

Theme:

## Teachers are Agents of Peace!

### From the Director

Looking back at the first half of the year 2022, global peace and security have been shaken significantly, with many implications to Africa. Following the longstanding and multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the spillover effect from the war in Ukraine has affected the continent's socio-economic position over the past few months. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where UNESCO IICBA's office is located, we too are witnessing changes in our daily life, for instance, a notable rise in food and fuel prices.

Indeed, it has been a critical moment for us to reflect on the role of the organization as well as the education sector. In the face of such multilayered and constantly emerging turmoil, there is no single solution. We all know that security responses, for example, are important, but not sufficient, and will not address many of the underlying conditions that breed violence. Listening to the voices of teachers and partners across Africa, we hear their concerns and a serious need to strengthen the capacity of the population to build sustainable and inclusive peace and resilience at local and regional levels – and education, in particular, teachers play critical roles in this.

The Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO says “*since wars begin in the minds of men (and women), it is in the minds of men (and women) that the defenses of peace must be constructed*” – I often cite this line to remind us of teachers' constructive role in peacebuilding and prevention of violence. Teachers have direct contact with learners, especially young people. Teachers can thus be their role models, agents of transformation, mediators, inspirations, and many more.

Importantly, to allow teachers to play such a role as peace agents, they need to be consulted, motivated, and equipped with appropriate competencies and teaching and learning tools. This includes developing their ability to foster a range of cognitive and non-cognitive skills among the learners – for instance, critical thinking, creativity, understanding of complexity, ethics, and collective responsibility.

However, in the face of multiple crises, education tends to be underfunded as it is not considered a lifesaving or life-sustaining service. This is what we are trying to challenge and contribute to, and hence we need to change this mindset.

Reflecting on such a context, this second quarterly newsletter sheds light on IICBA's work in peace and resilience building through education, in addition to the updates on our other initiatives. Please enjoy reading the articles and our activity updates!



Director Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki

## Activity Digest

In the second quarter of the year, UNESCO IICBA remained engaged in various productive activities, in particular, boosting its international outreach and capacity-building.

### April 18 - 22, Minnesota, the U.S. 66th Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society



UNESCO IICBA participated in the 66th annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society in Minnesota, Minneapolis, which showcased UNESCO IICBA's achievements in a variety of fields in Africa. In her session entitled, *"Building Resilience of Education Systems: Policy and Practice Responses to COVID-19"*, Dr. Victoria Kisaakye, Senior Program Coordinator of IICBA, enlightened the public on country experiences in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia where the respective States had responded resiliently to COVID-19-related disruptions and obstructions. [Read more](#)

### KIX Africa 19 Pulse Check Survey Infographic

The KIX Africa 19 hub conducted a "Pulse Check Survey" engaging 41 respondents from Eritrea, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with the aim to better understand countries' current experiences and perspectives about the KIX Africa 19 Hub. [Pulse Check Infographic](#)

### April 27 - 29, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Visit from the UNESCO Headquarters



Together with the UNESCO Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, UNESCO IICBA welcomed a mission team from the UNESCO Headquarters for a three-day visit. The mission team met with field officers including senior management present at the UNESCO Office, exchanging views on their working conditions as well as ways for effective project management to meet the organizational strategic goals and objectives.

### April 28 - May 12, Online KIX Africa 19 Hub Workshop Series: Learning How to Move from Research to Policy

Throughout the months of April and May, the KIX Africa 19 Hub hosted a three-session workshop for policymakers on employing research and innovation for evidence-based education sector policies and practices. The workshops aimed to strengthen the capacity of education specialists to effectively identify knowledge gaps in their education systems and to discuss the importance of research in policymaking.



More than 40 participants from Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe attended the workshops. [Read more](#)

### May 10 - 13, Doula, Cameroon Training workshop on Transformative Pedagogy to Build Peace and Resilience, and PVE in Africa



In collaboration with UNESCO’s regional office for Central Africa and Arigatou International, UNESCO IICBA organized a multilateral event aimed at transforming peacebuilding in Central Africa. Employing innovative methodologies and insightful contributions by experts, the training focused on understanding and identifying the conflicts and violence as well as conflict resolution mechanisms in the region targeting the four countries; the Republic of Burundi, Republic of Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Republic of Chad. [Read more](#)

[Local news coverage](#)

**May 19, Lilongwe, Malawi**  
**KIX Africa 19 Hub National Dialogue**



The KIX Africa 19 Hub team, in cooperation with the Malawi Ministry of Education and the National Commission for UNESCO in Malawi, organized a National Dialogue focused on the role of evidence-based policymaking and action towards accelerating access to equitable and quality education in Malawi. Over 60 stakeholders involved in education in Malawi brainstormed how to make education more equitable and accessible to children. [Read more](#)

[Malawi KIX National Dialogue Media Coverage by Zodiak Broadcasting Station](#)

**May 19 - July 22, Online**  
**Webinars: Lessons Learned in Promoting Transformative Pedagogy for Peace- and Resilience building**



UNESCO IICBA, in collaboration with Arigatou International, launched a series of webinars on promoting transformative pedagogy for peace

and resilience building in Africa. Incorporating experiences from teachers as well as universities, the webinars offered new insights while generating fruitful discussion on the topic of transformative pedagogy. Attended by over 100 participants, the webinars were well-received.

