Peace education curriculum development in post-conflict contexts: Sierra Leone

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Abstract

Sierra Leone has suffered a ten-year civil war which only ceased in 2000. Some of the main education issues for the country are the destruction of the school system, the trauma suffered by children and the wider community, the need to re-integrate former combatants, who are themselves children, and the challenge of understanding the past and re-building a secure society.

In this workshop we will describe a World Bank project to develop an integrated (years 1 to 9) peace education curriculum for the Sierra Leone Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). The paper provides a context for the project by discussing some of the broader aspects of peace and peace education before addressing specific project management and materials development issues.

Key Words

peace education, Sierra Leone, curriculum development, conflict resolution

Introduction

This paper outlines a project to develop peace education curriculum materials (years 1 to 9) and related teacher training approaches for the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) in Sierra Leone on behalf of the World Bank. Curriculum Corporation, a leading national education publisher and project management company was contracted to deliver the project, and assembled a team comprising peace education and curriculum writing experts to deliver an integrated peace education kit suitable for use in formal and non formal education settings in Sierra Leone. Project activity took place from January to August 2002. The paper is divided into three parts, broadly mirroring the roles of respective team members:

• Peace and peace education;
• Project process and working in Sierra Leone; and
• Developing appropriate materials.

Part one – Peace and peace education (Dr Diane Bretherton)

What is peace?

The word for ‘peace’ in the English language is derived from the Latin ‘pax’. Peace in the Roman Empire meant a cessation in fighting as well as rule over subject races. A modern equivalent is found in definitions of peace through deterrence. This definition describes peace in terms of what it is not, rather than what it is. A child might graphically represent negative peace by first drawing a weapon of war, such as a rocket or bomb, and then placing a cross
over it. A limitation of this approach is that although there may be an absence of armed hostility, the foundations for the next war may be dug. For example, militaristic attitudes, the build-up of weapons, the glorification of heroic conquests in history and the use of enemy images or de-humanising stereotypes in text may provide fertile ground for even greater conflict in the future.

Peace researchers such as Galtung (1996) pointed to the need for a positive definition that describes peace in itself; in terms of the conditions that hold when a peaceful state is maintained and promoted. To draw out this concept of peace from children, the teacher might ask them to think of and share a moment of peace. The images of peace that arise from such an exercise could include people meeting and undertaking social activities together in the natural environment. Positive peace might be represented, for example, as a family picnic by the lake. Positive peace would entail the absence of militarisation and also the absence of what Galtung called structural violence, the inequalities and exclusions buried in social institutions. Our family picnic by the lake can be transformed into an image of war by the social exclusion or failure to share food with one family member. As a feminist Boulding (1996) emphasised the everydayness of war and peace: their presence not only in the summits of political leaders but also in the whole ecology of social relationships: the family, the school and the neighbourhood, as well as within and between nations.

More recent initiatives by the UN have stressed the idea of a culture of peace. The idea of culture introduces the notion of shared meanings and values, and diversity between different peoples of the world. It also creates a space for thinking of peace not just as the province of politicians and soldiers but also of ordinary people. It is not so much a peace that is kept, but a peace that is created. The idea of a culture of peace moves beyond the dualism of inner and outer peace by stressing the inner meaning that is inherent in the experience of and active agency upon outer events. This broader view creates a space for thinking about peace not only in the language of politicians and soldiers but also in the languages of the spirit. Traditional ceremonies, rites and customs, as well as contemporary electronic communications can be seen as potential peace media. Therefore, peace talks become not just peace summits but processes such as mediation, community consultation, inter-religious dialogue and national commissions for truth and reconciliation.

Within this broader view of peace, three main approaches can be discerned. Peacekeeping involves deploying armed forces to ensure there is an absence of hostilities. Peace-making entails measures to ensure the cessation of hostilities and the implementation of peace accords. The restoration of peace, however, is signalled not by the presence of UN peacekeeping forces but rather by the resumption of everyday life. In the short term, the re-opening of schools and shops, the restoration of transport services and dismantling of check points, the existence of work opportunities, the return of exiles and the tourist trade kick-start a positive spiral of peace. However, to simply rebuild a war-torn society is not in the long term enough. The policies and practices that lead to the war in the first place might be perpetuated, even strengthened, in the rebuilding. A commitment to laying down the foundations for a more peaceful society is known as peace-building. This approach needs not only buildings but also builders. Hence the current commitment in the international community to capacity-building and peace education in post-conflict societies.

