## A Critique of the Curriculum for Excellence and a Suggestion for Education for Peace

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# Introduction

Scotland's national curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) represented a radical departure from Scotland's previous prescriptive curriculum. While it has had great success in many areas, it has also been met with staunch criticism (Stobart, 2021). Regarding this criticism and the increasing importance and relevance of Education for Peace, I believe it is worth considering a review of the Scottish Education System and associated curriculum. Over the course of this paper I hope to clarify what education for peace is, briefly critique the CfE generally and suggest that there is very poor visibility of peace principles within the curriculum, then I hope to lay out the steps of a review and what that may look like for Scotland specifically.

The CfE was formally introduced in the 2010-2011 academic year by the Scottish National Party Government after an extended consideration following its conception by the Labour/Liberal Democrat Government of 2004. The CfE represented a narrative shift of great magnitude in its radical departure from previous educational practices in Scotland. It is a curriculum that prioritises a developmental rather than a knowledge-based approach to education. It emphasises pedagogical agency and teachers as developers of the curriculum. Furthermore, it embraces more overtly student-focused language and manoeuvres students to develop in line with its Four Capacities in Young People: Confident Individuals, Successful Learners, Responsible Citizens, and Effective Contributors.

While the implementation of the CfE has certainly had some positive results, two recent studies suggest there is some cause for concern. A 2014 UNESCO International Bureau of Education report showed that there was "a strong link between social background and educational outcomes" (UNESCO I., 2014); thereby linking attainment levels at school to social exclusion. This would imply that school does not challenge the disadvantages faced by children outside school. Furthermore, a 2015 OECD study suggested that among other challenges "Liking school drops sharply among secondary students and reported

belonging in school among Scottish teenagers has dropped since 2003" (OECD, 2015). The OECD report suggests that Scotland "create a new narrative for the Curriculum for Excellence" (OECD, 2015). In this piece, I would like to expand on exactly what is missing generally and from an education for peace sense, analyse how a formal review and recommendation might be conducted.

#### What is Education for Peace?

#### Peace and Peacebuilding

To understand peace education and the role that it plays in the improvement of the CfE and therefore Scotland's understanding and embodiment of peaceful values, it is necessary to define peace and subsequently peacebuilding. Over time, we have come to discern between negative peace and positive peace. Galtung defines "negative peace" as the absence of direct violence and "positive peace" as the absence of direct and indirect (structural and cultural) violence, as shown by the presence of social justice, equity and harmonious social relationships (Galtung, 2011). While Galtung's definition makes great strides in providing a holistic definition of peace, its sociological nature neglects the psychological and spiritual dimension of "inner peace" a state of being which is often affected by conflict (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). Inner peace can play an important role in many of the processes we associate with peacebuilding such as conflict transformation, healing, and reconciliation. Clarke-Habibi suggests that "inner peace" is a psychological or spiritual state of well-being resulting from self-reflection and a mature set of ethical values (Clarke-Habibi, 2018). It is this "inner peace" in combination with "positive peace" that Kazumagic-Kafedzic believes represents a fuller understanding of both the collective and the individualistic nature of peace and its associated processes (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). Bajaj suggests that the structural analysis of the concepts of positive and negative peace is one of the core tenets of the education for peace field (Bajaj, 2008). They add, however, that other elements include the ideas that 1) the process of education can impart social goods, such as the skills and values needed for social justice and 2) the acquirement of these social goods can engender students to become agents of promoting peace.

Peacebuilding refers to a broad range of strategies designed to strengthen aspects of peace and support structural changes aimed at long-term peace, justice, and reconciliation (Van Brabant, 2010). Peacebuilding must be approached proactively and with an emphasis on acting for social change, furthermore, the methods that teachers use when delivering education for peace must be reflected in the values embedded within the curriculum that they teach (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). Hajir (2021) suggests that the interdisciplinary nature of peacebuilding often puts disciplines at odds with how best to pursue peace, leading to a muddying of the ideal process. They suggest that no single disciplinary approach would be adequate for peacebuilding; and that respect and collaboration must be promoted so that the nuanced nature of human needs can be fully understood. Interestingly, the interdisciplinary nature of the CfE is considered to be one of its main strengths.

#### **Education for Peace**

Having very briefly touched on a definition of peace and peacebuilding, it is now possible to understand the role of education for peace in these processes. Kazumagic-Kafedzic suggests that education for peace aims to give individuals and communities the knowledge, values, and skills required to collaborate on problem-solving for building more just, inclusive, and peaceful societies (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). Furthermore, education for peace hopes to lay the foundations for the non-repetition of historical atrocities, and the building of trust between former enemies to build a shared future (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). Fundamentally, education for peace recognises that it is not just what happens in the classroom that affects our notions of peace and our approaches to it, but instead, our education at a structural level. Issues like quality, access, and governance all play a role in the education that we intake, as such, it is in every aspect of education that we must implement education for peace.

To arrive at our contemporary definition of education for peace, our conceptualisation of the notion has evolved alongside conflict and our responses to it. Kazumagic-Kafedzic suggests that there have been 7 main influences on peace education theory and its practice (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023):

- 1. World wars
- 2. Gandhian non-violence and the civil rights movement

- 3. Liberation theology
- 4. environmental movement
- 5. Alternative conflict and mediation movement
- 6. Mental health and social healing movement
- 7. Critical race theory and the decolonisation movement

They suggest that each of these influences has shifted the paradigm by which we understand and pursue peace.

Similarly, Wintersteiner suggests that the discourse around peace education has grown from three questions (Wintersteiner, 2008):

- 1. What is peace?
- 2. What is the role of peace education in wider peacebuilding strategies?
- 3. What should be the contents and methods of peace education?

To which Kazumagic-Kafedzic proposes adding:

4. What stage of conflict is the context experiencing and how can education best respond to the forms of conflict and violence that are present?

From this, we can see that education for peace has evolved significantly since its conception. Now it represents the understanding that a true paradigm shift towards a culture of peace requires a level of cultural education and a sense of unlearning our embedded, systemic beliefs. To this end, many organisations such as UNESCO, have pushed for education for peace to be introduced formally and non-formally in education (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023).

Some scholars consider a culture change to be too nebulous for education for peace to challenge (Novelli, Cardozo, & Smith, 2019), therefore arguing that comprehensive attitudinal changes must be achieved alongside policy changes. From this one might imagine that the goal of peace education becomes a shift in policies towards a more sustainable practice of social justice.

(Novelli, Cardozo, & Smith, 2019) advance the idea of a sustainable peacebuilding system built upon entire education systems rather than just classrooms. (This is touched on by

another Visualising Peace team member, Lia da Giau, <u>in this blog</u>.) They propose the 4R framework, a system of key transformations necessary for sustainable peace:

- 1. redistribution
- 2. recognition
- 3. representation
- 4. reconciliation

This central understanding of this framework is that inequalities and injustice are important for understanding the cause of conflict and that addressing them is necessary to create sustainable peace (Novelli, Cardozo, & Smith, 2019). Embedding this framework in an education for peace program requires that the education system and sector are viewed critically and sensitively regarding conflict and that changes are made to curricula, instruction, education governance, institutional cultures, and policies.

Novelli recognises the relationship between the language used to describe conflict and the language used to inflict it. Thus, proposing that great care be taken when building a dialect by which to describe peace education and peacebuilding processes. Furthermore, they address the interconnected nature of their language model, noting that each stage may be reinforcing or conflictive. A policy that may benefit one stage of the model may detract from another. They propose that the 4R model be used as an approach by which to design and structure projects and inform the choices made when doing so.

## Education for Peace in a formal setting

Despite resources on peace education being available in multiple languages a systematic approach must be taken to make this philosophy mainstream. Change in policy and curricula is necessary for a sustainable change to occur. This idea, however, has been met with resistance (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023). The approach to education for peace comes from many different worldviews, and theories, as such, the principles and actionable points have become incoherent and inconsistent. Furthermore, each context requires a tailor-made approach to implementation and programming, which is inherently challenging and resource-demanding. While we have many peace education programs, that share a values-informed educational approach, it is a lack of specificity that raises a challenge. Salomon, 2002 furthers this idea by elucidating the fact that many approaches to education can be called peace education and posits that we must show more disciplinary rigour and professionalise the field. They suggest that in this professionalisation effort, the competencies, methods, and tools required from and for peace educators must be defined and implemented into teacher education programs. Finally, (Harris, 2011) suggests that for each specific context of violence, there must be a specific method by which to inform education for peace. Implying both that each curriculum should be unique and that curricula should evolve in reaction to the concurrent demand.

## Why should we implement education for peace and why use the national curriculum?

There is a compelling argument for the implementation of peace education movements globally. As of 2011, 50% of the world's out-of-school children lived in conflict-affected countries, this is a rise from the 42% seen in 2008 (Children Still Battling to Go to School, 2013). Efforts to build peace in countries affected by conflict have become essential, a 2011 study found that "nearly 60% of all countries that suffered one civil war experienced conflict again" (Walter, 2010) confirming the "conflict trap" (Collier & Sambanis, 2002). As part of a holistic approach to a country's social, cultural, and political understanding and implementation of peace-building efforts, education can play a significant role. Therefore a systematic approach to education for peace is warranted. UNESCO suggest that "full integration of education for peace into the national education system, including within the overall planning process, may increase the probability of successful implementation of education for peace initiatives." (UNESCO, 2015)

Scotland occupies a unique spot in the global setting. It is a broadly peaceful country, yet it is challenged by divides over free speech, climate issues, and nuclear weapons storage. Despite its small size, it has some political influence (independently and as part of the UK) in global politics. Therefore, as a society with only mild threats to peace yet tangible sway on global initiatives, Scotland has a responsibility to truly commit to understanding peace. Furthermore, given the criticism that the CfE has received in light of its intangibility and implementation (Priestley & Minty, 2013), the lack of education for peace principles

within the CfE (Standish & Joyce, 2016), and the development of a new examination board following COVID-19 (SQA, n.d.), now seems the perfect time for Scotland to take stock of its commitment to education.

#### Analysis of the CfE

In the effort to drive the argument that Scotland should consider the implementation of education for peace, I hope to show that the CfE maintains some flaws. Through the reimplementation of the CfE with education for peace principles, Scotland has the opportunity to solve both problems at once. The CfE can be analysed through three mediums: curriculum, learning, and pedagogy. In this analysis, I aim to show the specific challenges that the CfE faces and to provide some suggestions for their resolution.

#### Analysis of the CfE - Curriculum

The basing of the CfE around four key competencies (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors) is a concept that while new to Scotland, mirrors other movements in curricula development (Priestley & Minty, 2013). These competencies have been alleged to have a strong economic and civic angle and have been heavily influenced by input from supra-national organisations such as the (OECD, 2005) and the (European Union, 2006). Furthermore, some authors have been overtly critical of the language behind these capacities with Biesta condemning them for their focus on social responsibility rather than democratic citizenship (Biesta, 2008) and Watson going as far as suggesting that the capacities have overtones of indoctrination - teaching children what they should be rather than explaining what they are expected to know (Watson, 2010).