**May 23 – 26, the Gambia**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> African Continental Conference on Curriculum**



UNESCO IICBA participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> African Continental Conference on Curriculum in the Republic of the Gambia. In collaboration with the leading education specialists, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, education administrators and other key stakeholders across Africa, the conference sought to boost cooperation and enhance curriculum processes and products. At the conference, IICBA promised to extend its full support by offering capacity-development initiatives and learning workshops on improving curriculum standards vis-a-vis teacher training.

**May 25, Online**  
**Webinar: Bridging the Gender Digital Divide & Inequalities in Teaching and Learning amidst Crises - the Case of Azerbaijan**

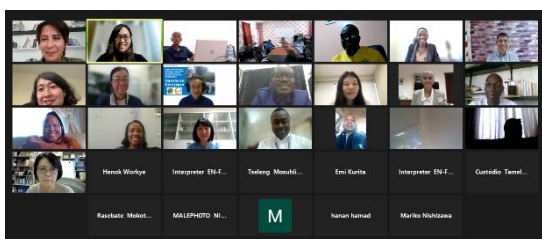
UNESCO IICBA, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Ethiopia, organized a webinar highlighting the need to address gender inequalities in Education. The session also tackled issues related to digital divide girls are experiencing in teaching and learning amidst crises. Attended by various scholars, professors, and heads of governmental offices and the Azerbaijani institutions including Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, the





webinar underlined the increasing gender digital divide in Africa and how it could be combated by reflecting on Azerbaijan’s experience. The webinar provided much-needed insights, with an emphasis on the innovation, commitment and steadfastness required in approaching this increasingly important topic.

**May 26 - June 16, Online**  
**Webinars: Peace and Resilience Building in Education; Experiences from Japan**



UNESCO IICBA, in cooperation with Hiroshima University (Japan), held a series of four webinars under the title of “Peace and Resilience Building in Education from Educational Policies and Course Perspectives: The Experience from Japan.” Prominent educators and policymakers from nine African countries, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia participated in the sessions and exchanged views and ideas with Japanese educators and government officers.

**June 2 - July 28, Online**  
**KIX Online Sessions on Community of Practice**

In this eight-session community of practice, participating policymakers will discuss approaches to strengthen capacity for implementing reforms in competency-based education in their national education systems or teacher education institutes.

DATES: JUNE 2, 9, 16, & 23 | JULY 7, 14, 21 & 28  
 EVENT LINK VIA EMAIL

STRENGTHENING COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION AND CURRICULA  
 COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

GPE KIX IDRC | CRDI UNESCO UNICEF African Union

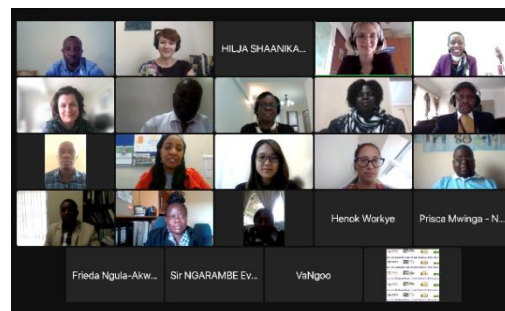
Starting on June 2, the KIX Africa 19 team initiated an ambitious eight-session online webinar series aimed at strengthening the capacity for implementing reforms in Competency-Based Education. The webinar series offered the Member States intuitive methods for improving and incorporating Competency-Based Education in their national education systems as well as teacher education institutes.

**June 15-16, Online**  
**China-Africa Deans of Education Forum 2022**

Attended by over 200 participants mainly from China and African countries, UNESCO IICBA participated in the China-Africa Deans of Education Forum 2022, a forum aimed at dealing with “Technology-enhanced Teacher Education,” “Quality Teachers for Rural Schools,” and “Education towards Peace and a Community with a Shared Future for humanity.”



**June 29, Online**  
**Launch of the Pilot and Publication of a Teachers’ Guide on Genocide Education**



UNESCO IICBA in cooperation with the UNESCO Section for Global Citizenship and Peace Education, and the United Nations Department of Global Communications launched a piloting programme of a soon-to-be-published teachers’ guide – Teaching to Prevent Atrocity Crimes. The programme invited 30 secondary school teachers from 6 pilot countries, namely Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, and Zimbabwe, together with representatives from the national commissions for UNESCO and Ministries of Education.

Participants are taking part in 6 online workshops and asynchronous in-person teaching practicum in their own classrooms.