**Peace education**

Peace education can be introduced as a separate subject, or spread across the curriculum, or be a whole-school approach. While a more holistic approach is to be preferred, the lack of a whole-school commitment should not stop individuals doing what they can towards making the school a more peaceful place. Also, it is probably best to have a particular subject to start with so teachers and children can get a flavour of what specific skills, knowledge and experience are needed.
The aim of peace education is to draw out, enrich, deepen and place in context students’ thinking about the concept of peace. The lesson to be learnt is not only the content of the concept but also its enactment and doing – that is the methodology of peace. Given that peace is active and participatory, the pedagogy of peace education is crucially important. Peace is not only what is done but also a quality of the way in which it is done. While texts are important, the peace education curriculum will also use role-plays, games and collaborative learning projects. Group activities provide opportunities to learn about negotiation, cooperation and working together.

Galtung (1996) warns against the idea that teachers can transmit a culture of peace. Few, if any, have internalised a culture of peace. We must distinguish between ‘a potential peace culture that has not entered and configured our mind sets and an actual/actuated peace that has been enacted’ (p 78). If educators try to transmit culture across this gap, then education itself may contribute to the detachment of rhetoric and representation from reality. The teacher who tries to convey peace culture without some practice, including peace action, is like ‘a moral rascal teaching ethics’.

The teacher is important as a model of peaceful behaviour and his or her relationship with students is a powerful feature of the learning process. Through enacting the values of peace in relationship to the teacher, the students can experience ‘actual/actuated culture of peace’.

Reflective discussions about the activities deepen understanding and give greater meaning to the concepts. The repetition of cooperative activities will help build trust and enjoyment, but will not in itself deepen children’s concepts of peace. Sharpening students’ powers of analysis and deepening their understanding will depend on the more discriminating educational use of the activities. For example, the teacher can draw out observations about role-plays, encourage the exploration of different viewpoints through role-reversals, challenge the children to create different endings, or ask judicious questions about the feelings of other characters. It is often in the de-briefing of the activity and the ensuing discussion that the full meaning and relevance of concepts can be realised. As well as using active learning methods, the teacher needs to be effective in managing the emotional climate. Learning occurs in an atmosphere of trust that paradoxically builds the freedom to challenge and contradict.

An important issue for teachers is the extent to which war, trauma, injury and weapons are discussed. An unrealistic denial of the darker side of life will not result in a credible program. However, sensitivity is needed to ensure that material is appropriate to the age of the children. When peace education was introduced into Australian schools in the 1980s, there were debates about the ethics of discussing war and violence with children. However, this concern was based on an assumption that children could be sheltered from knowledge. Nowadays, most people accept that information about war and violence is readily available to young children through television. Further, many children around the world know about armed conflict from direct experience of it. Even in communities at peace, the movement of refugees around the world increases the probability that children will learn from other children who have had direct experience. Thus talking about war and conflict can be seen not as an introduction to war and violence but rather as a chance to discuss, clarify and correct what is already known. Discussion with adults can mitigate the harmful effects of viewing violence. The problem with introducing material on the darker side of peace is not just that the children might be sensitive to it. Violence and weapons have their own fascination and interest. Children, particularly boys, can become fascinated with the capacities of weaponry, so that while the rhetoric is peace education, the actuality is war education.

**Education in post-conflict settings**

During a violent conflict it is likely that the education system will experience a number of problems, such as dislocation of children and teachers, damage to schools and breakdown of infrastructure, leading to non-payment of teachers. Hence, post-conflict education programs
need to take into account the fact that children may not be in school at all, and be flexible enough to work in a variety of settings with a minimum of material resources. Social as well as physical structures will be in need of repair and programs will need to build trust. Participants might come from opposing sides of the conflict. In Sierra Leone it is ‘difficult, if not impossible, to find a child that has not seen, heard or been part of atrocities committed in the war or who does not have relatives that have been affected’. (Pesonen 2002, p 16).

