

The Role of Education in Peacebuilding: Integrating Peace Education into Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in the Solomon Islands

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family in grateful recognition for their unerring love, prayers and support. My family refused to desert me, although it appeared I had deserted them. They have been with me every step of the way. Their sacrifice and patience has largely contributed to the completion of this PhD. **To Helen, Alfred, Kylie and Jerry.**

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Abstract

This thesis presents an in-depth qualitative case study of the efforts of six classrooms in three Solomon Islands' secondary schools to integrate peace education into their teaching of the social studies curriculum at junior secondary level. It has been claimed that teaching peace has the potential to create a culture of peace and healing in conflict and post-conflict societies and thus in turn to advance a civilisation of peace that extends beyond the post-conflict era. In order to address such claims, classroom observation was conducted in three community high schools, simultaneously over a period of four months. Using the critical features of peace education and curriculum policy, the integration of peace into classroom practice is described. Distinctions between these features in relation to theory and policy are examined as they emerged 'in practice,' allowing indigenous peace practices to inform the classroom curriculum.

Building on these empirically grounded findings, this thesis strongly supports the integration of indigenous-based peace practices and perspectives into the curriculum. The diversity within cultures affords an opportunity to understand school curricula as culturally situated. Through the analysis, the concept of peace is understood as the basis upon which a curriculum is constructed. The study demonstrates that a classroom peace curriculum can be culturally relevant if it is guided by a clear concept of peace. In *Temotu Nendo*, the conceptualisation of peace as *nowe* is the foundation of the culture's peacebuilding practices. In practice, *nowe* easily lends itself as a framework upon which the development and teaching of peace can be developed. As a case study, this research was not intended to represent the teaching of peace in all Solomon Islands' schools. However, it concludes that the case study has provided a credible and culture-specific approach to teaching peace in schools, providing insights for other cultures in the country and/or other parts of the world. The integration of peace into the school curriculum from a cultural perspective forms an important contribution to education and peacebuilding and can be extended to other areas of social practice.

Finally, the thesis suggests areas for further research and discusses implications and contributions relating to theory, methodology and practice.

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List of Acronyms

BCHS: Bay-view Community High School
 CCHS: Central Community High School
 CDC: Curriculum Development Centre
 CDO: Curriculum Development Officers
 CHS: Community High School
 CNURA: Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement
 COPRED: Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development
 EFA: Education for All
 ESIRP: Education Sector Investment Reform Programme
 EU: European Union
 GDP: Gross Domestic Product
 GRA: Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army
 HCHS: Hills Community High School
 HOD: Head of Department
 IFM: Isatabu Freedom Movement
 ITP: Integrated Theory of Peace
 ITPE: Integrated Theory of Peace Education
 JSS: Junior Secondary School
 MEF: Malaita Eagle Force
 METHRD: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
 MIs: Multiple Intelligences
 MNURP: Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace
 MP: Member of Parliament
 NCRA: National Coalition for Reform Advancement
 OBE: Outcome Based Education
 RAMSI: Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
 RCDF: Rural Constituency Development Fund
 RGDP: Real Gross Domestic Product
 RTC: Rural Training Centres
 SAC: Subject Advisory Committees
 SBCD: School-Based Curriculum Development
 SIAC: Solomon Islands Alliance for Change
 SIBC: Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation
 SICHE: Solomon Islands College of Higher Education
 SIPL: Solomon Islands Plantation Ltd
 SISC: Solomon Islands School Certificate
 SISEE: Secondary Entrance Examination
 SWG: Subject Working Group
 TIT: Teacher in Training
 TPA: Townsville Peace Agreement
 TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission