Education for Peace: Content, Form, and Structure: Mobilizing Youth for Civic Engagement

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Abstract

The inclusion of youth in peacebuilding initiatives brings vibrancy and creativity to peacebuilding efforts. Believing that youth offer creative energy and active potential for the transformation of violent conflict in the world -- and believing that education is a space for nurturing cultures of peace or cultures of war -- peace educators maintain that practitioners have a responsibility to dialogue with youth on knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors conducive to fostering global harmony and social justice. Peace is described as the absence of physical and structural violence, and the presence of justice; therefore, students should explore the root causes of conflict, know international humanitarian and human rights laws, envision alternative structures of security, and learn skills for managing micro/macro conflict without violence.

Accordingly, the goal of this paper is to discuss peace education as education for humane purposes and social justice, where youth are involved in the transformation of society and the construction of peaceful futures. The paper is divided into 5 sections: 1) what is peace education, 2) education for peace: values and inquiry-based teaching and learning, 3) peace education frameworks: the content of peace education, 4) pedagogy for peace: involving youth in community, and 5) models of peace education: learning in community. The paper focuses on the social purposes (why), content (what), pedagogy (how), and structure (where) of teaching peaceful values, behaviors, and skills, as well as generating a commitment among youth toward social agency and democratic participation.

The growing literature on peace education reflects a dynamic field. Harris (2004) divides peace education into 5 categories: international education, development education, environmental education, human rights education, and conflict resolution education. Curricula in peace education cover a range of topics, including the history and philosophy of peace education (Reardon 1988, Burns and Aspeslagh 1996, Harris and Morrison 2003), the dialectic between 'negative' and 'positive' peace (Galtung 1969, 1996), gender and militarism (Reardon 1993, 2001), conflict resolution education (Johnson and Johnson 2006) and the formation of peaceful values in education (Boulding 1988, Toh and Cawagas 1991). On nurturing cultures of peace, Sommerfelt and Vambheim (2008) write that peace requires citizens to contain their aggression, exhibit cooperative behavior, and resolve conflicts without violence. Jenkins (2007) illuminates the difference between education *about* peace and education *for* Education *about* peace includes modules on war and peace and leaders of peace movements, such as Gandhi and King. Education *for* peace, on the other hand, intends to nurture knowledge, values, behaviors and capacities to confront violence.

Peace education as a practice in schools is attributed to Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Paulo Freire, though earlier thought on education for peace is traced back to Erasmus and Socrates, among other scholars. Montessori worked to foster peace on three inter-related levels: the individual, community, and

globe. The individual level relates to person-centered awareness of the self (i.e. body, mind, emotions, and spirit), whereas the community level refers to interpersonal relations (i.e. trust, openness, and interdependence), and the global level concerns cultural and environmental consciousness (Montessori 1949). Dewey informed peace education through his work on the relationship between education and democracy, stating that one role of education is to foster active citizenship through the participation in processes of democracy (Dewey 1916). Freire (1970) centered education on revealing systems of oppression, particularly through the exploration of language and identity and by challenging the banking-model of teaching and learning. All three educators sought to create education that was learner-centered and autonomous. This concept of classroom education represents social outcomes relevant to democratic political systems. Hence, autonomous learning relates to individual and national autonomy and democratic classroom participation models active citizenship in a democracy. Peace education is also found philosophically in the work of authors (e.g. Tolstoy, Thoreau), social thinkers (e.g. Mead, Foucault, Adams), social learning scholars (e.g. Bandura and Walters) and activists (e.g. Ghandi, King, Ikeda, Syuu Kyi).

In practice, peace education is problem-posing education that attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviors on which a culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred future. Many scholars in the field address violence and the war system as the core problematic inhibiting peace and seek to propose viable solutions to violence in all its manifestations (e.g. social, economic, political, environmental, spiritual, and ethical). Violence might be defined as "avoidable, intentional harm, inflicted for a purpose or perceived advantage of the perpetrator or of those who, while not direct perpetrators, are, however, advantaged by the harm" (Reardon 2001, 35). Education for peace raises dialogue on critical issues at the heart of the community in order to transform oppressive systems from a violent orientation toward a culture of peace. Thus, through education for peace educators and students critically discuss manifestations of, and justifications for, violence, identify the actors involved and propose peaceful futures (Boulding 1988, Hicks 1994).