Structurally the CfE is based on outcomes split into distinct linear levels. This is in line with global trends and continues the pattern set out by Scotland's previous curriculum. However, the CfE is less specific and prescriptive in its content, covering a longer phase of each pupil's education. Furthermore, the CfE seeks to specify both the outcome and the experience that a student must undergo to meet the criteria under the Experiences and Outcomes movement (Priestley & Minty, 2013).

Priestley and Minty elucidate the natural tension between the four capacities and the Experiences and Outcomes models of teaching. They suggest that the Four Capacities provides a model based on the development of processes and the specification of content to achieve curricular aims. Whereas they propose that Experiences and Outcomes offers an audit approach to curriculum development and potentially engenders a culture of strategic compliance (Priestley & Minty, 2013). They propose that this dichotomy undermines the enactment of the CfE as a groundbreaking curriculum and instead encourages a more tokenistic approach which maintains and justifies existing practices under the guise of a new curriculum (Priestley & Minty, 2013).

# Analysis of the CfE - Learning

The CfE could also claim that it is distinctive in its philosophy around learning itself, both concerning the balance between skills and knowledge and the centrality of the learner. However, Priestley and Minty suggest that it is fairly typical in its desire to be less prescriptive in its content (Priestley & Minty, 2013). This less prescriptive turn in curricula represents a shift to address the increasingly demanding, evolving world and workplace. Workers and citizens must be able to have the skills to acquire new knowledge quickly as existing knowledge becomes redundant.

The CfE embodies this curricular shift in two ways: an explicit shift from the teaching of knowledge to the teaching of skills and the centring of the student at the heart of schooling.

There are a few who voice reservations towards the overt shift from knowledge to skills and the increasing interdisciplinary focus: (Young, 2010) questions whether skills can be developed without certain contextual knowledge and experience in the domains in which they would be used, (Young & Muller, 2010) suggest that the blurring of knowledge between subjects and into everyday knowledge may risk teachers missing fundamental conceptual steps that disadvantage students. However, many welcome this turn, this is exemplified by Whitty, 2010 who posits that knowledge is not the same as school subjects, which are not the same as academic disciplines.

The CfE also puts its learners at the heart of its curriculum and maintains personalisation and choice of the learner as a core value. This move is accompanied by a more acute belief and reliance on active learning, a term that the CfE mentions often. However, one challenge with

this angle is that the CfE requires teachers to engage pupils in active learning without providing any learning theory by which teachers can build these skills (Priestley & Minty, 2013).

## Analysis of the CfE - Pedagogy

The CfE puts teachers at the front and centre of the development of the curriculum at a school level and also more widely as agents of change (Priestley & Minty, 2013). While this is in line with a global focus on the role of pedagogy in education (Kasumagic-Kafedzic & Clarke-Habibi, 2023) it has become highly problematic in the Scottish system. CfE policy seems to focus on raising individual agentic behaviour without addressing the structural, cultural, and material issues that may enhance or restrain teacher agency (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2012). Teachers cannot become more agentic just by being told to do so. Research from the University of Glasgow (Baumfield, Hulme, Livingston, & Menter, 2010) highlights some challenges faced by teachers when making the most of the autonomy provided by the CfE. Accountability practices - such as attainment data and internal inspections - that accompany the CfE despite its focus on autonomy, may lead to cultures of performativity within schools (Cowie, Taylor, & Croxford, 2007).

Having explored the foundations of the CfE and its contemporary nature in the broad education movement, it is important to explore some areas where the CfE may have gone awry. The first of these relates directly to the aforementioned philosophy and is a divergence between policy and teachers' understanding of the CfE.

One way to conceptualise the disconnect between teachers' understanding of the CfE and policy is by analysing how teachers' first order engagement compares with their second order engagement.

- 1. First order engagement: How the CfE fits with the teachers' explicit beliefs around education and how openly teachers welcome the philosophy of the CfE
- Second order engagement: How the CfE fits with teachers' implicit beliefs around learning and education and whether they have fully engaged with the underlying principles of the curriculum.

Teachers can welcome the philosophies of the CfE while struggling to implement the CfE successfully because of implicit tensions between their core beliefs and the core principles of the CfE.

Regarding first order engagement, teachers respond well to the big ideas around the CfE (Priestley & Minty, 2013). Priestley and Minty give examples of teachers interviewing and professing the following messages:

- 1. The CfE tied in with their own ideas and beliefs about education
- 2. They appreciated the flexibility brought by the CfE and that it had rejuvenated their teaching
- 3. That their method of teaching in years prior was justified by the CfE's implementation
- 4. The CfE was about new approaches to teaching and learning rather than content
- 5. That the CfE was about new approaches to teaching and learning *and* content which incited anxiety
- 6. Too much good practice had been thrown out due to the wooliness of the documents

Priestley and Minty suggest that teacher perception of the good of the CfE depends on their views on teacher autonomy. Furthermore, between teachers, there was variation in how much autonomy had been achieved as a result of the CfE (Priestley & Minty, 2013). Teachers gave the following sentiments:

- 1. The lack of prescription was welcome, especially compared to the prescriptive nature of the previous curriculum
- 2. The CfE accorded greater autonomy to pupils, enabling them to tailor the teaching to their own needs
- 3. They moved from imparters of knowledge to facilitators of learning

Despite these positive views on the curriculum, Priestley and Minty found that teachers are struggling to embody this newfound autonomy through a lack of confidence (Priestley & Minty, 2013). They suggest that while teachers welcomed the move away from the previous curriculum, they felt that the CfE had moved too far in the opposite direction.