Pesonen (2002) describes the case of Saidu Kamara. At 11 years of age Saidu ‘looks more like a victim than a killer’. He was taken from his home by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) but managed to escape after 7 months. ‘I was ordered to kill an old woman. When I refused I was tied up and beaten. They threatened to shoot me instead. Then I did something to her.’ Child soldiers face great challenges in coming to terms with the pain they have endured and inflicted on others. Those who wish to re-integrate into the community may be rejected and broad support is needed to break the cycle of violence. An important aspect of the conflict in Sierra Leone is the lack of ideology. There is not a political cause that drives the rebellion and often people don’t understand the reasons for the conflict or for their own part in it. This has important implications for a peace education. War is seen as something that comes outside of human agency and control. One of the participants in our program expressed this sentiment as: ‘We had peace and then war, and, God willing, we will have peace again’.

A deeply disturbing aspect of the conflict was the use of amputations to terrorise the population. Most victims died, but amongst the surviving children there are many who lack limbs. The most heart-wrenching image of our first trip was a child with no hands begging for money. Dealing with trauma is thus a core issue in any peace education program in Sierra Leone. Teachers must strike a fine balance between grounding their program in reality, which is grim, and yet rebuilding community idealism and hope. People who have been subject to trauma may not find group work supportive and may find that listening to the troubles of others, far from being a warm sharing experience, overloads them with pain. Activities that are fun and icebreakers in a peaceful context may suddenly take on a deeper aspect in a war zone. For example, a blindfold trust game might evoke images of checkpoint searches and being taken hostage.

The question of how valid it is to transfer the peace education curriculum from one context or culture to another is also a key issue, as was the relationship between our team and local people. Initially there was some questioning of the relevance of Australian expertise, but the approach of sharing information about the situation in many countries around the world rapidly came to be valued. Our aim was to develop a program that suited local conditions but which also modelled learnings from international experience. The method adopted – drawing upon and then systematising the work of local agencies and educators for peace – was cooperative rather than an imposition by experts.

References


Part two - Project process and working in Sierra Leone (Jane Weston)

As briefly described in part one of this paper, there are common elements shared between post-conflict societies. Traumatised civilian populations, displaced peoples, enormous loss of life and severely damaged government infrastructure characterise post-conflict Sierra Leone. Since 1991, more than 20,000 lives have been lost as a direct result of the conflict, and related insecurity has caused the internal displacement of an estimated 1.2 million people, approximately 25% of the population. The UNHCR estimates that more than 500,000 people are either refugees, asylum seekers or internally displaced people (World Bank, 2002, p 9).

The international aid community has responded to these humanitarian disasters in Sierra Leone with the provision of technical expertise across the range of social domains. In the education domain, over 80% of all schools in Sierra Leone are managed by the missions and NGOs responsible for education service delivery. Organisations such as UNICEF, Plan International, the Norwegian Refugee Council and others have implemented non-formal primary education programs since 1992, and some in some instances since prior to the war (World Bank, 2002, p 11). The capacity of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) and others to monitor and coordinate the delivery of these education services has been severely compromised by the war and resulting loss of communications and infrastructure. Various actors have delivered a range of emergency education programs in Sierra Leone over the past 10 years.

Therefore, a key outcome sought through the integrated peace education project was to gather the various peace education materials and approaches being used, both in formal and non-formal education settings, with a view to developing a kit of materials that was both sensitive to successful current practice and able to identify gaps and create new materials to meet local needs. There was also a strong message from both the MOEST and NGOs that the materials needed to reflect the variety of Sierra Leone cultures and that the materials be closely linked to the framework driving school curriculum delivery in the country. Part three of this paper will examine these issues more closely.

In terms of the project process, key tasks for Curriculum Corporation were to:

1. **Draw together current peace education resources**

Two project consultants travelled to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in January 2002 to meet with MOEST and subsequently plan and conduct a three-day workshop with education stakeholders. Over 50 participants shared knowledge and practice in the area of peace education. It was apparent from evaluation data that most participants appreciated this opportunity to reflect and look for opportunities to integrate education initiatives. As mentioned earlier in this paper, the consultants were able to facilitate this process and bring some international comparative practice to the group. Participants provided the consultants with copies of materials being used in a variety of settings in Sierra Leone.

They also alerted the consultants to a range of education and community issues pertinent to the development of the peace education materials. Broadly, these issues included poverty, trauma, fear, dislocation, and ex-combatants and victims (sometimes amputees) returning to communities. In addition, as previously mentioned, 50% children were not in school, 50% of teachers not trained or qualified and there was also a serious shortage of current curriculum materials.

