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## Education as a Catalyst for Peacebuilding beyond the Classroom



(UNICEF, 2015)

## **Glossary of Terms**

**ALP – Accelerated Learning Programme**

**BRAC – Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee**

**BTS – Back-to-School**

**CBT – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**

**EiE – Emergencies in Education**

**GESS – Girls’ Education South Sudan**

**HEART – Healing and Education through the Arts**

**IRC – International Rescue Committee**

**INEE – Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies**

**NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation**

**PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

**UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund**

**UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation**

**UNDP – United Nations Development Programme**

## A. Introduction

This essay investigates Education in Emergencies (EiE) as a transformative mechanism for addressing systemic barriers to learning among populations affected by conflict and disasters (Sinclair, 2001). EiE emerged in response to the growing recognition of education's fundamental role in post-crisis recovery (INEE, 2023). As a human right and pathway to peace, EiE fosters social cohesion and equips individuals with skills for stability and resilience (UNESCO, 2024; Galtung, 1967).

Table 1 outlines key definitions central to this essay, clarifying foundational concepts.

**Table 1: Key Definitions for this Essay**

Concept	Definition
<b>Education</b>	A medium for imparting not only pedagogic instruction but also attitudes, values, and behaviours (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).
<b>Peacebuilding</b>	Targeted measures to reduce conflict relapse by enhancing capacities for conflict management and fostering sustainable peace. Peacebuilding education promotes social cohesion and addresses inequalities (Smith et al., 2011).
<b>Peacebuilding Education</b>	A bottom-up process driven by war-torn communities, grounded in their lived experiences and capacities, fostering non-violence, equity, and reconciliation (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Sheikh and Akhter, 2023).
<b>Trauma</b>	A key factor in crisis contexts, is response to severe stress that hinders children's cognitive and emotional development, disrupting their ability to learn (Perry, 2006; Van der Kolk, 2014).
<b>Education in Emergencies (EiE)</b>	Refers to the provision of educational opportunities in settings disrupted by crises such as conflict, natural calamities, or displacement (INEE, 2023).

*Table 1 - (Author's Own, 2024)*

EiE faces distinct challenges and requires different strategies depending on the context. Conflict zones need solutions for inequalities, trauma, and cultural tensions, while disaster zones need rapid infrastructure recovery and resource mobilisation (INEE, 2024).

EiE, is deeply embedded in Western humanitarian models shaped by post-Cold War peacekeeping, and global mandates, constrained by models prioritising scalability over context-sensitive approaches (Shah et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2024). Novelli et al. (2016) critiques Western-led EiE models for

perpetuating North-South inequalities and emphasises the need for community-driven, culturally relevant frameworks from the Global South.

EiE must address trauma-related conditions, such as PTSD in Syrian children and early marriage in South Sudan (Sellouti et al., 2020; Human Rights Council, 2022). Bush and Saltarelli (2000) highlight the flexibility of non-formal education in addressing cultural contexts, fostering resilience, emotional recovery, and peacebuilding (UNESCO, 2024a). They contrast this with the rigid structure of formal education, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Types of Education**

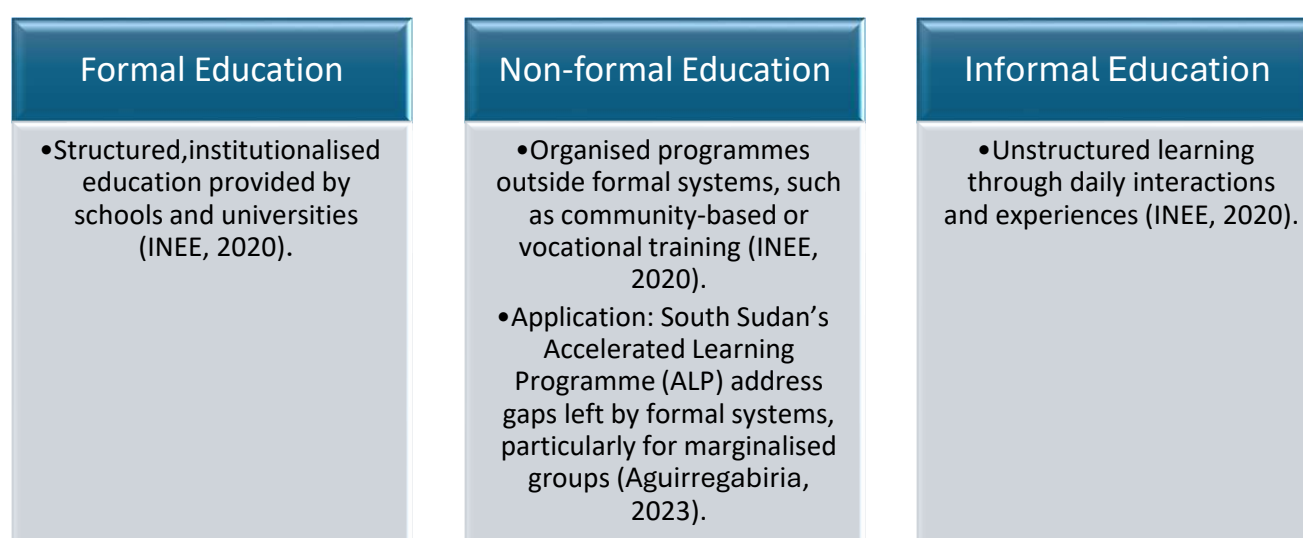


Figure 1: (Authors Own, 2024)

Educational frameworks do not inherently promote equity or resilience. Laub (2013) states their effectiveness depends on context-sensitive implementation. Without this alignment, education risks perpetuating inequalities rather than addressing them effectively (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). For example, the imposition of Arabic-language curricula and the closure of missionary schools in South Sudan marginalised local communities, reflecting a history of educational policies used as tools of repression, which contributed to broader political and social inequalities (Novelli et al., 2016).

This essay delves into Bush and Saltarelli's dual nature of education, structural challenges in EiE, and theoretical foundations such as Galtung's peace theory and Illich's decentralised learning. Using examples like post-genocide reforms in Rwanda, highlights how inclusive, context-sensitive systems can transform education into a catalyst for equity, reconciliation, and sustainable peacebuilding.

## B. The Duality of Education

To understand EiE's impact, it is essential to explore its dual nature. Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) concept of education's potential to either foster peace or entrench divisions. In Rwanda, colonial education systems institutionalized ethnic divisions by privileging the Tutsi and marginalizing the Hutu, which contributed to the 1994 genocide. Ethnic identity cards and curricula reinforced stereotypes, fostering resentment and resulting in the deaths of 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu (Ndabaga, 2021; Magnarella, 2005). This exemplifies Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) notion of negative education, which entrenches social inequalities and fuels conflict.

Rwanda's post-genocide educational reforms show how EiE can foster reconciliation and long-term peacebuilding. Grounded in Galtung's positive peace, these reforms addressed historical divisions through inclusive curricula, introducing genocide studies and human rights education to promote unity and peaceful coexistence (Obura, 2003; Ndabaga, 2021). By empowering local communities and integrating traditional values, decentralised systems supported trauma recovery and tackled root causes of division (Obura, 2003; Ndabaga, 2021). These measures laid the foundation for a culture of peace, responding to immediate crises while preventing future conflicts.

Table 2 outlines key components of Rwanda's educational reforms.

**Table 2: Post-Genocide Reforms in Rwanda**

Reform Area	Key objectives	Impact
<b>Curriculum Reforms</b>	Inclusion of genocide studies, human rights, and peaceful coexistence education (Ndabaga, 2021; Obura, 2003).	Addressed root causes of division, fostered unity and reconciliation, gender equity (Ndabaga, 2021; Obura, 2003).
<b>Teacher Training</b>	Conflict-sensitive pedagogy, inclusive classroom practices (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Jukes et al., 2021)	Promoted social cohesion and trauma recovery (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Jukes et al., 2021)
<b>Decentralisation</b>	Empowered communities to integrate traditional values like tolerance and collective responsibility (Narang Suri, 2016).	Strengthened local agency and cultural relevance (Narang Suri, 2016).

*Table 2 (Author's Own, 2024)*

These reforms addressed historical injustices and demonstrated how inclusive, context-sensitive education transforms schools into platforms for healing and peace. Rwanda's post-genocide

initiatives underscore education's potential to rebuild fractured societies and create pathways to resilience and unity. Understanding the dual nature of education highlights the need for theoretical frameworks that can guide its transformative potential. These post-genocide reforms in Rwanda underscore the importance of a well-structured theoretical framework. The subsequent discussion will explore how Galtung's and Illich's frameworks provide the necessary tools to understand and implement education as a vehicle for peacebuilding. To further explore this duality, the theoretical frameworks of Galtung and Illich provide the lenses through which EiE can be examined. These theoretical frameworks offer insights into how education in conflict settings can either rebuild societies or reinforce existing inequalities.