Peace education includes the cultivation of peacebuilding skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavors). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security systems, and use a pedagogy that is democratic and participatory. Thus, peace education as a practice and philosophy refers to matching complementary elements between education and society, where the social purposes (i.e. why teach), content (i.e. what to teach), and pedagogy (i.e. how to teach) of the educative process are conducive to fostering peace. Accordingly, peace education is a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues (i.e. talking points) related to local and global contexts.

So, where do educators begin? What are the problems? What are the values and methods of education for peace? How do educators develop peace education programs? What are conceptual frameworks to help teachers and learners understand conflict, violence, and peace education? How does education for peace address conflict differently than traditional education? Why should students have to study peace education and diversity issues? Isn't this discourse merely distracting youth from the more important goal of learning core subjects and enhancing their primary skills toward a specific chosen vocation? And isn't an extra class just an increased tuition burden during the current economic recession? I believe educators should focus more on maintaining creativity, which is often lost when growing older and burdened with more responsibility in a world dictated by economics that demand the sale of one's time and labor over the nurturance of a meaningful vocation. Accordingly, there have been a number of frameworks designed to illustrate the content of peace education, as well as the instructional methods appropriate to the content. This paper will discuss those frameworks hereafter and present model peace education programs.

Education for Peace: Values and Inquiry-based Learning and Teaching

Education for peace begins with questions. Who am I? How do I identify myself? What, if anything, represents me? To what communities do I belong? What is community? How do members define community? What are the assets of a community? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to a particular community? How do I solve conflicts? How do I involve myself with others in my community? What are examples of conflict and peacebuilding in my community, and how do I harness the potential encapsulated within conflict to transform it? How do I define violence? How do I justify violence? When do I use violent means? How is violence taught? What are alternatives? These questions are examples of the inquiry-based methodology and reflective practice that forms education for peace. Epistemologically, peace education focuses on the relationship between learning, violence, and cultures of peace. How do I learn? What do I learn? Who teaches the content? How is it taught? Who supports the content? In what spaces is peace learned? In what spaces is violence learned? What is done with the learning?

As an anecdote: Many of my students begin courses with the cynicism that peace is naive and impossible. They perceive peace as a utopian concept rooted in the ideas of harmony, quietude and passivity. Herein lies the problematic: that on one hand society perceives peace as silent and non-confrontational, yet for practitioners peacebuilding is dynamic, active and potentially agitating to the status quo. Peace education is not necessarily education for activism, though its intent is to create an informed, active and engaged citizenry, where civic participation and citizen decision-making forms a strong community and a healthy democracy. The process of peace education could be described as a process of revealing worldviews, biases and unmasking the intent behind education. Accordingly, many educators maintain that education is neutral, not political. However, by the very nature that education has objectives and social purposes it intends to foster among youth, education is political. The questions asked direct learning in a particular direction. The material teachers choose to teach directs the classroom discussion toward a specific sphere.

By claiming education as neutral many educators indoctrinate learners through education for capitalism and market-ideology, competition and violence, and neoliberalism and greed without allowing students to question the masked agenda (Apple 1969; Freire 1970; Giroux 1981, 2006; McLaren 1989). Peace education is overt with its intentions to confront, understand, and resist violence. Yet, because peace education is clear with its objectives, it is not a process of indoctrination (Mayor 2005). Peace education does not pour knowledge into the minds of students or tell students what to do. Nor does peace education utilize a system of experts who come into the classroom and tell students what to think. Peace education helps learners begin to raise questions and gives students the tools they need to direct their learning. It is an education about how to learn, not what to learn.