The consultants returned to Australia from the consultations both with materials for review and possible inclusion in the kit, and clear instructions from stakeholders that the materials should:

- be flexible, for use in formal and non-formal settings;
- be written for teachers and community workers;
• have student activities integrated into the training modules;
• be inclusive of local input and cultural content;
• be able to stand alone and also be integrated into the Sierra Leone syllabus;
• be sensitive to Creole and other indigenous languages; and
• be owned by the stakeholders.

2. **Develop teacher-training modules and student activities**

In Australia, a key writer and three subject specialists were briefed and provided with a subject schema and curriculum unit template developed by the project team. The schema and template assisted in ensuring consistency of approach and content. The project manager also created an email discussion group to ensure that ideas and progress could be quickly and easily communicated between writers. A secure consultation website was also created to allow Sierra Leone colleagues to view the materials in development.

A local Sierra Leone-based project officer was contracted to undertake an initial feedback workshop prior to the consultants returning to Freetown to further refine the peace education kit.

3. **Trial and refine materials with stakeholders and look for integration of materials in other education initiatives**

In June 2002, consultants returned to Freetown with a complete set of draft materials. A second two-day workshop brought together a group drawn from both the initial start-up consultation and teacher training institutions from across the country. As well as collecting feedback on the materials, the aim of this workshop was to model some of the values-clarification activities underpinning the kit and draw out from participants how they might strategically use the materials in their various domains and roles. For example, teacher training colleges might plan to use the materials within their pre-service teacher training initiatives, and teachers might plan how to use the materials at a school or faculty level.

At the conclusion of the June 2002 visit to Sierra Leone, it was both pleasing and clear that the kit, after some amendment, would be a useful resource in a range of education settings.

Perhaps the most important element of the project process was the engagement with both the MOEST and NGO education providers at all stages of project. Building trust and a sense of true partnership was central to the collection of ideas, resources and responses to the materials. Part three of this paper will explore the development of the peace education kit materials in further detail.

**References**


**Part three - Developing appropriate materials (Vic Zbar)**

**The philosophy guiding the writing**

Consistent with the positive view of peace advanced throughout this paper, the writing of the peace education kit for Sierra Leone was predicated on the premises that:

• Peace can be taught in many and varied ways but, even more importantly, *peace can be learned*. Peaceful behaviours can be learned when children have the opportunity
to develop and practise them through properly structured units and tasks and when they see these behaviours modelled by others around them.

• Rather than seeking to champion one of the three main approaches to peace education discussed, that is, as a separate subject in the curriculum, spread across the curriculum, or as a whole-school approach, it is preferable to embrace all three.

• To be successful, the peace education kit would need good teaching. More specifically, the units to be provided would, in order to work, require teaching which engages the students in worthwhile activities and provides them with the opportunity to acquire new attitudes and to learn new behaviours and skills. This, in turn, suggested a need to combine content with pedagogy, which is taken up in more detail below.

• Trauma has to be acknowledged. Teachers will need to show empathy and patience with children who have been traumatised by war and encourage them to talk openly about their experiences as part of helping them to deal with their stress. Since teachers themselves will likely have been affected by war, they may need to acknowledge their own trauma and deal with it as well. Some of the techniques that have proven effective in dealing with trauma and promoting healing, and which therefore are included in the kit, are games, the arts, relaxation and group activities. Above all though, and regardless of the techniques adopted, the most important thing is to urge teachers to show love and care and to provide security for each child by making time for them to talk and feel they are listened to.

• It is important to involve the community as well. Peace education in schools can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful community in Sierra Leone. By the same token, more peaceful schools can only be built and sustained in the context of a more peaceful community. Thus, an important focus of the kit must be the promotion of stronger links between the school and its community and in particular the engagement of parents in the education of their children and the life of the school.

The lessons of the pre-visit

A number of very important lessons were learned during the first mission to Sierra Leone, which played an important role in informing the writing of the kit. In particular:

• Teacher issues. Unlike Australia, a significant proportion of teachers is relatively untrained. This especially applies the further one goes away from the capital, Freetown, and in the early years of primary school. This means that the language of the kit had to be kept as easily understood as possible. All pedagogical advice needed to be particularly clear and the structure of the kit had to be highly accessible and easy to use.

• Facilities and resources. Schools, like all infrastructure, suffered markedly as a result of the war in Sierra Leone. Many school buildings were damaged or even destroyed. Beyond this, Sierra Leone ranks as the most impoverished nation in the United Nations and, despite a degree of overseas aid to support and sustain the peace process, schools are desperately short of resources. This especially applies to teaching and learning resources, with the result that students have very limited access to text books and teachers have few, if any, teaching guides or materials. This does, however, present an opportunity in that a clear message from the teachers visited in-country is that if materials can be delivered into their hands, then they will be used. The other side of the coin, though, is that no assumptions could really be made about access to resources, and hence the units included in the kit had to make only minimal demands.
• **The need to connect with local culture.** This sounds like a truism, but is not often observed in practice. Teachers and others encountered in the data-gathering mission conducted in January 2002, were clear in their advice that any names, traditions, and so on which were to be included in the kit needed to be drawn from Sierra Leone and not other countries or regions, whether they are in Africa or not. In this context, it is interesting to observe that the Internet was, at best, a semi-reliable resource and the material needed could only really be gathered and confirmed by visiting the country.

• **The need to link to the Sierra Leone curriculum,** whilst also promoting a wider perspective on peace education. Much peace education material has been written without reference to the curriculum and assessment requirements of the country concerned. As a result, it tends to be treated as an add-on at best, or dropped from the curriculum as soon as other demands emerge. Whilst there is a need for distinct cross-curriculum material – especially related to the core issues of dealing with trauma and so on outlined below – getting consistent coverage of peace education material in schools depends on linking it to core areas within the existing curriculum framework applying in Sierra Leone.

• **The need to promote teacher and student agency.** Sierra Leone is a deeply religious country. This provides an opportunity to focus on issues of peace and humanity. That said, it also occasions a problem in that there is some tendency to leave things to ‘God’s will’ rather than taking responsibility oneself. A key focus of the kit had, therefore, to be the promotion of teacher and student agency both through the content advanced and, perhaps even more importantly, the advice on how it might be taught and learned.

All of this resulted in a kit which comprises:

• an introduction which canvases much of the philosophy outlined above;

• a set of cross-curriculum units covering broad issues which teachers may need to take up in their efforts to strengthen peace in Sierra Leone;

• specific curriculum units divided according to different subject areas and different student ages – more specifically English and Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, and the Arts, for students in years 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, and 9; and

• whole-school and community activities designed to build a more peaceful school and community in general.

In addition, the kit consciously combines content with pedagogy, addresses core issues which transcend specific learning areas, and contributes to the creation of a more peaceful school and community. Each of these is now briefly explored.

**Combining the content with the pedagogy**

Three factors in particular led us to the view that we needed to write a kit which simultaneously addressed what is to be taught and how.

• The strong belief that creating more peaceful schools and communities in Sierra Leone, and assisting young people to act in peaceful ways, **depends on teachers practising what they preach.** There is no point having wonderful activities and ideas in a kit, if individual classes are run in authoritarian or non-peaceful ways. Thus, an important focus of the kit must be to provide teachers with pedagogical advice, and almost step-by-step training, so their teaching is consistent with the peace message. In particular, it was suggested to teachers that successful use of the kit would require them to know their students well, listen to their students, use a range of teaching techniques, structure their teaching so it supports student learning, involve students in learning activities and encourage their participation, provide positive
feedback and praise, never physically punish a child, and make connections with the community.

- The relative lack of training of many teachers identified through the in-country mission conducted at the start of the project. This means that it is not enough to merely provide teachers with content material to teach. Unless they also receive detailed advice on how to teach it, in plain and simple language, then they are unlikely to put it to use. What’s more, if we keep the previous point about appropriate pedagogy in mind, a kit written in this way could also serve as a de facto professional development tool to progressively introduce more favourable pedagogy into classrooms, such as discussion and student involvement, group work, problem-solving and the like.

- The experience of many kits produced for teachers which have separate books for student units, advice for teachers and teaching materials. Many teachers can find that having to juggle separate books of what is otherwise valuable teaching material makes them inaccessible and difficult to use. It is, for example, not particularly helpful for teachers to have to skip between a separate teachers’ guide on the one hand, student activities book on the other, and collection of proforma materials on yet another, to put together their lessons in a particular domain. We thought it essential, therefore, to produce a peace education kit where everything was at hand and a teacher could find it all in one place. Thus, each unit contains the student content, associated activities, any resources, such as stories to be read, and the advice on how it can be taught, without the need to go anywhere else. It is supplemented by information on further material that may enhance the teaching of the unit, but which is not required to do so. Each unit can therefore stand entirely on its own, even though it is integrated with, and enhanced by, its connection to other units provided.

With all this in mind, each of the lessons provided in the kit includes specific advice on:

- the time it should take;
- the objectives of the lesson;
- how the teacher will need to prepare to teach it;
- what things they will need, such as chalk or a story to read out;
- the way the lesson should be introduced;
- how to teach the lesson and the sorts of things that students might do;
- how to end the lesson and suggested further activities for students;
- any assessment that might be useful; and
- other lessons or activities that teachers might want to do next.

It is then, of course, up to the teachers themselves to work out how best to use the units in their schools and communities, but they have a basis on which to proceed.

**Core concepts for peace**

There are a number of broad issues which must be taken up in a post-conflict setting and which may need to be addressed across all learning areas rather than confined to just one. The four main issues we felt needed to be addressed, and which hence constitute the focus of the cross-curriculum units component of the kit, are:

- dealing with trauma
- communication
- conflict management
• human rights and democracy.

Whilst each of these is encompassed within the learning area units provided, we felt it necessary to explicitly address them in their own right, and provide teachers with units and lessons to offer in any learning area and at any year level.

Each of the units provided can be taught as:

• distinct sets of lessons on their own within the school program – for example, a teacher may choose to set aside a number of sessions over consecutive days within a specific week to develop students’ conflict management skills; and/or

• lessons or activities that are included as part of other subjects being taught – for example, a teacher may need to introduce one or more activities for dealing with trauma within a particular subject where students are experiencing anxiety.

The approach is up to the teacher concerned, but it is almost inevitable that they will find these four topics just too important to ignore.

Creating a more peaceful school and community

Peace is, of course, always about relationships between people. If peace is to be cemented in place in Sierra Leone there is, therefore, a need to work on building positive relationships which encourage cooperation between people and deal with difference and conflict in non-violent ways.

Schools can contribute to this both by becoming more peaceful places themselves, and playing an active role modelling and promoting peace in their local communities.

With this in mind, the kit contains a section specifically dedicated to whole-school and community activities which can help to generate peaceful and positive relations within the school, between the school and the community, and within the community as a whole.

The school-based units focus on the four areas of:

• behaviour and discipline, based on a logical-consequences approach which relates directly to the behaviour exhibited, are known by everyone in advance, and are respectful of the child and of others involved;

• examining all subjects as a means of engaging more teachers in the process and ensuring their approaches and messages are consistent with building a more peaceful Sierra Leone;

• promoting student participation at school, both within classrooms and at a broader level, including through the creation of student representative councils; and

• the adoption of appropriate teaching techniques which involve and interest students and invite their participation.

A range of ideas is advanced to connect the school to its community and the community to the school, and a checklist is provided to assist schools to determine the best place to start.

Responses to the kit in Sierra Leone

The second mission to Sierra Leone in June 2002 was specifically designed to seek feedback on the draft kit and to pilot its use within the MOEST and by broader non-government organisations.

To our great pleasure the overall feedback received was very positive indeed and suggested that the structure and content of the kit are useful and appropriate to the circumstances of Sierra Leone. In addition, it was clear that the degree of revision and improvement required was fairly minimal and the kit has subsequently been finalised for the World Bank.
Above all, the mission revealed that:
- there is a clear need for such a kit in schools and other educational settings;
- it is correct to address the kit to teachers and other facilitators, to provide them with clear guidance on how the student materials and activities should be implemented;
- the assumptions made in the kit about student capacities and teaching resources are appropriate; and
- peace education materials provided to teachers and other facilitators will be used in an environment which is characterised by a shortage of teaching resources.

That said, we did note a need to train both new and existing teachers to ensure that they are adequately equipped to manage the pedagogical approaches embodied in the kit, and to resolve the logistical problems associated with getting the kits into teachers’ hands – and these were the subject of recommendations included in our mission report.

Perhaps, however, the highest praise was received some weeks after the mission when a teacher commissioned to trial units along with colleagues in his school emailed us on his progress and wrote:

Gradually going through the SL peace education kit with the pupils. The units are very good, especially page E4 – knowing and trusting each other under English and Social studies. Schools now on holiday, but still trying it in my community.

It’s a strong base on which we can build.