### C. Theoretical Framework

These frameworks highlight education's potential in emergencies (Smith et al., 2011), yet many educators often lack training in trauma-informed approaches (Khatib et al., 2013). Humanitarian actors bridge the gap by providing resources and logistical support in disrupted contexts (Willers, 1975). However, these external solutions may misalign with local needs, particularly when peace education requires culturally relevant curricula (Smith et al., 2011). Collaborative approaches are essential, empowering local educators while leveraging humanitarian expertise for contextually relevant interventions (Obura, 2003; Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).

Galtung's framework highlights education's role in fostering positive peace by addressing root causes of conflict and promoting equity (Galtung, 1967; Smith et al., 2011), as exemplified by Rwanda's post-genocide reforms, which fostered social cohesion. The framework aligns with indigenous practices such as Rwanda's gacaca courts, used to restore social harmony after the genocide (Ndabaga, 2021; Obura, 2003). As shown in Table 3, Galtung defines positive peace as the absence of structural violence and the presence of social justice, addressing the root causes of violence to achieve lasting peace.

**Table 3: Galtung's (1967) Key Definitions:**

Concept	Definition
Negative Peace	The cessation and/or absence of violence.
Positive Peace	The absence of structural violence. The presence of social justice. The conditions that eliminate the causes of violence.
Root causes of conflict	Manifestations of structural and cultural violence, leading to direct violence, such as inequitable access.

<b>Sustainable peace</b>	Peace and processes towards it that address the root causes of violent conflict.
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Table 3 (Author's Own, 2024)

Illich critiques traditional schooling for perpetuating societal hierarchies and structural barriers through a "hidden curriculum" that prioritises conformity over autonomy (Illich, 1970). He advocates for decentralised, learner-centred education that empowers communities and fosters autonomy. This philosophy aligns with EiE, particularly in refugee contexts where flexibility and community-driven initiatives are critical (INEE, 2024). Illich's concept of "learning webs" supports modern approaches such as mobile learning hubs and peer-to-peer networks, which empower learners to rebuild fractured societies. These models foster adaptability, inclusivity, and resilience by tailoring education to displaced populations.

Galtung's positive peace and Illich's decentralised education emphasise addressing systemic injustices and fostering equity and reconciliation. This approach aims to eliminate the root causes of conflict by tackling structural violence (Galtung, 1967; Smith et al., 2011). These frameworks inform trauma-sensitive pedagogy and peace education.

These approaches enable communities to rebuild cohesively; however, they face challenges such as insufficient investment, instability, and resource constraints in emergency settings, hindering long-term commitment (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). Despite these barriers, Galtung and Illich's frameworks offer pathways for equitable education systems that foster stability and peace. By addressing systemic inequalities and fostering autonomy, their principles empower learners and promote long-term peacebuilding. Partnerships among humanitarian actors, local communities, and governments are essential for adapting these theories, enabling EiE to create transformative environments that rebuild societies peacefully (Veugelers, 2011; UNICEF, 2024a). While these theoretical frameworks highlight the potential of EiE as a peacebuilding tool, the reality of its implementation in crisis contexts reveals significant structural challenges, which must be addressed for effective outcomes.

#### D. Structural Issues in EiE

EiE frameworks are constrained by rigid curricula that fail to accommodate displaced learners, resource scarcity limiting teacher training and access to materials, and infrastructure deficits exacerbating disparities in access (INEE, 2024). EiE interventions must tackle both immediate recovery and the deep-seated inequalities that obstruct educational access, especially in conflict zones. The



implementation of EiE differs across conflict and disaster contexts, necessitating customized strategies to meet specific needs with flexibility and cultural relevance, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Conflict vs Disaster Context**

Context	Challenges	Priorities	Duration
<b>Conflict Context</b>	Ongoing violence, displacement, systemic inequalities, sociopolitical instability (Smith, et al., 2011).	Safety, equity, trauma-informed care, collapsing infrastructure, resource shortages (Smith et al., 2011).	Long-term, ongoing
<b>Disaster Context</b>	Infrastructure destruction, lack of emergency preparedness, scarcity of resources, and disruptions to normalcy (UNESCO, 2024; INEE, 2024)	Infrastructure repair, logistical coordination, restoring normalcy (INEE, 2024)	Short-term, potential long-term impacts

*Table 4 (Author's Own, 2024)*

These distinctions underline the importance of developing conflict-sensitive and disaster-responsive frameworks within EiE programming.

**Key Challenges in EiE**

Freire (2017) critiques rigid systems that perpetuate inequalities, while Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Sinclair (2001) highlight how standardised curricula often exclude displaced children due to inaccessible facilities and unfamiliar languages. Table 5 summarises the key challenges in EiE.