Inquiry-led education helps motivate learners to raise questions themselves, and become reflective and active learners. Engagement with issues at the core of contemporary society is the message students receive as they begin to ask critical questions in the classroom and participate actively in their communities. Students come to understand that the medium—the structure of learning—is the message. Value a variety of points of view, be confident, speak up, share opinions in a respectful way, resolve conflict dialogically, and reflect—these are the lessons students learn. Through this inquiry-based method of learning, sharing of personal knowledge and experiences, asking critical questions, and listening actively to others, students experience a range of thoughts and perspectives for cultural understanding, non-violent communication and conflict management. Youth begin to see old events, peoples, experiences and structures in a new light. They begin to question their previous assumptions and values. This is transformative education. Reflection and dialogue transforms the way students see themselves, their communities, and the world. The dialogue and reflection is grounded in social and political theories of educators, political scientists, environmentalists, practitioners and philosophers, such as John Dewey (1916), Maria Montessori (1949), Paulo Freire (1970), Immanuel Kant (2005/1795), Kenneth and Elise Boulding (1988), David Bohm (1996), Betty Reardon (1988, 2001), and Vandana Shiva (2005).

Therefore, the classroom, its relationship between learning, socialization, culture and conflict, and the use

of a specific value-laden pedagogy to achieve a desired result is central in cultivating an informed and engaged public. Education for peace, thus, includes participatory pedagogy and dialogue that more fully reflects the intended outcome of education for peace. In other words, education for peace seeks to foster peaceful personal attitudes, behaviors, skills and capacities. This education is not indoctrinating but is honest about its values of creating agency, respect and nonviolence. The most appropriate path toward this democratic objective is through learner-centered inquiry and democratic pedagogy (Dewey 1916, Freire 1970, Reardon and Cabezudo 2002). Classrooms must be spaces of multi-way, inter-generational, inter-cultural, pan-economic dialogue that introduces learners to new modes of thought, rather than sites of superficial discussions, memorization and information absorption that anesthetizes education (Kester 2007).

Peace Education Frameworks: The Content of Peace Education

While it is paramount that education for peace be specific to the teaching and learning context in which the learning is to take place and where the lessons are to be practiced, educators may nonetheless formulate their peace education lessons around common peace education themes. Burns and Aspeslagh (1996) describe these themes in five domains: 1) the international system, 2) peace, 3) development, 4) human rights, and 5) the environment. Additionally, there are several peace education frameworks to draw from as educators, as documented by the author (Kester 2008). Two of these frameworks highlight peace education content as the exploration of root causes of conflict, knowing international humanitarian and human rights law, envisioning alternative structures of security, and learning skills for managing micro / macro conflicts without resorting to violence. They are the *Learning to Abolish War* model (Reardon and Cabezudo 2002) and *Flower-Petal Model of Peace Education* (Toh 2004).

The *Learning to Abolish War* model emphasizes four strands of learning: root causes of conflict, international law, conflict management and global disarmament (*Figure 1*). The conceptual framework of this model places violence at the core of cultures of war, and non-violence and international understanding at the center of cultures of peace. This framework is particularly concerned with the role of international law in maintaining global justice, the construction of peacebuilding mechanisms, and the formation of personal lifestyles and behaviors conducive to fostering a culture of peace. In this framework education for peace is education for the abolition of war. This education relies on an exploration of what constitutes peace, dialogue at the intersection of identity and violence, and a process of re-defining human security in terms of needs and social welfare in place of national security, the armaments industry and militarism. Peace education through this framework seeks to foster a commitment among educators to educate for non-violence and generate active citizenship among learners.

Figure-1. Learning to Abolish War Framework

The *Flower-Petal Model of Peace Education* (*Figure 2*) is another framework for forming education for
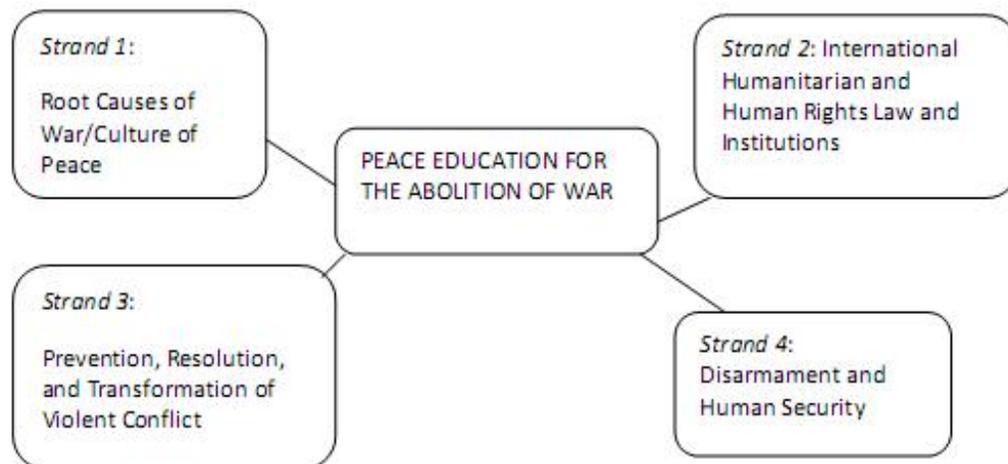
peace programs. In this model, a culture of peace is placed at the center. A culture of peace may be defined as:

a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation…promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms…commitment to peaceful settlements of conflicts…efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations… respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men (UN 1999, n.p.).

The *Flower-Petal* model has six categories comprising a culture of peace, including: 1) dismantling the culture of war, 2) environmental peace, 3) education for justice and compassion, 4) human rights education, 5) cultivating intercultural solidarity, and 6) harnessing inner peace. Dismantling a culture of war is concerned with mitigating all support for the war system, including competitive games, gender oppression, defense spending, oppressive security systems, and the sale of toys that mimic violence and teach children destructive behaviors (i.e. toy guns and knives, violent video games, excessive violence in film). It includes dissolving weapons access as well as disarming the mind from hate. Environmental education includes fostering global stewardship, simple living, and combating the environmental degradation that accompanies unsustainable development and war. Educating for justice and compassion deconstructs globalization processes, neoliberalism, and the notion of a commons. Education for human rights introduces students to their civil, economic, political, cultural and religious rights, among others, and assesses the nature of violations of these rights. Intercultural solidarity is concerned with interactions between differing groups and cultural norms, and national and international institutions that perpetuate violence or foster peace. Education for inner peace allows students to evaluate their own physical, emotional, and spiritual states as well as the interplay between micro and macro conflicts. The *Flower-Petal* framework focuses on intercultural solidarity, disarmament education, and the relationship between diverse forms of life and ways of living that subvert ethno-centrism, de-humanization, and pseudo-speciation while fostering peace, global environmental stewardship and contemplative practices.

Figure-2. Flower-petal Model of Peace Education

In addition to the conceptual frameworks outlined above, there are a number of normative frameworks (i.e. international standards) that serve as the basis for developing peace education programs. One such normative framework is the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy* (1995). The *Declaration and Integrated Framework* suggests "basic guidelines which could be translated into strategies, policies and plans of action at the institutional and

national levels according to the conditions of the different communities" (n.p.). The guidelines include:

· Teaching with an international approach

· Teaching about forms of conflict, their causes and effects

· Teaching human rights and international standards (e.g. Constitutions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

· Teaching about democracy and civic participation

· Teaching about development, de-colonization and globalization

· Teaching the histories of nations and States

· Teaching about the United Nations and international institutions

These conceptual and normative frameworks inform contemporary peace education programs and form the developmental basis of education for peace. Through referencing these documents educators may create a peace education program specific to their schools and non-formal learning environments.

