

Book review

Book review: *Educating for Peace and Human Rights: An introduction*, by Maria Hantzopoulos and Monisha Bajaj

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Peer review

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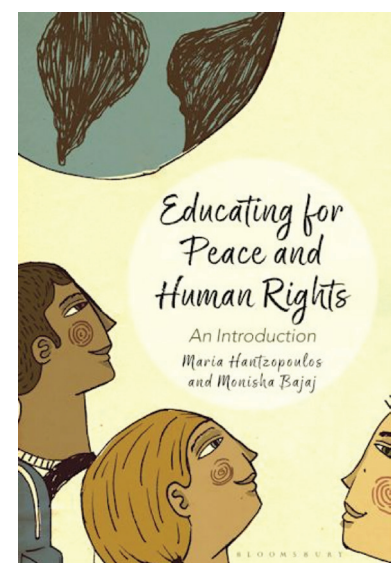
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Target 4.7 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has established that all learners should acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. This includes covering topics such as human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity. Development education as a field has a long tradition of working to raise awareness, and promote action, around these topics, and it therefore serves as a suitable response to achieve the goals established in the Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is a strong emphasis on active



change within the field (Bourn, 2014), alongside a core focus on raising awareness of global issues related to human rights and peace. Together, awareness building and the promotion of active participation through education are considered essential for promoting social change (Bryan and Bracken, 2011). However, the conceptual distinction between educating on *peace* and educating on *human rights*, and, thus, where they connect, is not clear. Hantzopoulos and Bajaj's book, *Education for Peace and Human Rights: An introduction*, offers some conceptual distinctions of the two areas, while also demonstrating possible connections between the theory and practice of peace and human rights education which could come together to dismantle violence and build 'cultures of peace, justice, and human rights' (1). In doing so, it provides a detailed examination of how the fields of human rights education and peace education can come together under the umbrella of development education to foster empowerment, participation and engagement of individuals and communities towards a more just, fair and sustainable society, as suggested in Target 4.7.

The book provides an introductory yet comprehensive analysis of the fields of peace education and human rights education, including their historical context, theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical influences, as well as common models and practices. The authors begin by laying out the advantages and possibilities of a joint analysis of these two disciplines: from distinguishing the multiple manifestations of a culture of injustice, violence and human rights abuses to a deeper analysis of their systemic causes or envisioning possible interventions to address them. In doing so, they provide readers with a foundational understanding of the two fields. This is followed by an analysis of a series of case study initiatives, programmes or practices that exemplify each field. The case studies presented provide insightful evidence on the impact of contextual and bottom-up approaches to teaching and learning for peace and human rights through a wide array of topics, from anti-racism, systemic violence and restorative justice in the United States to human rights in schools and textbooks, as well as community-based programmes on rights and access to justice in India and Bangladesh. While these cases are intended to provide the reader with a sense of the different ways in which peace and human rights education work in practice, these are only snapshot insights into how the programmes work and the context of their development. A limitation of the book is precisely that, perhaps due to insufficient space, it does not fully engage with an in-depth analysis of these cases, including their pedagogical design, implementation strategies or assessment of their impact and results.

However, this thorough analysis of the theory and practice of peace and human rights education also highlights the many connections between the two pedagogical fields. Thus, through looking to the shared tenets, common educational goals and foundational concepts of peace and human rights education, Hantzopoulos and Bajaj offer an alternative combined model for teaching. Building on the critical pedagogy and liberatory education traditions, the model proposed makes it possible to connect core concepts such as agency, dignity and equity with shared learning approaches, teaching practices and pedagogical outcomes. This includes key topics within both fields, such as peace, respect for human rights, community engagement and planetary stewardship (95–7). Their unified model is centred on two core concepts: dignity and transformational agency. From these core concepts, they link theories and practices common in peace and human rights education, for example, the implementation of contextually relevant curriculum and pedagogical practices, analysis of social inequalities and encouragement of critical reflection. This provides useful recommendations for academics, students and practitioners working in these fields.

Another valuable tool the authors offer in the book is the annotated bibliography, which includes both major texts in the fields of peace and human rights education and also decolonial approaches to education, intersectional pedagogy and transformative teaching. The inclusion of these texts extends the scope of audiences that can take advantage of the careful curation of readings by Hantzopoulos and Bajaj. Meanwhile, careful consideration of the literature contributes to the wider decolonial movement within the field of development education.

The authors explain from the start of the book that their intended audience is individuals working – either researching or teaching – in or for peace and human rights education. The structure of the book

responds to the needs of this audience by providing not only an introduction to the theories, authors and historical development of these fields, but also examples of practices and the annotated bibliography. Thus, while students and researchers new to these fields will undoubtedly benefit from the introductory approach to exploring key theory, the case study chapters provide detailed and valuable insight for experienced scholars and practitioners alike.

In this vein, the book is not intended to be an exhaustive handbook on how to teach for peace or human rights, nor a research manual on these areas. For this reason, the reader should not expect to find a detailed discussion on learning processes or research methodologies and methods to conduct research on peace and human rights education. As the authors explain, the book explicitly aims to set out an agenda for further research and work in these fields, so it is designed to pave the way for others to continue building on the proposed framework and conceptual connections established. In this sense, and consistent with the authors' own metaphor of the possibility tree, the book in itself opens up possibilities for research and practice in education for social justice. *Education for Peace and Human Rights: An introduction* is highly relevant to today's debates on peace and human rights as part of the broader sustainable development agenda, however, and, perhaps more importantly, it serves as a starting point for a deeper discussion about education, its goals and the role it has in creating a more sustainable, peaceful and rights-respecting world.

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