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World-Centred Peace Education: Toward a Framework for Socio-Eco Peace in Times of Systemic Crisis

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Abstract

This article develops a novel framework for world-centred peace education in response to today's interconnected social and ecological crises. It critiques anthropocentric models and the War System, arguing for a paradigm shift that centres relationality and the interdependence of people and planet. The framework is grounded in the concept of socio-eco peace—a vision of mutual flourishing—and integrates a guiding purpose, a relational worldview, theoretical influences, and five interrelated domains: inner, outer, context, pluralism, and process. These domains support peace education that is holistic, inclusive, and responsive to place, time, and community. The article explores how the framework can inform the design, facilitation, and evaluation of peace education across diverse settings, and concludes with implications for theory, policy, practice, and future research.

Keywords: Peace education; world-centred education; socio-eco peace; ecological justice; War System; transformative learning

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Introduction

Peace education must evolve to address today's interconnected and compounding social, ecological, and systemic crises. Dominant paradigms—particularly anthropocentric or exclusively individual-focused approaches—are increasingly inadequate. This article develops a novel framework for world-centred peace education—offering a new approach for responding to these crises by centring the interdependent relationship between people and planet.

The article unfolds in five interrelated parts: beginning with the author's positionality and praxis, followed by an examination of global conditions that influence the development of this framework—including socio-ecological breakdowns, emerging responses, the overlooked role of the War System, and a call to shift from human-centred to relational worldviews. It then introduces socio-eco peace as a guiding ethic—an integrative vision of mutual flourishing. The fourth section outlines the core elements of the framework, including its purpose, foundations, and five interrelated domains: inner, outer, context, pluralism, and process. The final sections explore how this framework can be applied across educational, community, and research settings, concluding with implications for theory, practice, and future inquiry.

This article is intended to make a contribution to peace education scholarship and practice. An original contribution is the argument that peace education should be oriented toward a world-centred approach—moving beyond dominant people-centred narratives, which emerged in response to top-down or state-centred models, yet often remain narrowly human-focused. The article also develops a coherent framework and set of conceptual tools that educators, researchers, and practitioners can use to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of peace education processes and outcomes across diverse settings. The framework synthesises literature, theories, and practices drawn from peace education, peace studies, critical pedagogy, environmental education, decolonial theory, and related fields—grounding its approach in relational, ecological, and systemic traditions.

Author Context: Positionality and Praxis

This article is written from the perspective of a white, neurodivergent man from England, raised in a working-class family and the first in his family to attend university. His background spans education, youth and community development, psychotherapy, and anti-war work, shaped by experiences of living, working, and learning in more than 60 countries. His praxis combines global engagement with grounded, place-based practice.

Influenced by thinkers such as Carl Rogers, Paulo Freire, and Ivan Illich, he has developed a strong interest in person-centred, experiential, and context-specific approaches that challenge standardised models of education. The

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framework developed in this article emerged both in response to gaps in the existing literature and through direct requests from educators, practitioners, and communities he has worked with across time and space. There remains a lack of coherent and adaptable frameworks that the field can draw on to support the design of peace education grounded in relational, ecological, and systemic perspectives.

As a practitioner-scholar committed to "working the hyphen" (Fine, 1994), he engages in ongoing cycles of reflection, action, and accountability across personal, institutional, and ecological relationships. He does not claim neutrality. Instead, he positions himself within the systems that require transformation, striving to engage with them relationally and responsibly.

Global Context: From Crises to Responses

This section situates the development of the framework within a wider global context—examining four interrelated elements: socio-ecological crises, evolving responses and frameworks, the overlooked role of the War System, and proposing the need to shift from human- to world-centred thinking.

Multiple Crises: Social Breakdown, Ecological Collapse, and Systemic Roots

Social and ecological breakdowns are often not isolated events—they are interwoven expressions of a deeper systemic crisis.

Socially, the human toll of war, armed conflict, and violence is staggering. Global military spending has reached unprecedented levels—even as peace declines and insecurity grows, and armed conflicts are more widespread than at any time since World War II. More than two billion people live in conflict-affected areas, and over 120 million have been forcibly displaced—the highest figures in modern history—driven by war, persecution, and systemic collapse. The threat of nuclear war persists, alongside racism, casteism, colonialism, and patriarchy—all of which continue to generate structural and cultural violence. Polarization and eroding trust in governance create conditions ripe for authoritarianism and collective alienation.

Ecological collapse is already underway, marked by accelerating climate disruption, species extinction, and environmental degradation. We are already in the midst of the largest extinction crisis in 60 million years, driven by habitat loss and the release of over 80,000 synthetic chemicals. No era in history has caused greater ecological devastation than the present (Rockström et al., 2009). Scientists warn that we are undermining the life-support systems on which civilisation depends. UN Secretary-General António Guterres warns of a path toward "collective suicide" without urgent, systemic change. These outcomes are not accidental—they are driven by political, economic, and cultural systems that enable both structural violence and ecocide (Galtung, 1969, 1990).

Evolving Responses: Emerging Frameworks for Integrated Peace

Scholars are advancing frameworks that respond to the complex, interlinked crises confronting our shared world. Peace education is increasingly situated at the intersection of social justice, environmental harm, climate security, and planetary stewardship. While space does not allow for a comprehensive review, several influential contributions stand out—emerging from diverse theoretical, geographic, and disciplinary traditions—that collectively support an ecological and relational turn across the fields of peace, security, and education.

Reardon (1988) lays the foundational groundwork for comprehensive peace education, integrating global citizenship, human rights, disarmament, and planetary stewardship. Wenden (2004) and Bajaj and Chiu (2009) explore the intersections between peace education and environmental education, emphasising ecological consciousness in peace learning. Selby and Kagawa (2010) explore the role of education in mitigating climate change. Brantmeier (2013) calls for critical peace education for sustainability, advocating for transformative pedagogies rooted in ecological and social justice.