Pedagogy for Peace: Involving Youth in Community

Educators often find that the educational methods (e.g. lecturing and test-taking) do not match the intended social outcome, whether it relates to government, business, education, or technology, and that is largely what peace education concerns. Our schools and nations intend to create democracy and community interdependence, yet to do so educators often use tactics of war-making (e.g. obedience-drilling, secrecy, and competitive games) that reflect more fully the very ideologies the school system intends to transcend. For example, many educators teach the benefits of capitalism through competitive games to illustrate individualism and hard work, yet to teach capitalism in this overly simplified manner exaggerates the negative characteristics of a capitalistic system (i.e. greed and exclusion). This education is fragmenting and divisive—it focuses on patriotism, militarism, and materialism—rather than holistic and interdependent. Such a lesson seems to value materialism above character. So we are presented with the ideological and existential contradiction that our means do not meet our intended ends, our content and pedagogy are in conflict, and democracy is compromised. Education must consider this contradiction. In contrast, to teach cooperation, respect, the value of diversity, creativity and empathy, educators could use cooperative games, participatory pedagogy, and creative problem-solving activities that emphasize learning to work and live together.

The classroom spaces also pose a democratic contradiction. Consider that classrooms are often sites of oppression. Several frequent learning situations occur in our classrooms that undermine fair and democratic education. Take, for instance, the overly didactic classroom where material is lectured to students in an authoritarian style, with learners listening passively but not engaging each other, the instructor, or the material. There are a number of characteristics that might define an oppressive classroom, including: 1) teachers lecturing for the entire period without responses from learners, or without giving learners the opportunity to question the agenda, 2) teachers allow one or a few students to dominate class time, which silences the majority, 3) students are encouraged to memorize 'facts' rather than engage in critical thinking and inquiry, 4) course material is not relevant to students' lived experiences (e.g. US textbooks being used to teach Ethiopian youth), and 5) student-bullying is allowed to flourish as 'boys just being boys' (Kester 2007).

Accordingly, in light of this situation, educators have been working to cultivate a culture of peace for several decades. The United Nations, as facilitator, has promoted this dialogue. The UN General Assembly passed the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy* (1995), *Declaration on a Culture of Peace* (1998), and declared the year 2000 as the 'International Year for

a Culture of Peace' and 2001-2010 as the 'UN International Decade on Education for Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.' The 1995 and 1998 resolutions articulate necessary components of education for peace and a culture of peace, respectively. Each includes education on knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors that support peaceful societies and unpacks thinking that supports the war system (*Figure 3*). Furthermore, the UN implemented peace education into its educational bodies (i.e. UNESCO, UNITAR, UNU, and UPEACE) to serve as a model for mainstreaming peace education into organizations and agencies.

Figure-3. Toward a Culture of Peace

From A CULTURE OF WAR	*Toward* A CULTURE OF PEACE
Power based on force	Power based on mutual agreements
Having an enemy, dualism, dichotomy	Tolerance, solidarity, and international understanding
Authoritarian governance	Democratic participation
Secrecy	Transparency, free flow of information
Armament	Disarmament
Exploitation of people	Human Rights
Exploitation of nature	Sustainable Development
Straight male domination	Gender equity and equality

Reardon (2001, 111-112) describes education for a culture of peace:

Learners must be guided towards a clear comprehension of the major obstacles to a culture of peace: the normative and behavioral obstacles that lie at the heart of our discussion of capacities and skills; and the institutional and existential obstacles, the global problems that are the worldwide manifestations of the culture of war. Together these problems comprise the problematic of creating a culture of peace…. One way of looking at the main tasks of creating a culture of peace is to think of the primary goals as reducing and eliminating violence, and enhancing and universalizing human dignity and equality by increasing gender justice

Hence, the pedagogy of education for peace focuses on illuminating causal relationships, developing empathy, and nurturing students who are committed to democratic participation and nonviolence in their local and global communities. Educators should be aware of direct and indirect forms violence and the war system so that education may overcome systems of violence. An education for peace program, thus, pedagogically emphasizes *values* (tolerance, respect, equality, empathy, compassion), *capacities* (cultural proficiency, sensitivity), *skills* (nonviolent communication, active listening, competence in a foreign language, gender-inclusive language), and *knowledge* (of history and cultures, peace movements) for peace. The *pedagogy* includes cooperative learning activities, gender perspectives, creative reflection and journaling, theatre games, role-plays, empathy-building activities, and alternative futures exercises.