It is expected that by the end of the training, teachers will be able to deliver lessons on the history of mass atrocity crimes in the African context that favor coming to terms with violent pasts and their prevention in order to build the resilience of learners to hateful ideologies; and persisting grievances.

## Report from Cameroon: Transformative Pedagogy to Build Peace and Resilience, and Preventing Violent Extremism in Africa

UNESCO IICBA, the UNESCO Regional Office for Central Africa, and Arigatou International conducted a training workshop on peace, resilience, and Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) from May 10 to 13, 2022. Attendees from Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Chad were among those who attended the regional training. Senior Program Coordinator Saliou Sall and Project Officer Eyerusalem Azmeraw were on hand to represent IICBA. This training is part of the project "Prevention of Extremism and its Resurgence amid the COVID-19 Pandemic through Education in Africa, aligned with the Spirit of TICAD7 and NAPSA," funded by the government of Japan.



The focus of the training was Central African conflict resolution processes as well as peace-building efforts, including the role of educators in it in the four target nations. In the workshop, participants learned and discussed how transformative pedagogy contributes to creating safe learning environments, equipping ethics of learning to live together, and fostering the competencies that are essential for peacebuilding. The training was designed based on the guide that IICBA developed – "[Transformative Pedagogy for Peace-building; A Guide for Teachers](#)". The sessions also opened a space for thinking around the need for creative assessments and the approaches to enabling youth to lead actions for peacebuilding. Importantly, governments developed strategies for implementing the training and enhancing their own peace-building efforts so that the initiatives are owned by them and live long.

### What is Transformative Pedagogy?

Transformative Pedagogy is an innovative pedagogical approach that **empowers learners to critically examine their contexts, beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes** with the goal of developing spaces for self-reflection, appreciation of diversity and critical thinking. It is realized when **learning goes beyond the "mind" and connects "hearts" and "actions" – transforming knowledge, attitudes and skills.**

At the training session, on behalf of the Governor of the Littoral Region of Cameroon, Mr. Kengne Simplicie Hervé, Inspector General of the Littoral Regional Services, delivered a speech recalling how crucial this workshop is as it comes at a time when the Central African sub-region has recently been facing security crises and the role of education systems and teachers remains crucial to guarantee peace and stability in the medium and long term.



### What is the spirit of NAPSA?

In 2019, during the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the Government of Japan announced a new initiative called "New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA)." NAPSA aims to **address the underlying causes of violence by strengthening institutions and governance**, supporting continental initiatives and stabilizing conflict zones. It resonates with the holistic approach that Transformative Pedagogy embraces as well as the vision that IICBA holds in its peacebuilding efforts through education.

Teachers are Agents of Peace!

## Lessons Learned from the Past 5-year Initiatives – IICBA’s Initiatives in Mainstreaming Peace Education

*Over the past several years, UNESCO IICBA has actively been working on the prevention of violence and peace- and resilience-building through education in Africa.*

Africa’s ever-growing youth population is an essential part of the continent’s stability and sustainable development, and therefore, it is crucial to engage, support, and educate them for their meaningful participation in society. In the face of economic and social instability, coupled with environmental degradation, ongoing conflicts, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, young people are often at the frontlines of risks of such vulnerabilities. It is therefore imperative that they have the opportunity to be heard about their experiences and encouraged to engage in transforming those issues they face in their communities on a daily basis.

For the past five years, IICBA has conducted a number of capacity development training at regional, national and institutional levels across the continent with a focus on the Transformative Pedagogy approach in collaboration with our prominent partners.

Reflecting on the past five years of our initiatives and recognizing also the importance of shared learning and reflective practice, we organized a webinar series titled “Lessons learned in Promoting Transformative Pedagogy for Peace and Resilience Building, Prevention of Violent Extremism and Learning to Live Together in Africa” in cooperation with Arigatou International. This series of webinars includes three sessions in English with each focusing on 1) teacher training, 2) universities and 3) youth empowerment, and one session in French focused on the implementation in francophone countries.



### **Session 1 “Experiences from Teacher Training”** [Watch the recording](#)

In the first session, experiences were shared by Ms. Nora Tairi (Ministry of National Education, Algeria), Mr. Wegayehu Abebe (Ministry of Education, Ethiopia), Ms. Mary Kangethe (Kenya National Commission for UNESCO), Mr. Mako Matsela (Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO), and Mr. Chifuniro Chikoti (Ministry of Education, Malawi), who briefed participants about their efforts in incorporating Transformative Pedagogy in their teacher training programmes.

### **Session 2 “Experiences from Universities”** [Watch the recording](#)

The second session was opened by Prof. Yonas Adaye Adeto’s (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia) keynote speech, which was followed by presentations from Mrs. Annet Mugisha Kajura (Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda), Dr. Reinhold Gallant (Nelson Mandela University, South Africa), and Dr. Tendayi Marovah (Midlands State University, Zimbabwe). The session showcased examples of mainstreaming the pedagogical strategies in the curriculum as well as courses and extra-curricular activities.