More recently, Krampe (2021) and Ide (2023) examine climate-security dynamics, with Krampe focusing on environmental peacebuilding and Ide analysing how climate change shapes patterns of conflict and cooperation. De Coning and Maalim (2022) propose an adaptive peacebuilding framework grounded in systems thinking and resilience. Lederach et al. (2024) extend relational and place-based peacebuilding into ecological and planetary dimensions. Ehrenzeller and Patel (2024) call for a reimagining of peace education through eco-peace perspectives that emphasise ethical relationality, mutual care, and regenerative practices.

Collectively, these works share common themes, pointing to the importance of relational and ethical responsibility and the need to move beyond people-centred approaches and siloed thinking that prioritise human-to-human interaction. Peace education and related efforts must move beyond fragmented responses toward holistic, integrated, and grounded ways of living, learning, and being. In doing so, these frameworks help to bridge long-standing divides between the human and ecological sciences, offering integrated responses to crises that are often both social and planetary in scope.

These shifts align with global agendas and international policy frameworks that emphasise inclusion, ecological interdependence, and sustainability. Sachs (2015) argues that sustainable development depends on social equity, environmental stewardship, and systemic cooperation. The Right to Peace (UNGA, 2016) and the Rights of Nature (e.g., Constitution of Ecuador, 2008) offers legal and ethical entry points for advancing peace as both an individual and collective ethic of care—for people, communities, and the Earth. The Earth Charter (2000) and UNESCO's Futures of Education report (2021)

promote education and action rooted in interdependence, justice, and sustainability.

However, many of these frameworks stop short of confronting the root systems that perpetuate violence—a main one being the War System.

The War System: Naming the Root Cause

The War System is a central driver of direct, structural, cultural, and ecological violence worldwide. It shapes institutions and norms, normalising war while obscuring alternatives. Arms production, fossil fuel extraction, and environmental harm frequently coincide—especially in regions shaped by colonial legacies. Militarism is among the most ecologically destructive of all human activities: forests are razed, and farmlands poisoned. Military emissions are routinely excluded from climate agreements, even though armed forces remain among the world's largest polluters.

While much attention is given to individual wars, far less is directed at the system that enables and sustains them. As a result, discourse and policy remain reactive—focused on "the wars of the day" rather than proactively addressing the structural, cultural, and systemic forces that make war possible. Many global frameworks, methodologies, scholarly accounts, and peacebuilding organizations give little or no attention to the War System directly.

For example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—including Goal 16, which promotes peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice, and accountable institutions—fail to name, let alone challenge, the War System. The Global Peace Index and similar measures track peace trends and economic benefits, but avoid structural critiques of militarism. Even initiatives like the Earth Charter and UNESCO's Culture of Peace promote coexistence but stop short of confronting the systems that fund and legitimise war.

This omission is both paradoxical and predictable. Paradoxical because war undermines nearly every global goal—from eradicating poverty and protecting ecosystems to promoting health and education. Predictable because dominant frameworks tend to address symptoms rather than root causes. The War System entrenches global inequality and accelerates climate collapse. It concentrates power, erodes ecosystems, and perpetuates narratives that normalize war while rejecting peaceful alternatives.

Its core pillars—militarised security, armament, war economies, military alliances, armed conflict, and a culture of war—are upheld by the military-industrial-media-academic complex (MIMAC), forming an entrenched infrastructure that obstructs peace, justice, and sustainability. Unless this system is named and dismantled, efforts to build a peaceful and sustainable world—while important and necessary—will remain fragmented and insufficient.

None of this is to suggest that peace efforts focused on exploring alternatives to war or violence are all that matter, or that those centred on

psychosocial dimensions lack value. Efforts that bridge longstanding divides between cognitive and affective learning, and critically address the structural and cultural conditions that both sustain and threaten peace, remain vital components of the broader peace education landscape (see Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013; Cremin & Bevington, 2017).

At the same time, balance is needed. Just as peace education must seek to find the right balance between inner and outer dimensions—linking the personal with the political, the internal with the systemic—so too must it balance efforts to reduce direct violence (negative peace) with those that build just and sustainable conditions (positive peace) (Galtung, 1969). This balance is essential to advancing the field's goal of moving the world away from all forms of violence—direct, structural, cultural, and ecological—and toward the cultivation of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies for all.

One factor contributing to this imbalance is the dominance of narratives that emphasise the often-repeated claim that "peace is more than the absence of war." While true, this framing can be misleading if it overlooks the reality that war remains one of the greatest threats to peace. In the final analysis, not all peacebuilders must work directly to dismantle the War System. But given its central role in perpetuating global violence and obstructing the possibility of just and sustainable peace, far more should.

Addressing the War System is necessary but not sufficient. Responding more effectively to today's interlinked social and ecological breakdowns also requires a shift: from human-centred to world-centred ways of thinking, relating, and acting. This idea leads naturally to the next section.

Reimagining the Centre: From Human to World-Centred

Many frameworks in peace, security, and education—despite notable progress—still tend to prioritise human concerns above all else. Policy, research, and practice often emphasise "putting people first," focusing on human-to-human interactions while neglecting relationships between people and the planet.

Even within peace education—where the centrality of relationships is widely recognised—the focus often remains on intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics, such as student well-being or educator–learner interactions. Relational spaces that include—yet extend beyond—the human are frequently neglected. This anthropocentric framing sustains a worldview in which nature is treated as a backdrop or resource, rather than as a co-participant in shared life.

This exclusion has deep roots. Scholars such as Merchant (1980) and Orr (1992) have shown how dominant knowledge systems have historically portrayed nature as passive, mechanical, and subordinate. In education, Biesta (2021) develops the idea of the "learnification" of education—the reduction of education to learning, focused narrowly on the individual learner and

disconnected from content, context, and the world. Across disciplines, the more-than-human world is routinely marginalised, erased, or instrumentalised.