Furthermore, the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Education for Peace* (1995) suggests that education for peace must be trans-disciplinary and included in all learning spaces. Education for peace should not be limited to a single classroom or subject. Yet, the institution or space in which education for peace operates should be in harmony with the goals and lessons of peace education and peace education should be integrated into all learning spaces. That is the learning space should foster intercultural and international dialogue and respect, knowledge of national and global systems of governance, respect for all life, and a commitment to non-violence. Authoritarian and exclusive learning spaces work counter to the cooperative and inclusive goals of peace education.

Models of Peace Education: Learning in Community

Since 1982, the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE), under the directorship of Betty Reardon, has been leading education for peace through a model of community learning. Every year IIPE brings together international educators to discourse on current themes related to peace, violence and the war system. IIPE has 3 goals: to develop peace education through identifying new and challenging themes, to form new institutional alliances among NGOs, universities, and agencies, and to generate regional cooperation toward transforming society (Jenkins 2007). Peace education communities foster peace through dialogical exploration of critical contemporary issues, sharing best teaching practices, and brainstorming methods for individuals and education to respond to the critical issues at hand. The program considers violence through the lens of education and the political systems in which conflict plays out. IIPE begins with the Freirean philosophy that all community members are at once teacher and student. This horizontal and dialogical process of community learning and shared responsibility among learners forms a learning community that both represents peace education and participation in a democracy. Through dialogical community learning, participants learn with and from each other toward political action possibilities to address the social issues under study in order to transform institutions of violence (Jenkins 2008). For more information, see the IIPE website at   http://www.tc.columbia.edu/PeaceEd/IIPE/index.htm.

In 2002, the United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE), through consultation with leading international peace educators, including Reardon, began formulating a framework and strategy for offering a master's degree program in peace education. The culminating document from the consultation (Jenkins 2002) designed the master's degree program around eight organizing principles: peace education as 1) comprehensive in scope, 2) holistic in organization, 3) values-laden, 4) inquiry-based, 5) conceptually designed, 6) practiced with learner-centered pedagogy, 7) intended to develop peacemaking skills, and 8) as intentionally-directed learning. The eight principles of peace education underscore a holistic and comprehensive model of peace education. Students at UPEACE interact with concepts of peace through exploration of the values, beliefs and worldviews present among cultures of the diverse student body. This approach to peace education embodies a symbiotic relationship between education for peace and multicultural education; for, both multicultural education and peace education aim to raise global awareness, respect for all life and a re-humanization of the "Other." In multicultural learning communities learners deconstruct their previously held prejudices and beliefs about others and formulate models for greater cooperation in the future. For further information on UPEACE, see http://www.upeace.org/.

In 1997, the Civic Education Project (CEP) of Northwestern University began its youth programs by combining classroom teaching with community service to promote civic responsibility among youth. CEP offers young people an opportunity to learn and serve through service-learning projects in communities across the US, developing the knowledge, values and skills students need to make a positive impact on society. CEP engages students with social and economic challenges in cities (e.g. politics and urban poverty, hunger and homelessness, youth violence and conflict resolution, law and social justice, and public health) as a process of creating change and preparing youth for active citizenship. The structure of CEP includes a core course that grapples with the issue under study, field experiences working with local agencies addressing the topic, special topic seminars of the students' choice, evening colloquia with guest speakers, nightly reflection sessions, and residential and recreational activities developing the participatory and cooperative ethos of the learning community. The Civic Education Project is found at
  http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/cep/.

In conclusion, peace education as a practice aims to confront and resist violence to transform societies toward cultures of peace. Peace education focuses both on education *about* peace and education *for* peace while addressing the knowledge, values, skills and behaviors needed to nurture a peace culture. The content of peace education includes knowledge of peace movements, peacemakers, 'negative and positive' peace, direct and indirect violence, peace as an active process, human rights and responsibilities, worldviews and ideologies, non-violent communication, community and dialogue. The pedagogy used in peace education is cooperative, participatory and active, including case-studies, storytelling, role-plays, empathy activities,

negotiation and mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles, and alternative futures exercises. The learning objective of peace education aims to transform conflict through dialogue and nonviolence, and particularly where peace education affects youth conflict is transformed across generations.

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A Publication of:

University for Peace