### **Session 3 “Experiences from Youth Empowerment”** [Watch the recording](#)

The third session was initiated by H.E. Ricardo Mosca, the EU Deputy Ambassador to the AU, who shared the EU’s work on youth empowerment, whereafter youth representatives from Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia presented their initiatives. Dr. Rhuks Ako, Head of the African Union’s Youth for Peace Programme, joined the conversation as well.

*\*The 4<sup>th</sup> session will take place on July 25 in a closed manner.*



## Algerian Transformative Pedagogy Project

Algeria's initiative started in 2019 after receiving training in 2018 in Senegal. Although the cascading process took longer than originally planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic, three training took place by the end of 2021 and today Algeria celebrates several key achievements! One of them is the adaptation of the guide into the Algerian context with specific topics selected.

The topics include;

- The role of education in peacebuilding
- School violence
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Ethics as an objective
- Community engagement
- Transformative Pedagogy; competencies, learning process, assessment and evaluation

These topics will be incorporated in the school subjects that cover human rights, citizenship, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The contextualized guide has a unique cover page, which was drawn by a training participant. It symbolizes all the aims of the project.



The project also produced a sample of teaching plans in the form of cards. It applies the Transformative Pedagogy learning process and supports teachers to adopt it in their teaching and learning practices.

Ms. Nora Tairi (Ministry of Education in Algeria) says;

*“Transformative Pedagogy is an innovative pedagogical approach that empowers both teachers and learners. It encourages learners to be reflective and critical thinkers who are able to contribute meaningfully as members of local and global communities.”*

Now, Algeria seeks to refine the cascading training guide, further cascade Transformative Pedagogy to teachers, produce peacebuilding teaching plans in multiple languages depending on the school and curriculum and monitor/evaluate the impact of Transformative Pedagogy.

## Kenyan Experience on Transformative Pedagogy

The Transformative Pedagogy for Peacebuilding Initiatives in Kenya started in 2018. The pedagogy was implemented in several existing frameworks such as; Peace Education Policy; National Peace Education Programme; Peace Education integrated into the Curriculum; and the onset of curriculum reforms into the country.

Transformative Pedagogy took several forms in Kenya;

- Teachers' self-awareness
- Safe learning environments
- Interactive methodologies
- Collaborative learning
- Attitude & value development
- Behaviour change



So far, around 100 people mainly from Teacher Training Colleges were trained. The purpose of the training was to train teacher educators and to infuse the concepts in the curriculum in class and out of class. This, of course, is only the beginning of the process with expansion being discussed as a possibility to further mainstream peace education within school systems.

Ms. Mary Kangethe (Kenya National Commission for UNESCO) brought up the multi-pronged approach of the initiative. Peace Education programs in Kenya have already been strongly integrated in the curriculum. Yet, it's worth highlighting that the program also includes teaching educators and subsequently students about the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, which is not strongly incorporated currently. Ms. Kangethe says; *"(The) Programs seem to have pushed teachers out of their comfort zones. There is still a capacity gap on how teachers could properly implement the pedagogy in the class room. There is a need to popularize it more so that teachers keep up engagement with the material, the pedagogy and the platforms."*



## South African Approach to Transformative Pedagogy and Peacebuilding

The initiative in South Africa focused on three schools that led the implementation process, namely Nelson Mandela University, Sol Plaatje University, and the Durban University of Technology.

Around 30 participants were part of the initial batch of trainees, the majority of which were current or incoming teacher trainees.

Looking at the structural challenges in the South African educational system, Dr. Duduzile Mzindle from the Durban University of Technology stressed the importance of "peace clubs," especially given their potential to act as a conduit between the administration and the students.

She stated; *"Peace clubs will go a long way towards alleviating the violence (in schools)."*

Some of the significance of peace clubs according to the country's focal points are;

- A safe space for dialogue, exchange, and de-escalation
- A place for peer-to-peer interaction and discussion
- The possibility to provide a platform for all to conduct intergenerational exchange

Professors from the three focal universities highlighted the strength of their initiative being collaborative group work between the universities. The possibility of further expansion of peace education initiatives beyond the academic setting is also of importance to the South African focal points, with broader expansion and use of the approach towards the broader community.



## Training on peacebuilding & PVE in the Rhino Refugee Settlement, Uganda

On May 24 and 25, 2022, Makerere University, in collaboration with the Teachers Union in Uganda, UNESCO Kampala Office and the Ministry of Education, conducted a two-day capacity development training on peacebuilding and PVE amongst the youths in the Rhino refugee settlement in Terego district in Uganda. The two-day session explored the peace-related issues that are unique to the place as well as the participants, and opened the discussion on strategies for peacebuilding.

### **What is “conflict” for the participants?**

Participants defined the term differently. Conflict can involve violence, but it can also be latent. One participant mentioned that *“conflict is the fighting with another tribe or group of individuals from different areas.”* This is indeed the first step to unpack the reality of location-specific peace issues.