At the same time, people-centred approaches have brought important gains. In peacebuilding, they challenge elite-driven processes. In security, they question state primacy through concepts like human security. In education, they shift emphasis from teacher authority to learner agency. These contributions matter. They uphold human dignity, challenge hierarchies, and support relational inquiry. But by centring the human alone, they risk excluding ecosystems and other species from moral and political concern.

This calls instead for a more critical and nuanced approach—one that includes but moves beyond human-centred models toward a world-centred orientation. Rather than simply replacing one centre with another, it foregrounds the co-centrality of people and planet. It affirms that human and ecological well-being are fundamentally interdependent and co-constituted. It challenges people-first hierarchies, promoting circular, relational forms of coexistence grounded in mutual care, reciprocity, and ethical interconnection.

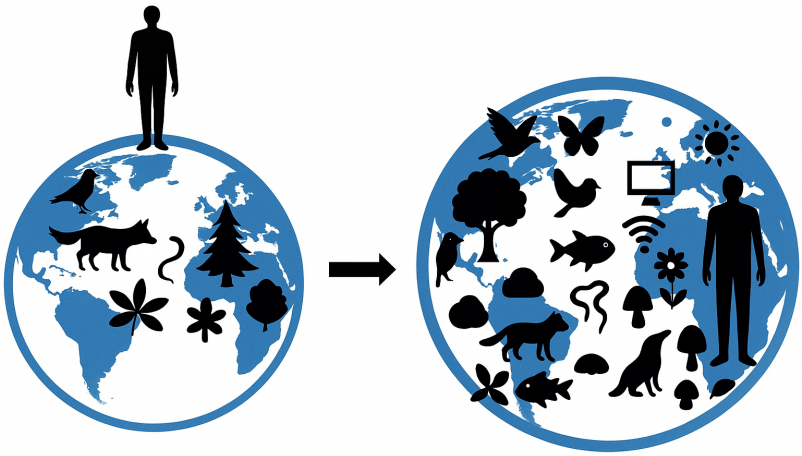


Figure 2. From dominance to coexistence: Reimagining our place in the world. Image developed by the author, inspired by collaborative discussions.

The image contrasts two paradigms. On the left, the human stands above all else, echoing a tradition of dominance. On the right, the human is embedded within a living world, signalling a shift toward coexistence and interdependence. This captures the essence of a world-centred ethic.

Language plays a central role in this shift. Kemmis's (2009) framework of sayings, doings, and relatings is helpful in this regard. It reminds us that how we speak, act, and relate fundamentally shapes educational practice. If peace education speaks only of people—using concepts such as human agency, human

rights, human needs, or people-centred approaches—acts only for people—by focusing on human-to-human dynamics—and relates only to people—through intrapersonal and interpersonal exchanges—it risks reinforcing a narrow, exclusionary frame.

This article proposes the need for a world-centred approach to peace education. In doing so, it reorients the purpose, process, and outcomes of peace education—moving beyond personal and social interests to also embrace ecological ones. Peace is understood not merely as the absence of violence, but as the presence of just, sustainable, and reciprocal relationships among human and more-than-human communities. The article echoes and expands UNESCO's call to "live together in peace" by also exploring what it means to live well with the world, not merely in it.

This requires shifts across educational language, practice, and relationships. In sayings, it calls for language rooted in interdependence, kinship, and ecological justice—avoiding narratives that place people above all else. In doings, it embeds learning in place, integrates ecological awareness across disciplines, and encourages attentive interaction with the living world. In relatings, it expands the field of relationship beyond the human—recognising learners as part of a wider web of life, including future generations and planetary systems.

These shifts raise generative questions: What kinds of relationships should peace education cultivate? With whom—or with what—are we in relationship? And how do these relationships shape the futures we are building?

In sum, a world-centred orientation calls for a reimagined centre—one that holds people and planet in mutual regard. This is not a rejection of person-centred approaches—whether grounded in human agency, rights, needs, or security—which have made vital contributions. Rather, it recognises that these must be complemented by systemic and ecological perspectives.

To better respond to today's interconnected social and ecological crises, peace education must move beyond narrowly people-centred models. A world-centred approach offers both a language and an ethical orientation for this shift. It affirms the co-constitutive relationships between people, planet, and place, and recognises that peace must be practised with the world, not merely within or upon it. In doing so, this approach responds to Brantmeier's (2023) call for "transformative aspirations" in peace education research, including the need to place "the Earth as a central foci to peace education pursuits"—a call that affirms and extends the turn toward a relational, world-centred paradigm.

This orientation sets the stage for the next section, which introduces socio-eco peace as a guiding vision within a world-centred frame.

Socio-Eco Peace: A Vision of Interdependence

To build the case for a world-centred approach to peace education, this section introduces the concept of socio-eco peace—a guiding vision rooted in mutual flourishing between people and the planet. Before defining this concept, three interrelated aspects are addressed: how theory is used in this work, how peace and peace education are relationally framed, and how inner and outer dimensions of peace are integrated.

Defining Theory: Tools for Rethinking Peace Education

Theory is treated here as a practical resource—a way of thinking with and through the world. Following Foucault's (1980) 'toolbox' metaphor, theory is not used to impose meaning but to open new ways of seeing and doing. Rather than presenting universal truths, it functions tactically: to question assumptions, disrupt the taken-for-granted, and spark innovation in how we think, act, and relate.

In this article, theory is used to expose limitations in dominant paradigms—including those that prioritise narrowly "people-first" approaches—and to introduce the idea of world-centred peace education, with the aim of bringing it from the margins into broader conversation. It offers a shared language for engaging with core questions in the field. Rather than a prescriptive model, the framework is presented as a provocation—an invitation to reimagine what peace education is, could be, and should become.

Peace and Peace Education as Relational Processes

Peace is understood here as a dynamic, relational, and iterative process—encompassing peace with oneself, others, and the world. It unfolds across interconnected levels—social, cultural, structural, national, regional, global, and ecological—embodying the notion that peace is simultaneously deeply personal, profoundly social, and ecologically grounded.