Regarding the second order engagement, while most teachers explicitly broadly welcomed the philosophy behind the CfE, Priestley and Minty found that second order engagement proved to be more problematic (Priestley & Minty, 2013). They found that teachers had little opportunity to make sense of the new curriculum. Furthermore, they question whether the assumptions that the CfE makes around learning and knowledge are in line with teachers' implicit theories (Priestley & Minty, 2013). The CfE promotes constructivist views of learning, that students should learn through active engagement and experience, however, this research suggests conversely that many secondary school teachers maintain transmissionist views of knowledge and learning despite the new curriculum (Priestley & Minty, 2013).

Priestley and Minty highlight tensions between first order engagement and second order engagement in the following key areas:

- 1. Inter-disciplinary learning and specialist subjects
- a. Despite being in favour of inter-disciplinary

learning teachers were often: underconfident to teach outwith their speciality, concerned that students would still be examined on individual subjects, and worried that their subject would be lost in the move to inter-disciplinarity.

2. Skills and knowledge

a. Whilst teachers also believed in teaching skills to pupils, many teachers: still saw themselves as transmitters of knowledge, were scared to leave the method of teaching that they knew, and that knowledge was being watered down in favour of less useful soft skills.

3. Assessment

a. This was the greatest area of tension for teachers who expressed: fear regarding uncertainty of what was being asked of them, misunderstanding of assessment in relation to the CfE, difficulties moving from the previous prescriptive curriculum to the CfE, that every frame of reference for working towards exams had been removed, and that the development of assessment for the CfE felt like an afterthought.

Fundamentally, this research points to a few lessons that are directly applicable to the CfE and by proxy apply to new curricula that are being developed and implemented. It points to a greater need for elucidation, tangible language, and consistent training around the philosophy of a given curriculum. A fuller understanding of the key tenets of the CfE is required for its successful use in schools. Whilst the agent first nature of the CfE would have the responsibility land on the shoulders of the teachers, this research suggests that there is a lack of clarity in the policies surrounding the CfE, suggesting a need for clearer description on a government and organisational level. Finally, Priestley and Minty call for Structural, cultural, and material changes that allow for the improvement of the ecology in which teachers can become agents of change (Priestley & Minty, 2013).

These lessons around consistent, meaningful, and tangible messaging are important to bring to the review and redevelopment of the CfE.

# Peace in the CfE

Having looked at some general critiques of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence it is clear that a review of sorts is needed. To this end, I propose that we include an analysis of where Scotland lacks peace education to consider how to fit that into a review. Having briefly discussed education for peace, in the following section I would like to analyse how well the CfE embodies this concept.

I will be drawing significantly from a 2016 paper on Peace in the CfE (Standish & Joyce, 2016). The Peace Education Curricular Analysis (PECA) Project is a global analysis that investigates national curricula for peace education qualities, it began in 2014 with the data collection from several mandatory national curricula. The PECA project mirrors specialty organizations such as the OECD, which is involved in the critique of the CfE, in examining educational curricula to assess particular qualities. It aims to present a baseline peace education analysis by which all other international curricular statements can be judged.

The PECA project follows a three-pronged theoretical framework to conceptualise peace education:

1. Recognising Violence

a. Violence is considered an intentional, harmful, and avoidable human behaviour. This element considers three forms of violence: cultural violence, structural violence, and direct violence

2. Nonviolent conflict transformation

a. The PECA project codes tools and techniques such as dialogue, mediation, and collaboration, as examples of nonviolent conflict transformation. When looking for these

tools, they are coded whether or not they actively are used in the specific conflict transformation context.

3. Positive Peace

a. Peace zones - areas free from violence

b. Peace bond - positive, kind, empathetic relationships

c. Social Justice - fairness and/or equality

d. Eco Mind - Harmonious relationship between humanity and nature

e. Link mind - a perception of interconnectivity and interdependency

f. Gender mind - an awareness of gender as a critical aspect of understanding peace and conflict

g. Resilience - the ability to manage personal, social, or environmental challenges

h. Wellbeing - health, wellness, and responsibility for others

i. Prevention - the knowledge of how to stop violence before it starts.

The PECA Project is underpinned by three theoretical constructs:

1. Transmission belt theory

a. This suggests that mandatory education systems, i.e. national curricula, are cultural transmission belts which impart wisdom, values, and ideals to a student. These transmitted aspects are reflective of social and cultural values.

2. Curriculum theory

a. This theory suggests that the aims and outcomes of education should reflect the idea that what it means to "be educated" is impacted by past, present, and future concerns. As such, these aims can be captured for analysis and evaluation.

3. Peace Education Theory

a. The goal of education should be the eradication of all forms of violence and the introduction and sustaining of positive peace.

(Standish & Joyce, 2016) use third paradigm research to locate indicators of values and ideals in curricular statements, and use content analysis to gather both a qualitative and quantitative account of this data. This data analysis is broken down into the three sections mentioned above and includes relevant quotations that are expressive of the various themes. Essentially, PECA proposes that a curriculum's peace education potential can be judged through the number of instances that terms within its search are found within the curriculum. As such, by counting and analysing relevant quotes, we can grasp how effective the CfE is at Education for Peace.

For each aforementioned prong of the theoretical framework, quotation analysis was undertaken. The results were presented as follows:

1. Recognition of violence

a. 12 references that recognise violence: 6 references to structural violence, 2 references to cultural violence, and 4 relating to direct violence

2. Nonviolent Conflict Transformation Tools

a. 128 references to Nonviolent Tools for Conflict Transformation: 70 references to collaboration, 54 references to dialogue, and 2 relating to mediation

3. Positive Peace Elements

a. 421 references to Elements of Positive Peace: 291 references to wellbeing, 55
references to peace bond, 25 references to social justice, 17 to resilience, 16 to peace zone, 2
to link mind, and 0 to prevention, eco mind, and gender mind.