### **What are the “causes” of conflicts?**

The most repeated causes were cultural differences, scarcity of resources including firewood for cooking, shortages of food, pregnancy among girls and women, unemployment that creates idle minds leading to destructive attitude among the refugee youths, social change and historical differences among the refugee youths in the camp or in the villages, etc. The most mentioned types of conflict in the area were communal conflict, intergroup conflict and intergenerational conflict.

### **What is “violence” for the participants?**

Participants acknowledged the presence of conflict among the villages that lead to violence. One participant exemplified violence as *“the process of hitting or hurting an individual with a big stick with the intentions of causing pain to another.”* Violence is not limited to physical force – the discussion expanded to psychological violence as well. Most of the participants mentioned that due to violence, young people are affected seriously and face such psychological impact as lack of empathy, depression, poor anger management, anxiety, etc. which can lead to further violence.



### **How to build peace in the camp & village?**

Some of the ideas participants raised included: respect for other cultures, involvement of church leaders to settle the disputes, conflict or violence, educating the youth and other community members so as there is value between the members of the community from different tribes and clans, community dialogues, establishment of football tournaments or activities to create friendship among the youth to avoid conflict, having good leaders, etc. Participants also expressed the need for peacebuilding in the villages and in the camp in general so that they would live in harmony and not be reminded that they are refugees.

### **What if domestic violence happened...?**

Participants worked in groups to come up with skits on conflict happening in their respective communities and to think through ways for mediation. One group selected domestic violence as a case since most of the villages in Rhino refugee settlement faced it. It was shared that effective mediation requires such skills as empathy, active listening, neutrality, commitment, not being judgmental, conflict sensitivity, and patience among others.

### **Designing strategies for peace**

At the end of the sessions, participants discussed strategies for peacebuilding in their respective communities. The exercise helped the participants develop mutual understanding, identify opportunities for solutions, reaffirm the costs of failing to solve the problem, and many more.

## Teachers are Agents of Peace!

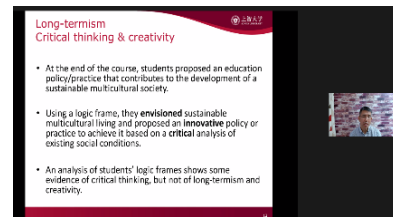
### Peace & Resilience Building in Education – Experience from Japan

From 26 May to 16 June 2022, UNESCO IICBA, in cooperation with Hiroshima University, Japan, held a series of four webinars under the title of “Peace and Resilience Building in Education from Educational Policies and Course Perspectives: The Experience from Japan.”

This collaborative training on Peace and Resilience Building in Education started in 2017 with the financial support from the Government of Japan. From 2017 to 2019, IICBA organized study tours to Japan to learn directly from universities and other educational institutions on how they institutionalize peace education and try to prevent violence and disasters in Japan. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training in 2020 and this year were changed to an online modality. Nonetheless, this virtual programme brought an important and timely opportunity for knowledge co-creation and networking, similar to that of a physical study tour.

#### Day 1 “Citizenship and Peace Education for Peaceful World”

The first session featured presentations from Prof. Taro Komatsu (Sophia University) and Ms. Mariko Nishizawa (The Peace Promotion Team at the Hiroshima Prefectural Government). The participants discussed potential “risks” in relation to peacebuilding that they foresee in their own context and examined the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviors that need to be fostered in order to create a lasting peace.



#### Day 2 “Opportunities and Challenges in Peacebuilding – Experience-sharing from the Universities of Hiroshima”

The second session explored the peace and security threats and conditions in the East Asian context and discussed the roles and potentials of the universities. We heard from Prof. Tatsuo Yamane (Hiroshima University) and Prof. Gen Kikkawa (Hiroshima City University). We also had the honor to hear from a student representative, Mr. Francis Hikaru Oba (Hiroshima University), who shared examples of student-led learning activities as well.

#### Day 3 “A World Without Nuclear Weapons”

The third session explored the lessons from Hiroshima’s and Nagasaki’s experiences of the atomic bombing and post-atrocity paths, through the presentations by Prof. Satoshi Hirose (Nagasaki University) and Mr. Shamsul Hadi Shams (The United Nations Institute for Training and Research; UNITAR). Participants reflected on the consequences of such inhumane weaponries and widespread culture of violence, and discussed what the implication of Japan’s experiences to their contexts and how education can contribute to prevent such atrocities.

#### Day 4 “Japan’s Education Policies and Areas of Cooperation for Peacebuilding”

In the fourth session, Ms. Ayaki Kobayashi (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; MEXT) provided an overview of the internationalization policies of Japanese higher education and Mr. Shinya Morimoto (MEXT) briefed participants on school safety measures including disaster education in Japan. We also heard from Dr. Yuko Doi (Japan International Cooperation Agency; JICA) on JICA’s peacebuilding assistance experiences, which showcased their projects of resilient State building in Sudan and Cote d’Ivoire.

Today, in the face of massive violence and injustice present around the world and particularly in Africa, the belief in nonviolent actions, as well as disarmament at the very individual level, is being challenged. The experience sharing from Japan was indeed to reaffirm the role of education and especially of teachers in peace- and resilience building and the prevention of violence, as teachers have direct contact with young people and they can be role models, change agents and mediators nurturing values to live together.

Article from UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

## Social Emotional Learning for Youth Waging Peace Online Course: From Individual to Community Resilience

*“Are humans inherently peaceful or violent? Is human nature good or bad? Why do humans commit atrocious acts of violence and yet undertake inspiring kindness? Can we nurture empathy and compassion while at same time build a critical inquiry mindset? How do we build resilience?” These are some questions that underpin the newly launched online course by UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP), [Social Emotional Learning for Youth Waging Peace \(SEL4YWP\)](#). Being mainly neuroscience based, the course attempts to provide structured exploration and answers on those questions, starting from cultivating self, relating to others and engaging in social systems.*

### Neuroscience-based Resilience

Neuroscience has long clearly indicated that our brain is central to both our cognitive as well as affective process, linking interconnected networks of neurons as a whole, rather than independent parts with separate functions. While cognitive development and impact have been spotlighted in recent times due to focus on standardized, time-bound and “one-size-fits-all” approaches to education, the recent development shows that our emotional dimension is more essential than known before. Interestingly, more and more [neuroscientists argue](#) that [everything is constructed](#) and can be (possibly) deconstructed and re-constructed, or what is known as “neuroplasticity.” It includes our individual and collective trauma.

The question remains, how can we understand the construction process of emotions? Sarah McKay explained some ingredients of emotions (2020), in which we can observe and understand our emotions from, interalia, the physiological sensations we feel in our body (also see [Maté, 2019](#)). Breathing, for example, is definitely our basic bodily activity and physiological sensation that are not only frequently overlooked but also underrated. Breathing regulation can be fundamentally powerful, leading to emotional regulation, as claimed by scientists ([Zaccaro et al., 2018](#); [Zelano et al., 2016](#)). Mind and body attunement activities will help us to tackle what Goleman (1995) called “amygdala hijack” and stay in our resilient zone even during extreme situations.

Then, how does it relate to violence or more prosocial behavior? Arriving with different degrees, the feelings of amygdala hijack frequently go as “automatic” response of the brain. Our brain hyper-arousal (fight, flight) or hypo-arousal (fright, freeze) mostly occur unnoticed, unresolved and accumulated into deep-seated and strong emotions or even trauma. As a result, stereotypes, bias, prejudice, stigmatization and violence in its varied manifestations, are likely to happen ([Simi et al., 2015](#); [Milani, 2017](#)). Thus, the ultimate impact is that the vicious cycle of violence is never broken.

### Social Emotional Learning as MGIEP Response

One of the solutions to the differing manifestations of violence is the ability of individuals to develop emotional competences from inside to engage constructively and effectively with situations outside, including how to deal with things that s/he cannot control. In more recent studies, this competence is often referred to as social and emotional learning (SEL), such as the studies from [the Collaborate for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) and [Yale University](#).

In 2017, based on various research and practices of neuroscience institutions, UNESCO MGIEP formulated the whole-brain EMC approach to social and emotional learning - Empathy, Mindfulness, Compassion, and Critical Inquiry. The fundamental notion of SEL and EMC, as confirmed by neuroscientists and other related experts in the important document of [the Seville Statement](#), is that humans are not inherently violent (biological pessimism). Instead, humans are capable and have huge potential that can be developed to counter and prevent violence. All of us are more hardwired for empathy, forgiveness,

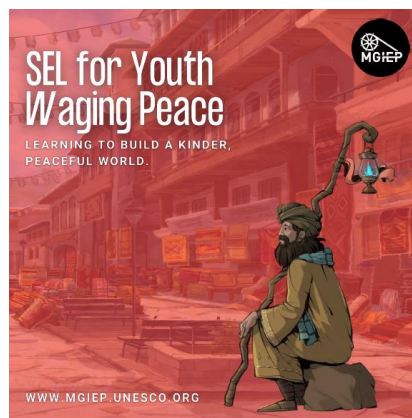


compassion and kindness. Being integrated with critical inquiry – critically assessing someone’s position and potential contribution in systems and its layers, all of these competences become an effective antidote to break the chain of violence.

## About the SEL4YWP Course

The concept above became the underpinning framework of the UNESCO MGIEP [Social Emotional Learning for Youth Waging Peace](#) (SEL4YWP) online course. Violent extremism is one aspect that is addressed. The course discusses other related issues such as negative peace, hate speech, inequality and injustice, and mental health.

A theoretical understanding and practical tools are interwoven and integrated in such a way that establishes pluralistic thinking and builds pro-social skills, while increasing emotional resilience of its learners. The learners are also equipped with hands-on instruments, for example, feeling observation and body scanning, active listening, media literacy and information filtering and system mapping. Appreciative inquiry and its tools are also introduced to help learners to be an impactful community builder. Aimed specifically for youth and those working with youth (18+ years old), this course is using story-based narrative, a fictional world of Ahayou with some key characters that reflect the real world and resonate to many conflict-torn and violence-trauma contexts.



Being fully compliant of [General Data Protection Regulations](#) (GDPR), this course also provides safe spaces for deep and critical reflections while following this up with actions, in line with the critical participatory pedagogy (Reardon, 1998; Reardon & Snauwaert 2011; also see Freire’s concept of praxis, 1973). At the end, this learning journey will lead its learners to be global citizens who are happy and mentally healthy, and at the same time who are actively engaging and positively contributing to sustainable peace. As one youth certified learner, Alberta Ushie from Nigeria said, “*I must confess it’s a life transforming experience,*” a transformation from individual to community resilience, becomes the essence of the course and the accomplishment of Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

Designed like a graphic novel, the story is revealed by Kalamfariku the narrator. The story is set in Ahayou, a land unconfined by time. Ahayou is fictional, or it may remind you of a place you know too well.

Duration  
16-20 hours | Self-paced

Age group  
18+

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## China-Africa Deans of Education Forum 2022

**Education 2030**

**北京师范大学**  
1902 - 2022

# 2022中非教育学院院长论坛

## China-Africa Deans of Education Forum 2022

共同构想教师教育 迈向中非命运共同体  
Reimagine Teacher Education towards a Shared Future

中国·北京 Beijing, P.R. China  
2022年6月15-16日 June 15-16, 2022

指导单位 Supported by 中国联合国教科文组织全国委员会 National Commissioner of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO

主办单位 Hosted by 北京师范大学 BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY

承办单位 Organised by UNESCO

协办单位 Co-organised by

On June 15 and 16, 2022, UNESCO IICBA in collaboration with UNESCO INRULED and the Faculty of Education of Beijing Normal University organized the China-Africa Deans of Education Forum 2022 on the theme “Reimagining teacher education towards a shared future”. With over 200 participants, the forum was hosted by the Beijing Normal University and was held in English, Chinese and French with interpretation.



This forum invited deans of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) from China and Africa to discuss the complexities of the post-COVID era, identify ways to strengthen and ensure high quality teacher education and to imagine how the TEIs in China and Africa can innovate through collaboration.

*“Behind every great teacher is the story of an educator who inspired him/her. Universities provide inspiration for teachers and the future teachers in Africa. I hope this forum will be a starting point of sharing, thinking, and reimagining the teaching profession and teacher education in Africa together: a journey for better learning in Africa,”* said Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of IICBA in her opening remarks.

[Read more](#)

## UNESCO IICBA x TTF x ADEA Policy Workshop

On June 21 and 22, 2022, the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), in collaboration with the UNESCO IICBA and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) organized two virtual regional dialogues respectively in French and English for over 50 participants from TTF member countries, civil society representatives, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and others to facilitate Regional Peer-to-peer Policy Learning on Teacher Policy Development.

The objectives were to:

- A) Foster peer-learning around common and distinct experiences, challenges, and solutions related to policy for teacher education and professional development, focusing on COVID-19 recovery.
- B) Identify good regional and national practices related to teacher education and development, and examine the enabling conditions and key factors that lead to policy change and scaling-up.
- C) Explore the regional partners, channels and mechanisms to foster and support further policy learning for current and emerging national and regional policy learning needs.
- D) Build partnerships amongst country and institutional members with regional remits to initiate specific policy development objectives and change.

Participants were also oriented on the new teacher policy guide with countries like Uganda, Kenya among others sharing how they had used it to develop their policies.

Materials and Good Practices from Activities/Projects:

- ▶ Teacher Policy Development Guide in English:  
<https://teachertaskforce.org/knowledge-hub/teacher-policy-development-guide>
- ▶ New TPDG module on crisis-sensitive teacher policy and planning in English:  
<https://teachertaskforce.org/es/node/1218>.
- ▶ Online course of the TPDG in English:  
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=4348>
- ▶ Report on Distance learning and teacher training strategies. Lessons from the Caribbean, the teacher training project in the Caribbean in English:  
<https://teachertaskforce.org/knowledge-hub/distance-learning-and-teacher-training-strategies-lessons-caribbean>
- ▶ Details about the event can be accessed on  
<https://teachertaskforce.org/events/national-and-regional-policy-learning-anglophone-africa-teacher-education-covid-19-recovery>

Also access to the presentations of the meeting will be available in the [workspace in the TTF knowledge platform](#). The presentations can be found by scrolling down the main page under the section, “Recent Documents”. The outcomes and recordings will be available soon.

We invite you to create your account [here](#) if you have not done so!



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## New Staff: Welcome to UNESCO IICBA!