This understanding of peace as layered and relational resonates across the diverse and globally dispersed peace education community. Despite differences in approaches, there is broad agreement: the quality of relationships—among learners, educators, and communities—is central to both the process and outcomes of peace education. Relationality grounds the field in lived experience, ethical engagement, and mutual accountability.

However, peace education must also engage with the wider systems—social, political, economic, and ecological—that shape and constrain these relationships. Violence, extractivism, inequality, and ecological collapse demand transformation at every level. The Earth must no longer be seen as a

passive backdrop, but rather as a co-actor, collaborator, and teacher. Human and planetary well-being are mutually constitutive.

Although the field increasingly acknowledges systemic and ecological dimensions, much of the literature remains largely focused on human-to-human interactions—particularly between educators and learners—rather than relationships between people, place, and planet. Frequently, practice remains shaped by people-centred discourse, focused on what happens in educational spaces, rather than how learning is situated within the wider living world.

This relational view of peace necessarily includes both inner and outer dimensions—a theme explored further in the next section.

Integrating Inner and Outer Peace: Moving Beyond Binary Debates

A relational understanding of peace involves both inward and outward dimensions. Yet debate persists in the field around whether inner transformation or systemic change should come first. Some view inner peace as foundational; others prioritise structural transformation. But framing the two as separate or sequential misses the point. Each is necessary, and their integration is essential.

Peace education requires the integration of inner and outer dimensions as part of a holistic vision. Inner peace fosters ethical clarity, emotional grounding, and personal responsibility; outer peace involves transforming harmful systems and cultivating just, sustainable relationships. One without the other is incomplete.

This integration requires relational work—between people, communities, and the planet—recognising that peace must be both inward-facing (peace with self) and outward-facing (peace with others and the world), encompassing the personal, relational, structural, cultural, political, and ecological dimensions.

Outer peace must include not only human-to-human engagement across divides, but also right relationship with ecosystems and non-human life. Any approach that neglects inner well-being, social connection, or climate justice is inherently partial. While debate continues around where peace education should focus its attention, neither the inner nor the outer dimension is sufficient alone. Both are essential—and together, they define the full scope of peace education: 100% of the terrain it must navigate to be truly holistic and comprehensive.

This does not mean every intervention must address all levels at once. But it does call for attentiveness to the full ecology of peace—relationships with self, others, place, and planet. When integrated, these dimensions deepen the responsiveness and transformative potential of peace education, and lay the groundwork for advancing socio-eco peace as both concept and practice.

Defining Socio-Eco Peace: Working the Hyphen

Socio-eco peace brings these dimensions together as both a vision and a practice. It frames peace as an ongoing process shaped through the reciprocal

dynamics of human and ecological well-being, and offers a holistic framework that bridges knowledge systems, cultural worldviews, ethical commitments, governance approaches, and ecological concerns.

The 'socio' refers to the human dimensions of peace—relationships, values, identities, institutions, and systems. It includes cognitive, emotional, ethical, political, and cultural elements, such as emotional literacy, mutual care, justice, dialogue, and co-responsibility.

The 'eco' encompasses the ecological systems in which all life is embedded—nonhuman species, ecosystems, and the material and symbolic relationships between people and the Earth. It invokes interdependence and calls for moral imagination beyond the human.

In this framework, the hyphen between 'socio' and 'eco' is more than grammatical. It becomes a generative space—a space of connection rather than separation, of integration rather than hierarchy. It bridges people and planet, self and other, past and present, global and local, theory and practice, knowing and being, educator and learner, youth and adult, and more.

This integrative ethic forms the foundation of the world-centred peace education framework introduced in the following section. It offers both a grounding vision and an orienting principle: peace must be built with, by, and for the full community of life.

World-Centred Peace Education: Core Elements of the Framework

This section outlines the core elements of the world-centred peace education framework—its purpose, relational worldview, theoretical influences, and five interrelated domains. Together, these elements offer a grounded yet adaptable framework that educators, researchers, and practitioners can use to design, implement, and evaluate peace education initiatives that are relational, context-responsive, and aligned with world-centred principles.

Purpose: Why Peace Education is Needed—and What it is For

Peace education must be oriented by a guiding—yet exploratory—purpose that aligns intention, content, and impact. Before asking what to teach or how, it is essential to first ask why peace education is needed and what it hopes to achieve. Beginning with the end in mind helps ensure meaningful alignment between content, form, and intended outcomes. Without such orientation, peace education risks becoming disconnected from the complex realities it seeks to address.

A world-centred approach, then, begins by asking: What is peace education for, and how might it be reimagined to respond more effectively to today's overlapping social and ecological crises?

There is broad agreement that peace education should support the cultivation of cultures of peace and nonviolence, while challenging the systems,

structures, and narratives that sustain violence—however peace and violence are defined. While there are many paths to peace, the use of violence must be rejected.

World-centred peace education aligns with this shared purpose and grounds its approach more specifically in an evolving commitment to socio-eco peace—a vision of mutual flourishing between people and planet.

The framework is both principled and exploratory: principled in its commitment to peace by peaceful means and to transforming all forms of violence—direct, structural, cultural, and ecological; exploratory in its invitation to co-create inclusive, evolving, and context-grounded approaches to advancing peace and addressing these interconnected forms of violence.

This purpose lays the foundation for the relational worldview and theoretical influences that underpin the framework.

Foundations: Relational Worldviews and Theoretical Influences

World-centred peace education is grounded in a relational worldview shaped by interdependence, shared responsibility, and transformation.

Two foundational ideas inform this approach. First, Biesta's (2021) concept of *world-centred education* challenges learner- and educator-centred models by framing education as an encounter with the world—one that calls learners into ethical relationship with what lies beyond themselves. Second, *nos-otros*—a concept from Latin American decolonial thought, particularly the work of Catherine Walsh—fuses nosotros (we/us) and otros (others) to describe a relational space where identity is shaped through dialogue, difference, and shared accountability.