Analysis of Recognition of Violence within the CfE

Standish and Joyce suggest that Cultural Violence is made up of mindsets and worldviews that legitimise other forms of violence within society (Standish & Joyce, 2016). Take for example racism, which leads to discrimination and then to physical violence. Cultural violence may also act on invisible forms of identity and can therefore legitimise violence against people based on gender, sexuality, religion etc. In Scotland, this is especially important given its low multiculturalism. According to this paper, the CfE communicates a theological perspective that can be perceived as a commitment to a singular truth (Standish & Joyce, 2016). A dogmatic approach can result in cultural violence when solitary ideologies are pedestalised over other values. Standish and Joyce note that there is an awareness of cultural and ontological diversity, however, caveat it with the fact that the document also mentions evangelism. They suggest that the CfE could be clearer in recognising the implicit tension and conflictual ways that evangelism may affect those not of the Christian faith in Scotland (Standish & Joyce, 2016).

This paper suggests that the CfE emphasises respect for diversity and cultural traditions, has an explicit concern for the expression of practical values, and highlights desirable ideals and attitudes. In line with The Four Capacities, the CfE makes reference to citizenship and the duties of a responsible citizen 13 times. This focus on citizenship seems wholly good, however, should a citizen lose sight of their responsibility for and value of other people because of their allegiance, then citizenship acts as a tool for conflict. This risk is not discussed in the CfE.

The CfE does not touch on the inherent potential danger and violence of ideologies and mindsets. As violent ideologies are specifically unmentioned, the space for discussion of peaceful ideologies and the combating of violent ideologies is also left unspoken. This paper exemplifies Christianity, it provides many positive benefits such as peace and joy yet also provides many conflictual aspects such as guilt and fear, the lack of coverage on such ideological issues undermines the work the CfE does on wellness. Should the CfE tackle issues around ideology, it could emphasise the value of peaceful aspects of ideologies and show that CfE's core tenets help combat the negative aspects of ideologies.

### Analysis of Conflict Transformation Tools in the CfE

The CfE strongly encourages collaboration, yet the nature and processes by which students might engage with and learn collaboration skills are unclear. In this sense, the CfE would benefit from teaching the skills of collaboration rather than just implying that they are used. The CfE should directly provide materials that educate students not only on methods to collaborate effectively but also on the value of doing so. This paper suggests that the CfE should expand on the repertoire of non-violence to include and encourage non-violent actions and ways of being rather than just using non-violent acts from the past as a way to teach specific instances of non-violence (Standish & Joyce, 2016).

## Analysis of Positive Peace Elements in the CfE

Scotland has a very strong emphasis on wellbeing in its curriculum, as Standish & Joyce, 2016, and this connects to other principles such as social justice, peace bond, and peace zone. However, the CfE shows no awareness of prevention, eco mind, or gender mind. This is particularly interesting considering its progressive values on both environmentalism and gender equality. The CfE should espouse the view that the environment is not inferior to humanity (Standish & Joyce, 2016) in an effort to balance this lack of information, and

should further promote the awareness of gender as an important facet by which to understand the world and relationships in which we participate.

Recommendations (taken from Standish & Joyce, 2016):

# Recognition of violence

- Further acknowledge the presence of violence in a variety of forms
- Define conflict, violence, and non-violence
- Use language that describes violence and violent events as harmful

Nonviolent conflict transformation

- Develop learning platforms that model nonviolent conflict transformation
- Highlight that conflict between humans is normal
- Develop a curriculum that explicitly assists each student in the development of collaborative intelligence and communication
- Increase the quantity of tools or techniques that transform conflict without using violence

# Positive Peace

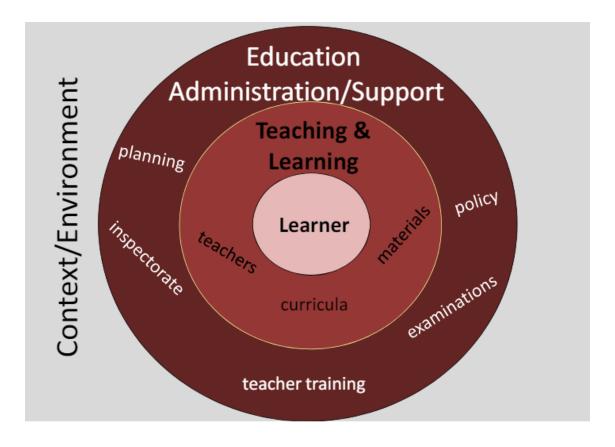
- Establish the importance of a harmonious connection between humanity and nature
- Support students to understand ways of stopping violence before it starts
- Encourage awareness of the importance of gender for understanding in the human world
- Help students create coping mechanisms for the circumstances of life
- Emphasize that everything is connected and that nothing exists in isolation
- Define peace according to concepts of interconnection, balance, collaborative intelligence, moment-by-moment awareness and natural interpersonal adjustment

The CfE recognises all of the kinds of violence that the PECA project was looking for. It strongly demonstrates a commitment to the values of collaboration and dialogue, but does so minimally for mediation. Furthermore, Positive peace is represented well through the aspect of wellbeing, however, the other eight aspects are represented minimally or not at all. It leaves all three notions of nonviolent tools for conflict transformation undefined, and there is plenty of room for a reflexive turn of the CfE to analyse the inherent violence within the curriculum. On that note, it is clear that the CfE holds many elements of peace education yet there is plenty of work to be done in creating a holistic education for peace curriculum for Scotland.