**Table 5: Challenges in EiE**

Challenges	Statistics	Source
<b>Funding Gaps</b>	Only 43% of aid requests being fulfilled in 2019. Furthermore, as of 2023, only 50% of global education needs are being met.	(INEE, 2020; INEE, 2024)
<b>Cultural Misalignment</b>	External frameworks often overlook local traditions.	(Smith et al., 2011).
<b>Infrastructure Deficits</b>	7,000 schools destroyed in Syria and 2,426 non-functional schools destroyed in Yemen.	(Lizuka, 2024; UNDP, 2024)

<b>Access Inequalities</b>	In 2023, 70% of South Sudanese children and, in 2022, 7.8 million Afghan children remained out of school, significantly impacting educational continuity and access. In 2022, 127 million crisis-affected children and a total of 250 million children worldwide were out of school.	(Human Rights Watch, 2023; Aguilar & Heusser, 2022; UNICEF; UNESCO, 2023)
<b>Declining Support</b>	Humanitarian funding allocated to education dropped from 3.2% of total humanitarian spending in 2018 to 2.6% in 2019. In 2023, there was a 4% reduction in funding for education in humanitarian crises. Additionally, in 2024, UN education funding appeals decreased by 26%.	(Aguilar & Heusser, 2022; Heusser et al., 2024)

Table 5 (Author's Own, 2024)

To overcome these barriers, EiE must prioritise flexible, community-led initiatives and adaptive pedagogies (Shah, R. et al., 2024). However, persistent gaps between the Global North and South in EiE are not solely due to resource disparities. Deep-rooted power dynamics favour the Global North, with Western organisations often imposing standardised curricula and solutions that disregard the historical and cultural contexts of local communities (Novelli, M. et al., 2016). This approach reinforces dependency on external aid, marginalising local innovation and perpetuating inequities. Without addressing these systemic issues, EiE risks limiting its potential to effectively tackle systemic inequalities.

### Formal vs. Non-Formal Education in EiE

Non-formal education models, with their community-led, culturally relevant curricula, offer greater flexibility in crises and can effectively bridge gaps in access and equity, overcoming structural barriers left by rigid formal systems (INEE, 2024; Novelli et al., 2016), as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Comparison of Formal and Non-Formal Education in EiE**

Criteria	Formal Education	Non-Formal Education
<b>Structure</b>	Rigid, standardised curricula (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).	Flexible, adaptable to local needs (INEE, 2024).
<b>Accessibility</b>	Limited for marginalised groups (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).	Better outreach to displaced and vulnerable groups (INEE, 2024).
<b>Examples</b>	Public school systems (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000).	Community-led learning hubs (INEE, 2024).

Table 6 (Author's Own, 2024)

## Statistics Reflecting EiE Challenges

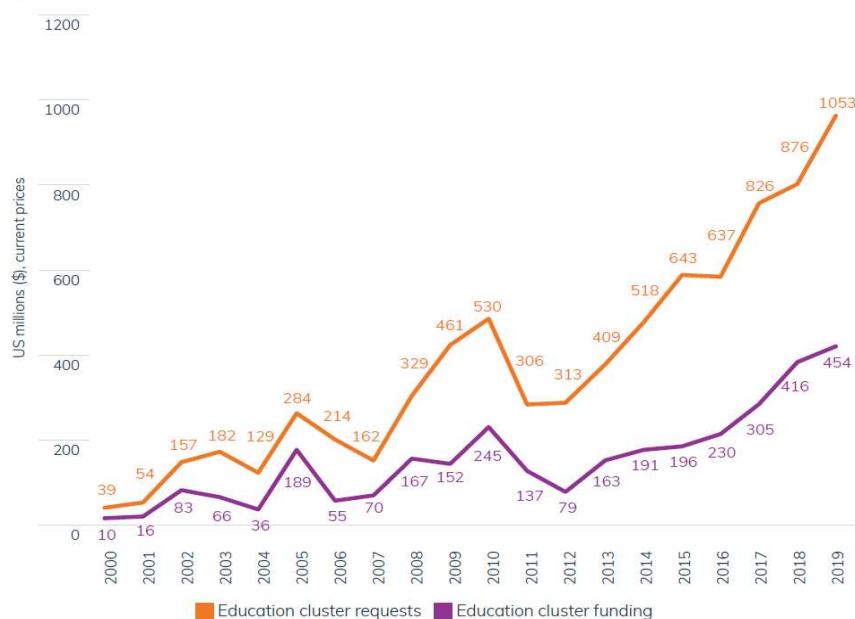
Crisis-affected contexts face significant deficits in educational infrastructure and access. These deficits deprive children of stability, psychosocial support, and social cohesion, all critical for rebuilding communities (UNICEF, 2022).