These foundations support a relational, ethical, and world-responsive orientation. At the same time, this framework is non-prescriptive. Rather than relying on a single theoretical tradition, it invites educators and practitioners to engage with the perspectives, knowledge systems, and conceptual tools most relevant to their specific contexts, purposes, and relationships.

The following are illustrative examples of such tools.

- **Pluriversality**, as articulated by Arturo Escobar (2018), which emphasises the value of multiple, coexisting worldviews, methods, and ways of being, thinking, and acting.
- **Decolonial thought**, including critiques of Western modernity by Macarena Gómez-Barris (2017) and Sylvia Wynter (2003), which challenge dominant ontologies and foreground the need for epistemic justice.
- **Posthumanist pedagogy**, influenced by Rosi Braidotti (2013), which challenges anthropocentrism and calls for education that recognises nonhuman agency, interdependence, and multispecies entanglement.

- **Planetary boundaries**, drawing on the work of Johan Rockström et al. (2009), which highlight the ecological thresholds necessary to sustain life and the urgent need to operate within them.
- **Indigenous knowledge systems**, including contributions from Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), which foreground land-based learning, relational responsibility, and sovereignty rooted in ancestral traditions.
- **Transrational peace theory**, developed by Wolfgang Dietrich (2012), which outlines five "families of peace"—modern, moral, postmodern, energetic, and transrational—highlighting diverse cultural, spiritual, and epistemological traditions.
- **Ecopedagogy**, inspired by Paulo Freire (1970) and Richard Kahn (2010), which links environmental justice with critical pedagogy and cultivates planetary consciousness.
- **Critical comprehensive approaches**, which are directed towards personal, relational, political, structural, cultural, and/or ecological change by linking internal with external action (Bar-Tal, 2002; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Jenkins, 2022).
- **Holistic and transformative learning traditions**, which support whole-person development and integrates cognitive, affective, aesthetic, ethical, spiritual, and somatic dimensions (Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 1980; Gur-Ze-ev, 2001; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013; Cremin, 2016).
- **Place-based and contextual pedagogies**, which centre education in lived experience and specific environments, emphasising rootedness, responsiveness, and local-global connection (Gruenewald, 2003; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Gittins, 2017).

Together, these influences form a generative toolkit to support peace education that is contextually grounded, ecologically responsive, and relationally attuned.

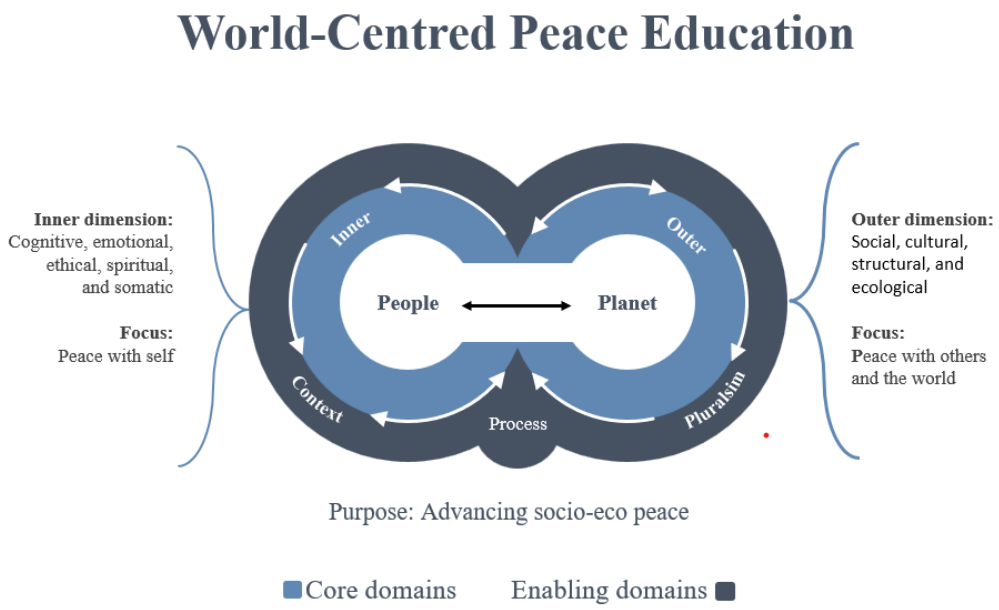
Domains: The Five Elements of Practice

This section introduces five interrelated domains that form the practical backbone of the world-centred peace education framework. Together, these domains offer a flexible and coherent structure for designing, facilitating, and evaluating peace education grounded in relationship, context, and ethical purpose.

The framework is organised around two core domains—inner and outer—and three enabling domains—context, pluralism, and process. The core domains define the scope of peace education, encompassing personal, social, structural, cultural, and ecological dimensions. The enabling domains identify and explain the conditions and practices through which this work can be pursued across diverse settings. Collectively, the five domains provide a dynamic and adaptable framework, grounded in right relationship and responsive to context.

The term "world-centred" is used here to encompass the full web of life: people, planet, ecosystems, human and more-than-human communities, and the relationships that connect them across space, time, and scale. World-centred peace education, therefore, moves beyond individualistic or anthropocentric paradigms. It begins with the recognition that peace is not solely a human concern, but a relational practice rooted in right relationships—within and across relationships with self, others, systems, and the living world.

Figure 1 illustrates this framework, with the two core domains at the centre, surrounded by the enabling domains. Arrows reflect the connections and interdependence between people and the planet. The placement of 'purpose' outside the rings emphasises the framework's ethical anchoring in socio-eco peace—a shared, evolving aim that guides all domains.



Overview: Summary of the Five Domains

Table 1 provides a summary of the five domains that make up this framework—highlighting their key dimensions, core assumptions, and pedagogical approaches. Each domain includes foundational and advanced practices, along with guiding questions to support reflection, design, and evaluation. These domains are further expanded in the sections that follow. Used flexibly, this framework invites both structure and imagination—enabling scholars, educators, and practitioners to engage at different levels and in diverse contexts.