# What are the practical steps to implementing education for peace in a national curriculum?

Having thoroughly analysed two vastly different curriculum reviews it becomes clear that a holistic change is needed in the CfE. This is further emphasised by what I believe is an emergence of the importance of education for peace.

UNESCO recommends a system-wide and rights-based approach to promoting education for peace (UNESCO, 2015). This rights-based approach is the idea that the pillars of human rights are reflected throughout the education system. Noting that each part of the education system plays a different role in affecting the formation of the student. The curriculum plays a role, as does the education culture within a country. An updated approach to education in Scotland should reflect and underpin a drive for peace.



# Figure 1. UNESCO's "The Learning System" (UNESCO, 2015)

Mirroring the CfE's learner-centric approach to education the UNESCO guidance suggests that we view the education system as shown in Figure 1. The learner should be at the centre of the education system, followed by the school level, and the educational system level, which is all situated within its specific environment. This is a concept that the CfE already embodies, but further elucidates the importance not only of a curriculum edit but also a narrative shift in how we undertake education.

Furthermore, they recommend that a "conflict-sensitive" approach be taken to planning education for peace and conflict prevention (UNESCO, 2015). This approach realises that education systems themselves can contribute, either subconsciously through poor wording of the ethos, or directly through inequality of access, to conflict. However, it also recognises that education can contribute to peace proactively through teaching nonviolent conflict transformation, respect for diversity and addressing historically unequal access to education through policy.

I would like to briefly touch on the educational planning process as exemplified by UNESCO and touch on some elements that apply directly to Scotland.

**Educational Planning Process** 

1. Situation analysis/ Sector diagnosis

a. This stage involves a broad look at the education sector and its performance. Results are typically split into categories such as access, quality, equity, and management. While this section looks specifically at the education sector, it also considers national and international strategies that may impact the education sector. It should also conduct a conflict and vulnerability analysis that assesses the conflict risks facing the system. This section is important as its consideration will include the identification of areas which may exacerbate conflict.

2. Policy review

a. Policy regarding specific issues facing the educational sector may be implemented through a review of current policy. Should children have unequal access to education a social inclusion policy may then be put in place in the final stage.

3. Identification of objectives and design of priority programmes

a. Based on the sector diagnosis, certain objectives within the new plan for the education sector may be prioritised. When these key objectives have been identified, specific programmes for achieving them can be designed and implemented.

4. Costing and Financing Frameworks

a. For a tangible, sound educational plan, a realistic and accurate estimation of costs must be made. For education for peace, this would likely include the cost of teacher retraining and the associated new materials. Once the budget is created it must be compared to the allowance given by the Ministry of Finance. Any shortfalls in the budget must be sorted through the seeking of funding from external sources.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

a. The monitoring and evaluation plan should be developed alongside the review and account for any areas that will likely pose challenges. This stage is critical as it allows for the assessment of the new plan, and the scope for the development of contingency plans if it is failing in certain areas.

# **Situation Analysis and Sector Diagnosis**

A Review of Existing National Development Strategies

Scotland's National Performance Framework (Scottish Government).

Scotland aims to develop in the following ways:

- 1. create a more successful country.
- 2. give opportunities to all people living in Scotland.
- 3. increase the wellbeing of people living in Scotland.
- 4. create sustainable and inclusive growth.
- 5. reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress.

Based on a set of values which include:

- 1. treat all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion.
- 2. respect the rule of law.
- 3. act in an open and transparent way.

Scotland's Government hopes that these values in turn lead to the following National Outcomes that:

- 1. reflect the values and aspirations of the people of Scotland.
- 2. are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- 3. help to track progress in reducing inequality.

The National outcomes are that people:

- 1. grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.
- 2. live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
- 3. are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.
- 4. have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- 5. are well-educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
- 6. value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment.
- 7. have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone.

- 8. are healthy and active.
- 9. respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- 10. are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally.
- 11. tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

Scotland's National Performance Framework does not explicitly mention key peacebuilding issues such as conflict, peace, or justice. However, it does mention issues of equality, environment, diversity, resilience, and safety. This all points to a national framework that aligns with the values of education for peace. An education for peace curriculum would certainly enhance all of the positive values mentioned above, but would also teach Scottish students the value of being a country that actively promotes peace - which is unmentioned.

## Vulnerability and Conflict Analysis

- Teacher Training: As education for peace is not a priority in Scotland at the moment, no teachers have been directly trained in its methodology. Some of Scotland's CfE is in line with Education for Peace and therefore teachers have received some training on transferable skills. However, one of the main critiques of the CfE in its current form is the lack of consistent, quality training of teachers (Priestley & Minty, 2013), as such, even those skills that are transferable from this iteration of the CfE have not been trained satisfactorily.
- 2. Curriculum: The curriculum has been reviewed by external sources as mentioned above. We have general recommendations from the OECD and Priestley and Minty and specific education for peace recommendations from Standish and Joyce. These reviews suggest that the curriculum in its current state is not optimal for peace education and that more generally a deeper understanding of the ethos behind the CfE is required for it to become effective. As such teacher training policy should be reviewed and specific teacher training curricula should be composed. Furthermore, the curriculum should be amended to include more language that is in line with education for peace models, both generally and at an ethos level.
- 3. Examination system: The challenge that the CfE faces with examination is their testing of knowledge. The CfE claims to be a skills-based curriculum, however, this is not reflected in the examinations. Therefore, teachers resort to transmitting knowledge rather than facilitating learning as they want their pupils to succeed in assessments. In

the same vein, no concepts related to peace and conflict prevention have been incorporated into the examination system. Should the CfE wish to maintain its examination system it should incorporate these themes into its testing repertoire. However, it seems that the examinations required by the CfE should be developed to reflect the ethos of the curriculum as highlighted in this post-COVID-19 OECD report (Stobart, 2021).

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Scotland has stopped the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) and has removed Scotland from the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), meaning that the only international survey of Scotland's educational standards that Scotland are involved in is PISA (Reform Scotland, 2022). This is all to say that Scotland has a poor track record of testing the attainment of its students. Scotland does engage in regular curriculum monitoring by the OECD, however, Paterson gives a damning indictment of their reports suggesting they give partial evidence, partial reporting, and partial knowledge (Paterson, 2021).

Analysis of Educational Data with a Conflict-Sensitive Perspective

An analysis of Educational Data should consider:

1. Access

a. Disaggregated enrolment and intake ratios: Scotland has an attainment gap based on the socioeconomic status of its pupils (Mitchell, 2021). While it is combatting this (Education Scotland, 2024), further analysis should be done to determine exactly which geographic areas are most affected by poor attendance. This approach can elucidate inequities within the education system.

i. This approach should be expanded to include facets such as gender, gender identity, sexuality, level of the system, ethnic background etc. This must be handled with great care given the sensitivity of the issue.

b. Availability of Schooling: by type and geographic location. The location of secondary and tertiary institutions may highlight long-standing disparities in the accessibility of education.

2. Quality

a. Exam results and student attainment: A disaggregated analysis of this area would show where Scotland has been challenged specifically. This would indicate both disparities in

results and equality of access. Scotland is currently undergoing an exam board change (SQA, n.d.), as such it is the perfect time to assess where geographically or societally students were previously struggling with exams.

b. Distribution of Qualified Teachers: Likewise this analysis should be conducted throughout the country and through levels of the education system. If the "best" teachers are located in the most affluent areas this is no doubt a cyclical problem that leads to some of the CfE's attainment challenges.

c. Language of Instruction: Despite Scotland being a very monocultural society, there are undoubtedly those who speak English as their second language. Inevitably, this fact disadvantages those children who are learning a language that is not familiar to them. An analysis of this aspect could show where to direct efforts under a new plan.

d. Student-classroom and student-teacher ratios: Once again this statistic, analysed geographically can elucidate disparities in educational access and should be done to as fine a level as possible. It is important to note, especially given the rural nature of some of Scotland's outermost islands, that a low student-teacher ratio is not necessarily a good thing. It may indicate a rural place, or even a reluctance of parents to enroll their children in school.

3. Management and Administration

a. Education Expenditures per Student: Analysing the distribution of education expenditure, disaggregated by level within the system, is also a useful way to determine inequalities. Importantly, if a government is trying to redress issues caused by historically disadvantaged regions, certain areas may already be receiving more funding.

Review Education Reports written by Researchers or External Actors

\*See previous sections

# SWOT Analysis

This SWOT analysis will be conducted for Education for Peace in Scotland.

Strengths	Weaknesses
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Internal	Scotland's Education System has a	Historic weaknesses in
	strong ethos of developing students	implementation, material provision,
	sustainably towards values as	and training.
		and training.
	opposed to holders of knowledge.	Teachers feel underconfident in
	Scotland maintains a large focus on	delivering a course that is skills-first
	Wellbeing in the CfE, which is a	as opposed to knowledge-first.
	core tenet of education for peace.	
		Teachers and administrators are not
	Relatively, Scotland's curriculum is	familiar with Education for Peace
	already peace promoting as is its	programs.
	culture.	
		The CfE does not consider many
		imperative Education for Peace
		concepts.
		Scotland has poor reference to Gender
		disparities in its curriculum.
		dispartites in its currentum.
	Opportunities	Threats
External	With a review of the examination	Currently Scotland is in a place of
	board underway, Scotland is poised	slight political instability.
	to make changes.	
		One cultural group dominates
	Scotland has the chance to learn	Scotland's population.
	from mistakes with the	Soutland may continue to manitar its
	implementation of the CfE.	Scotland may continue to monitor its
	There is abundant literature anound	progression poorly, due to its absence
	There is abundant literature around	from global attainment standards.
	both the challenges that the CfE	
	faces and education for peace that	
	Scotland can draw on.	

## **Policy Formation/Review**

Scotland already has a strong focus on global citizenship and the promotion of equality as seen in its International Development Strategy (Scottish Government, 2016). It aims to fight against global poverty, inequality, and injustice and promote sustainable development.

Scotland's education system should further reflect this priority for peace and equality. A review should be undertaken regarding which policies within its education system can be altered to do so. This review should consider: the philosophy behind the CfE, syllabuses for subjects, time allocation, cross-curriculum learning, classroom resources and support materials, teacher training, assessment of student learning, and hidden curriculums.

New policy should be written on curriculum that considers the recommendations made and critiques given in this article. It must be clear and unambiguous in its writing, potentially removing the student focused language in favour of clarity, and should be readily accessible to stakeholders. As we have seen recruitment and training of teachers should be a key focus as should a consistent and revitalised inspection criteria, to avoid mistakes made in the CfE.

Elements of Education for Peace should be integrated across the curriculum. Although some subjects will take the brunt of responsibility for learning these principles, all subjects must make significant reference to Education for peace; this includes maths and sciences. (UNESCO, 2015) recommend that as well as requiring all subjects to make reference to Education for Peace Principles, specific content should be included in the syllabuses and teaching resources of selected subjects.