We are pleased to introduce to you Dr. Mathias Gakwerere – a new Program Officer for Education for Health and Wellbeing at UNESCO IICBA!

He comes in with a rich experience from UNFPA on adolescent health and will be responsible for providing support to UNESCO Staff in the region and other relevant stakeholders towards effective planning, implementation and monitoring of teacher development & training programs for Education for Health and Wellbeing in the Africa region within the framing of “Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future” (O3) Programme. He will be working closely with Colleagues at the UNESCO liaison office in Addis Ababa to provide technical guidance at the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025) Thematic Clusters on Women and Girls Education; Life Skills and Career Guidance.

Join us in welcoming Mathias to the UNESCO family and feel free to engage him in your programs!  
Dr. Mathias, welcome to UNESCO IICBA!



**Dr. Mathias Gakwerere,**  
**UNESCO-IICBA**

### **PROGRAM OFFICER, EDUCATION FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING**

*Mathias joins UNESCO-IICBA after 7 years of service at UNFPA Rwanda as Sexual Reproductive Health Specialist. He is a Medical Doctor that holds an MSc in Public Health Nutrition and Development, an MSc in International Health Management and an academic certificate in Sexual Reproductive Health and Population issues.*

*He has over 10 years of experience in clinical medicine, policy development and programming for health system strengthening, Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health, HIV including in humanitarian settings. He has contributed greatly to the introduction and roll-out of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Primary and Secondary schools of Rwanda and the establishment of linkages with adolescent and youth friendly health services.*

*He is married with 3 children; he likes reading, music and sports and is fluent in both English and French.*

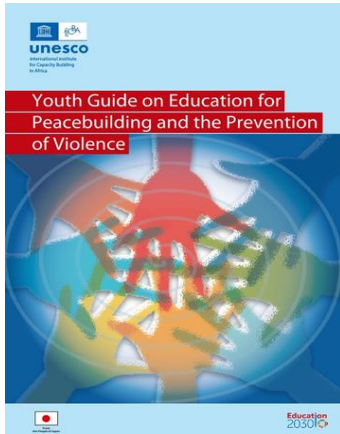
Email : [m.gakwerere@unesco.org](mailto:m.gakwerere@unesco.org)

Mobile: +251976388898

### Message from Dr. Mathias

*“I am excited to join the vibrant team of UNESCO IICBA and contribute to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs through deliberate investment in the education and health of children and adolescents to realize the benefits of the demographic dividend across the African continent.”*

## “Youth guide on education for peacebuilding and the prevention of violence.”

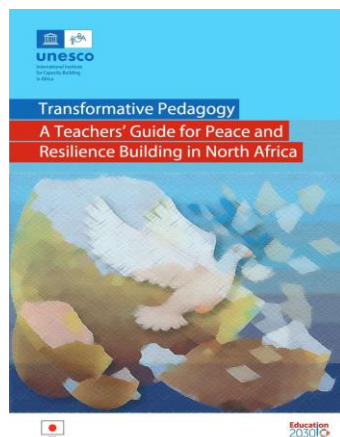


UNESCO IICBA in close collaboration with the AU's Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Program and Arigatou international has developed a “Youth Guide on Education for Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violence.” Under its project “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 through Youth Education,” funded by the Government of Japan. The guide is available in Arabic, English and French.

This youth guide aims to strengthen the capacity of youth leaders in Africa to contribute to peacebuilding through education, and for them to empower young people for the prevention of violence, the promotion of a culture of peace and mutual understanding and respect among peoples.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381620>

## “Transformative Pedagogy: A Teachers’ Guide for Peace and Resilience Building in North Africa.”



UNESCO IICBA published a regional teachers’ guide “Transformative Pedagogy: A Teachers’ Guide for Peace and Resilience Building in North Africa” in partnership with Arigatou international under the project “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 through Youth Education,” funded by the Government of Japan.

This guide is designed to build the capacity of teachers so that they are informed and empowered in why and how to educate for peacebuilding. It offers an analysis of conflict, examines the role of ethics, expands on the elements of transformative pedagogy. It also provides practical tools to support learners’ active participation. The guide is available in English and French at;

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381621.locale=en>

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## Interact with us!

To learn more about our work along with our past and current projects, please visit our website at <http://www.iicba.unesco.org>

And be the first to know by joining us on social media!



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## Contact us

The UNESCO IICBA Newsletter is published quarterly. This newsletter was designed and edited by Ms. Kasumi Moritani, UNV, Ms. Kevine Uwingabiye AU volunteer, and Mr. Rezan Hasan, intern, under the supervision of Dr. Victoria Kanobe Kisaakye and Mr Saliou Sall, Senior Programme Coordinators of IICBA, and Mr. Gabriel Mekbib, Knowledge Management Consultant, and under the overall guidance of Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of IICBA.

The next newsletter will be published in September 2022. We welcome editorial comments and inquiries about UNESCO IICBA. Please reach out to us via mail, phone or email listed below.

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