Table 1. Overview of the Five Domains in the World-Centred Peace Education Framework

Domain	Dimensions	Core Assumptions	Pedagogical Approaches	Guiding Questions
Inner	Cognitive, psychological, emotional, ethical, spiritual, and somatic	Peace is deeply personal. Inner awareness, balance, and resilience shape ethical action and relationships	Foundational: Mindfulness, journaling, emotional literacy. Advanced: Somatic inquiry, restorative dialogue, moral imagination	How can we cultivate inner awareness, ethical clarity, and resilience? What practices support inner growth and agency?
Outer	Social, political, cultural, structural, and ecological systems	Peace is systemic and relational. Transforming systems and cultures, and building right relationships across human and ecological communities	Foundational: Classroom inquiry around peace, justice, sustainability, and human rights. Advanced: Community-based learning, collective action, policy engagement	What systems of harm must be challenged or dismantled? How can we foster right relationships across communities and ecologies?
Context	Geographic, temporal, cultural, relational, ecological specificity	Peace education must be grounded in place, history, ecology, and lived realities	Foundational: Use local languages, cultural practices, and histories. Advanced: Co-design curricula with communities, rooted in land and lived experience	How is peace education rooted in local needs, cultures, and ecologies? How can global goals connect with lived, place-based realities?
Pluralism	Epistemological, ontological, and methodological diversity	Peace education must engage diverse traditions of knowing, being, and acting—each offering unique insight	Foundational: Explore diverse peace traditions and regional case studies. Advanced: Facilitate intercultural exchange, storytelling, and dialogic inquiry	Whose knowledge and practices are centred—and whose are left out? How can diverse worldviews (e.g. spiritual, feminist, Indigenous, posthumanist) be

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				brought together in respectful, generative ways?
Process	Participatory, relational, and co-creative inquiry	Peace education must embody its values. Inclusive, participatory processes ensure ethical alignment	Foundational: Early consultation, reflection, and feedback loops. Advanced: Co-design and co-facilitate the full process—from needs assessment to dissemination	How are peace education processes designed, facilitated, evaluated, and shared? Are they inclusive, participatory, and grounded?

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Inner Domain – Cultivating Peace with Self

The inner domain addresses the personal dimensions of peace—cognitive, emotional, ethical, spiritual, and somatic. It emphasises self-awareness, emotional balance, and inner resilience as foundations for ethical action and meaningful relationships.

Pedagogically, it emphasises practices such as mindfulness, emotional literacy, and contemplative inquiry. These practices cultivate agency, integrity, and moral imagination. As UNESCO notes, "wars begin in the minds of people," underscoring how inner dispositions—shaped by physical, psychological, and emotional experiences—both influence and are influenced by broader social, structural, and ecological forces.

Foundational approaches may include practices such as journaling, breathwork, mindfulness, or emotional check-ins—tools that develop inner awareness and self-regulation. Advanced approaches may involve deeper somatic and ethical engagement, such as restorative dialogue, somatic inquiry, or guided moral reflection. For example, in Colombia, a peace education program integrated daily rituals—silence, breathing exercises, and emotional check-ins—contributing to improved emotional regulation, empathy, and peer connection (Moya & Rodriguez, 2020).

Outer Domain – Cultivating Peace with Others and the World

The outer domain addresses the social, political, structural, cultural, and ecological dimensions of peace. It emphasizes the need to transform harmful systems and dominant norms, while building right relationships across human and ecological communities.

This domain invites learners and educators to think systemically, act ethically, and engage politically and relationally. It draws on pedagogical traditions such as critical pedagogy and ecopedagogy (Freire, 1970; Kahn 2010) that link education to justice, sustainability, and planetary well-being. It encourages critical reflection on human–Earth relations, highlighting the interdependence of social, political, and ecological justice.

Foundational approaches may include classroom-based inquiry into themes of peace, justice, sustainability, and human rights—using dialogue, case studies, and storytelling to explore systems of harm and possibility. Advanced approaches may involve community-based learning, collective action, and policy engagement—supporting learners to actively challenge injustice and build alternatives. For example, a global initiative that educated, mentored, and mobilised youth, communities, and organisations in 12 countries led to over 20 youth-led projects. These ranged from environmental justice efforts in Colombia and community-building in South Sudan, to youth-led dialogue and conflict resolution workshops across Ukraine and Russia (Gittins, 2021).

Context Domain – Grounding the Work in Place and Time

The context domain explores the "where," "when," and "with whom" of peace education, grounding the work in time, place, history, and ecology.

Grounding peace education in context requires deep engagement with place-based knowledge, Indigenous traditions, socio-ecological dynamics, and the political, historical, and ecological conditions shaping human and ecological systems (Gittins, 2017). This includes recognising legacies of violence and resistance, and attending carefully to the lived realities that inform practice.

In a world-centred approach, contextualisation involves balancing the needs of people and place with global aspirations. Without such grounding, peace education risks becoming detached from the communities it serves and the ecosystems in which it unfolds.

Foundational approaches may include using local languages, engaging with regional histories and exploring cultural practices rooted in everyday life. Advanced approaches may involve co-designing curricula with local communities—working alongside elders, youth, and other local actors—to ensure the work is relevant, grounded, and responsive to place and time. For example, a peace education initiative in Aotearoa New Zealand integrated Māori knowledge through collaborative curriculum development with community leaders and elders (Smith, 2012).

Pluralism Domain – Embracing Diverse Ways of Knowing

The pluralism domain embraces diverse ways of knowing, being, and acting. It addresses the "what" of peace education—what knowledge, principles, and pedagogies should guide the work.

Instead of universal models, it invites critical, feminist, decolonial, Indigenous, spiritual, artistic, and posthumanist traditions into generative dialogue. Drawing on cosmopolitan principles, it values respectful exchange, hybrid practices, and mutual learning. Posthumanist pedagogy, for example, challenges anthropocentric assumptions by decentring the human subject and recognising the agency of nonhuman beings, systems, and relationships. Scholars such as Rosi Braidotti (2013) argue for educational approaches that embrace complexity, hybridity, and ethical entanglement across species and technologies. In this view, peace is not solely a human concern but a multispecies condition—one that requires humility, curiosity, and shared responsibility.