The advantages of this model of integration are:

- 1. No structural change of the curriculum is necessary, Education for Peace principles can be implemented into the existing curriculum model.
  - 1. This offers an opportunity for the re-implementation of the CfE with a greater focus on training, materials, and understanding of teh core principles.
- 2. Students perceive Education for Peace as a normal and legitimate part of their learning as it is a consistently reinforced overarching principle of the curriculum.
- 3. The curriculum provides realistic context in which subject and skill learning can be applied.

All of these advantages align with what the CfE is already trying to do.

The disadvantages of this model are:

- 1. It requires very well trained teachers who can identify opportunities to link Education for Peace to their classroom activities.
  - 1. A retraining of teachers in both CfE and Education for Peace principles offers a chance to meet this challenge head on
- 2. It is often difficult to monitor whether all elements of the 'curriculum' have been given appropriate time and effort
  - Scotland's poor track record in monitoring could be ammended to increase monitoring in general and to implement a body for the monitoring of this facet.
- 3. The key messages of Education for Peace may not be delivered consistently due to priorities of different teachers within different faculties.
- 4. Assessment of student achievement in Education for Peace is often of secondary importance to the achievement of subject learning outcomes.
  - 1. Scotland has the chance to engage with this opportunity during the reimagining of its examination board.

Furthermore, consideration on which curriculum model should be undertaken. The spiral model is popular, however Ireland and Mouthaan found benefit in both the Lattice Model and the City Model (Ireland & Mouthaan, 2020). They suggest that network models offer a more flexible approach to the sequencing and scope of learning objectives, and that learners have more decision-making power within these models. These models may align more closely with the ethos of the CfE, however, they suggest that the Spiral Model may also have benefits in subjects that are less well structured, despite its more common useage in structured subjects (Ireland & Mouthaan, 2020). As such, Ireland and Mouthaan suggest bridging the two different perspectives when considering future curriculum design.

In this effort, The Scottish Government may want to consider policy on the following:

- 1. Inclusive Education.
- 2. Provision of education for refugees.

- 3. Teacher training that provides sufficient skills in the CfE, nonviolent conflict prevention and transformation, and Education for Peace.
- 4. Teacher deployment policy that ensures the equitable deployment of teachers across geographical areas.
- Resource allocation policies. This will depend on the results of the disaggregated analysis findings and the historical oppression of certain ethnic or cultural groups in Scotland.

This policy formulation should be inclusive and involve educators, pupils, policymakers, and stakeholders from a variety of cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. To do otherwise would undermine the process and the embodiment of the values of Education for Peace.

# **Identification and Development of Priority Programmes**

In addition to a curriculum reform, it is important to consider priorities when implementing Education for Peace Values across an entire Education System. For Scotland these may include teacher performance and training, and system management and monitoring. I hope to elucidate some possible strategies to consider in these facets in the following section, however those amending the policy should not consider this either an exhaustive list of areas for development or strategies.

- 1. Teacher Training:
  - a. Strategies that give high priority to teachers from communities where the teacher-pupil ratio is already high.
  - b. The consideration of non-formal teacher training as costs associated with teacher training are high.
  - c. A flexible certificate system that allows teachers to remain within the system while upgrading their qualifications.
  - d. Recognition of the value of experienced teachers who have taught previous curricula for an extended period of time.
  - e. Teacher supervision and mentoring systems in line with previous warnings of tokenistic behaviours.

- f. Anonymous questions pages for teachers to express concerns and misunderstanding of the new curriculum.
- g. Training in philosophy, content, teaching, and assessment to ensure teachers feel confident delivering the curriculum.
- h. Training on hidden curricula and methods for improving school cultures of peace.
- 2. System Management and Monitoring
  - a. Allocations based on objective criteria and in accordance with efforts to reduce inequity.
  - b. Multi-stakeholder consultations throughout the implementation cycle as well as regular reviews
  - c. Strengthen accountability measures to ensure that resources are reaching their intended destination.

Having considered these suggestions, further priorities should be selected on the criteria of affordability, desirability, feasibility, and sustainability.

# **Costing and Financing**

We can consider costing to be the establishment of the unit costs of all education expenditure such as teachers and construction of classrooms, and financing to be the financial resources provided to support plan implementation (UNESCO, 2015). These must be considered in parallel as accurate costing is needed to determine gaps in financing. Furthermore, financing will play a role in which priorities are selected and pursued.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This is an area that has been previously criticised in the CfE (Paterson, 2021), as such it is imperative that future iterations of policy consider this area thoroughly. Traditional education indicators should be incorporated, such as the previous monitoring services that Scotland has abstained from participating in (Reform Scotland, 2022). Non-traditional objectives will require new indicators. These might measure the implementation of the new curriculum, school's ethos and changes in values, and attitudes and behaviours of learners.

## Summary

When considering the implementation of Education for Peace in an Education System, every step must be taken with great care, lest inequities and conflict be embedded within the system itself. Through a thoughtful, thorough system of implementation, this can be avoided. In this section I hope to have laid out a roadmap, based on research in previous sections, for how this may be considered for Scotland specifically.

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyse the CfE both for flaws and education for peace principles, to outline a broad idea of education for peace, and suggest some steps for the implementation of these principles within the education system and the curriculum itself.

It is clear that while Scotland has peaceful policy and a forward-looking curriculum, it is in need of some development. Through the implementation of education for peace and the reimplementation of the CfE embodying these principles, Scotland can amend the errors it has made with the CfE in its original form.

The Scottish Government should be considerate of language, teacher training, and consistent monitoring of outcomes throughout this process.

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