Likewise, Indigenous knowledge systems deepen pluralism through relational worldviews that resist linear, extractive, and dualistic logics. These traditions emphasise community, intergenerational learning, and reciprocal relationships with the land. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into peace education expands the concept beyond multicultural inclusion—pointing toward more embodied, spiritual, and Earth-connected pedagogies.

Foundational approaches may involve exploring diverse peace traditions and regional case studies to surface multiple perspectives and encourage critical reflection. Advanced approaches might support deeper intercultural exchange, dialogic engagement, and collaborative exploration of worldviews, knowledge systems, and peace practices. For example, storytelling, listening, and symbolic practices have been used in cross-cultural peace education to surface tensions, foster empathy, and explore knowledge that emerges through encounter, memory, and lived experience (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Bekerman, 2007).

Process Domain – Enabling Co-Creation and Inclusive Practices

The process domain addresses the 'how' of peace education—how it is co-designed, facilitated, and evaluated. It focuses on the integrity of process, not just outcomes.

This domain frames peace education as a dynamic, evolving practice shaped through relational inquiry—where ideas and actions emerge from those involved, the places they inhabit, and the needs of the Earth. As such, equal attention must be paid to the processes through which the work unfolds—how people relate, make decisions, and learn together—not only to its content or outcomes. The methods of peace education must embody the values they promote, centring reflective practice, dialogue, and compassion.

Central to this domain is the idea of human agency—the capacity of individuals and communities to shape their realities through inquiry, reflection, and action. In world-centred peace education, agency is understood as relational and situated, exercised in connection with others and the wider world.

Collaboration is essential. It brings together people, experiences, and ways of knowing across all stages of peace education. It also activates the other enabling domains—context and pluralism—by translating them into lived, co-created practice. This domain encourages the practice of shared power, reflexivity, and collaborative design.

Foundational practices include early consultation with participants, integrating feedback throughout the project, and creating space for ongoing reflection. Advanced practices involve co-creating the full initiative—from needs assessment and curriculum design to delivery, evaluation, and dissemination. These approaches require time, trust, and a commitment to shared power, guided by the principle of "nothing about us without us." Importantly, this principle extends beyond human communities, inviting relational accountability to the more-than-human world as well.

For example, a participatory action research project in Bolivia supported young people to co-create a peace education initiative. Positioned as research collaborators, participants shaped the curriculum, facilitated workshops, and led their own local projects addressing a range of social and environmental issues. The process culminated in a public event—co-designed and co-led by the young

participants—where they shared their work with community members, UN representatives, NGOs, and civil society actors (Gittins, 2017).

With the five domains outlined, the next section explores how this framework can be practically applied across educational, community, and research contexts.

Applying the Framework: Practice, Research, and Reflection

What does all this mean for peace education practice? How can the framework be used to inform new ways of thinking, relating, and acting in the field? This section proposes two possible applications: as a resource for educational and community practice, and as a guide for research and evaluation.

Using the Framework in Education and Community Practice

The framework can help to reimagine how peace education might be designed and facilitated—across classroom and community settings. It can serve as a versatile tool to inform transdisciplinary education linking social justice, environmental science, and global citizenship—and to support peace initiatives that bridge social transformation with ecological well-being. It can guide values-based planning, mid-course adaptation, and post-activity reflection, offering a flexible resource for each stage of a peace education initiative. It also provides a shared structure and vocabulary to foster dialogue among those working at the intersections of peace, justice, war, and the environment.

Curricula grounded in a world-centred approach emphasise relational ethics, contextual sensitivity, and ecological interdependence. It could be structured using the five domains outlined above—which together support learning that is ethical, systemic, place-based, inclusive, and participatory.

Facilitation strategies guided by this approach prioritise relational engagement over content transmission. Educators become co-learners, cultivating dialogue, storytelling, land-based learning, systems thinking, and contemplative practice. These methods are practised not as techniques to deliver, but as responsive engagements with the cultural, social, and ecological realities in which education unfolds.

Using the Framework in Research and Evaluation Processes

The framework can serve as a generative resource for study, research, and evaluation. It can guide the formulation of research questions and agendas, support study design, and inform methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Adaptable to both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it can support context-sensitive exploration of peace education work.

In keeping with its relational ethos, the framework supports research approaches that are participatory, co-created, and grounded in the lived realities of those directly involved. It challenges extractive or decontextualised models

of inquiry and affirms the value of collaborative, place-based inquiry. Concepts such as *nos-otros* (relational co-becoming) and *interbeing* (mutual embeddedness in the web of life) further enrich methodologies that recognise the social and ecological entanglements shaping peace and violence.

Evaluation practices informed by the framework would be similarly relational and reflective. Rather than treating evaluation as an external judgment, the framework supports formative and dialogic approaches embedded throughout the learning process. Where assessment is used, it should reflect the framework's values—prioritising reflective practice, ethical responsiveness, and relational engagement over standardised metrics or individual performance. What matters most is not just what learners know, but how they relate—to themselves, others, and the living world.

The five-domain structure also offers a useful tool for organising and guiding evaluation. Questions for reflection might include:

- **Inner Domain:** In what ways did the learning experience support inner consideration, ethical imagination, and relational responsibility?
- **Outer Domain:** How did it engage with or challenge systemic and ecological conditions that shape peace and violence?
- **Context Domain:** How was the learning grounded in specific histories, cultures, places, and relationships?
- **Pluralism Domain:** How were diverse voices, knowledges, and ways of being meaningfully included and valued?
- **Process Domain:** How were peace education processes co-created, facilitated, and adapted with integrity, care, and responsiveness?

These questions are not intended as a checklist, but prompts for inquiry, dialogue, and reflection. They are designed to support research and evaluation practices that reflect the ethos of the framework outlined in this article.

Contributions, Implications, and Future Directions

This section summarises the article's contributions, considers their implications for policy, research, and practice, and identifies avenues for future inquiry.

Contributions

This article contributes to peace education scholarship and practice by advocating for a shift beyond people-centred toward world-centred peace education. In doing so, it situates peace education within an integrated social and ecological framework—not merely focused on individual or social purposes but oriented toward cultivating mutual care and responsibility among people,

planet, and place. Peace is reframed as a relational ethic—active, evolving, and grounded in interdependence across communities, ecosystems, and scales.

The article also develops a novel world-centred framework, grounded in a clear guiding purpose and relational worldview. It offers a coherent and adaptable five-domain structure—Inner, Outer, Context, Pluralism, and Process—that guides the design, implementation, and evaluation of peace education initiatives across diverse contexts. By emphasising ecological awareness, relational engagement, and responsiveness to place and context, the framework supports a holistic approach to complex socio-ecological challenges. It also responds to growing calls for models that meaningfully integrate the personal, the social, and the ecological. By offering both conceptual grounding and practical guidance, the framework supports peace education that is as much about learning with the world as about transforming our ways of relating to it.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Pedagogy

A world-centred approach has profound implications for research, practice, and the wider field of peace education. Several are outlined here.

At the policy level, peace education frameworks must be reimagined to explicitly integrate social and ecological concerns rather than treat them as separate domains. Embedding socio-eco peace principles into national curricula, teacher training, and global education frameworks can bridge longstanding divides—connecting social justice with planetary stewardship and sustainability.

While this approach aligns with existing sustainable development models (Sachs, 2015) that link social and environmental goals, it goes further by arguing that lasting, just, and sustainable peace requires dismantling the structures and logics of the War System. Militarism's ideological, economic, and institutional foundations must be directly confronted if peace education is to be genuinely inclusive, equitable, and transformative.

Practically, educators, facilitators, and institutions are called upon to (re)conceptualise their roles as co-creators of learning environments that are ecologically grounded, responsive to time and place, and rooted in relationship. This shift involves cultivating cultures that value dialogue, critical reflection, and relational accountability, and co-creating learning spaces where diverse voices and knowledge systems can flourish.

Pedagogically, a world-centred approach invites pluralistic, transdisciplinary methods that transcend disciplinary silos and hierarchies. Educators are encouraged to engage with specific cultural, historical, and ecological contexts while nurturing awareness of global interdependence. This orientation supports curriculum, assessment, and partnerships that reflect the realities learners inhabit. It also promotes pedagogical humility—recognising that learners, educators, and environments co-shape one another through shared, situated learning encounters.

At the core of these shifts is language—what Kemmis (2009) calls the "sayings" of educational practice. Reimagining what peace education is and could become involves more than changes in purpose, principles, content, and form—it also involves rethinking the very vocabulary through which peace is conceptualised and pursued. Language is not merely symbolic—it constitutes how peace is imagined, communicated, and enacted. This article highlights the need to challenge dominant narratives—particularly those that call for "putting people first"—in order to disrupt anthropocentric assumptions that narrow peace to the human realm. While people-centred approaches offer important contributions, privileging the human alone marginalises the agency of nonhuman life and reinforces hierarchies that separate people from the planet. A world-centred approach affirms the interdependence of all life and calls for a vocabulary rooted in kinship, reciprocity, and relational responsibility.

Future Directions

As a new yet evolving framework, world-centred peace education invites ongoing inquiry, critique, and collaboration. This includes surfacing tensions, challenging assumptions, and participating in evolving conversations to refine and strengthen the framework. Future research should investigate how the framework can be adapted and used across contexts. The following suggested directions correspond to the framework's interrelated domains, highlighting opportunities to deepen understanding and advance practice:

- **Inner Domain:** Further research could examine how work on self—through self-awareness, ethical imagination, and spiritual grounding—contribute to individual well-being and broader forms of peace. This includes exploring how inner peace connects with interpersonal relationships, systemic conditions, and reciprocal engagement with the Earth, and how these interlinked dynamics influence social and ecological peace.
- **Outer Domain:** Investigations could focus on how the framework resonates within policy arenas, institutions, grassroots initiatives, and civil society. Research might trace what emerges, shifts, or endures when its principles are applied, paying close attention to how diverse contexts are bridged without losing connection to local realities and ecological specificities.
- **Context Domain:** Studies may explore how local histories, ecologies, and political dynamics shape peace education practices and pedagogies. Emphasising contextual specificity over universal prescriptions can deepen relevance, cultural resonance, and impact.
- **Pluralism Domain:** Further inquiry could examine the integration of Indigenous, land-based, and marginalised epistemologies with dominant knowledge systems. This research might illuminate ways diverse

knowledges coexist, interact, and mutually enrich pluralistic learning environments, fostering more inclusive and holistic peace education.

- **Process Domain:** Research might investigate how peace education can be co-designed and practised with, by, and for both human and more-than-human communities. Focus could be placed on participatory processes that advance co-creation, shared agency, and relational accountability throughout all stages of design, facilitation, reflection, and renewal.

Addressing today's socio-ecological crises requires more than technical fixes or isolated reforms. It calls for a fundamental reorientation of how peace is understood, practiced, and pursued. This includes transcending disciplinary and institutional divides, and cultivating collaborative partnerships across education, climate justice, Indigenous leadership, policy, spirituality, and activism.

World-centred peace education contributes to this shift by offering both a flexible framework and a generative vocabulary—tools not only for designing research and practice, but for reimagining what peace and peace education are and could become. In this way, it embodies both the language of critique and the language of possibility—naming root causes while opening space for regenerative alternatives. More than a set of pedagogical strategies, it offers a way of speaking, relating, and acting that is relational, regenerative, and responsive to the full web of life. In this sense, it is not only a framework for peace education—it is a framework for transformation grounded in relationship.

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