## Funding and Infrastructure Deficits

Figure 2 illustrates the gap between requested and actual funding, highlighting EiE underfunding. Such funding shortfalls disproportionately impact less visible crises, such as those in Yemen and South Sudan (Aguilar & Heusser, 2022).

### Figure 2: Requested vs. Actual Funding for the Education Sector

Figure 2 - Funding Gap for the Education Sector (INEE, 2020)



## Access Inequalities

Funding gaps exacerbate inequities, particularly in countries like South Sudan and Afghanistan. Table 7 summarises key barriers affecting educational access in these contexts, highlighting the urgent need for culturally relevant, inclusive models.

**Table 7: Access Inequalities in EiE:**

Country	Barrier	Impact	Source
South Sudan	Unsafe travel, early marriage, domestic pressures	2.2 million children out of school in 2018	ReliefWeb, 2021
Afghanistan	Harmful gender norms, traditional and religious barriers, logistical challenges in training educators, gender stereotyping in teaching materials, and insecurity	7.8 million children without access to education in 2022	Human Rights Watch, 2023

*Table 7 (Author's Own, 2024)*

Inclusive education approaches, focusing on safety and equity, are essential for bridging these disparities and fostering reconciliation.



*Syria 2020 (UNICEF, 2024c)*

## The Role of Local Leadership

Scalable frameworks often overlook cultural nuances, alienating communities (Smith et al., 2011). Empowering local educators ensures cultural relevance and addresses donor influence. Programmes like Girls' Education South Sudan (GESS) adapt curricula to local values and promote gender equality. Despite patriarchal challenges, GESS's workshops highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity and collaboration in achieving educational success (GESS).

## **E. The Philosophical Underpinnings of Education**

Philosophy guides EiE, shaping knowledge to rebuild communities and foster peace (Donovan, 2021). Freire's (2017) focus on dialogue aligns with trauma-informed teaching, advocating mutual learning between educators and students. By co-creating curricula, this method addresses immediate educational needs and disrupts systemic inequities rooted in conflict and displacement.

Humanistic philosophy emphasises empathy and authenticity, essential for fostering trust in vulnerable learners (McLeod, 2024). Initiatives like Save the Children's HEART programme exemplify this by using art and storytelling to help children process trauma and regain stability (Save the Children, 2024). Humanism is crucial in peacebuilding, equipping individuals with the skills and mindset to foster reconciliation and non-violence (Veugelers, 2011). These core tenets equip individuals with the skills and mindsets essential for fostering reconciliation, mutual understanding, and non-violence. Creative expression supports academic growth and helps children reflect on their experience, facilitating emotional healing and fostering self-awareness. By integrating both academic and emotional recovery, humanistic education plays a pivotal role in addressing the multifaceted needs of children affected by conflict, offering them a pathway to both learning and hope.

However, implementing EiE approaches faces challenges, including resistance from educators, resource constraints, and balancing teacher authority with learner autonomy (Khatib et al., 2013; Willers, 1975). Resource limitations hinder trauma-informed practices like INEE's Minimum Standards (INEE, 2024), while rigid credentialing frameworks deprioritise personal growth and reflection (El Souefi, 2022).

While humanistic education emphasises individual growth and resilience, critical theory offers a lens to dismantle systemic barriers and promote social justice. In South Sudan, workshops to co-design gender-sensitive curricula with community leaders exemplify critical theory's application in EiE (GESS). Despite these efforts, entrenched patriarchal norms and limited resources hindered full implementation, highlighting the complexity of systemic change (GESS; Jukes et al., 2021; Shayan, 2015). Morrow and Brown (1994) and Crossman (2024) note, critical theory examining how knowledge, power, and social structures interact, particularly in educational settings. Unlike traditional theories that merely seek to explain societal dynamics, critical theory actively challenges oppressive systems and promotes social change (Morrow et al, 1994). This approach is particularly relevant to peacebuilding as it addresses the root causes of conflict inequality, domination, and

structural violence by questioning and transforming the systems that perpetuate them (Crossman, 2024). Rooted in Marxist critique, it highlights how economic and ideological structures perpetuate these issues (Crossman, 2024). Rwanda's post-genocide curriculum reforms illustrate critical theory's application by embedding genocide studies and peace education, fostering reconciliation and inclusivity (Obura, 2003).

Despite its transformative potential to dismantle systemic inequities, critical theory in EiE is hampered by funding, resistance to progressive curricula, and deeply ingrained patriarchal norms (Shayan, 2015; Shah et al., 2024). For instance, in Afghanistan, implementing gender-sensitive curricula is met with resistance from community leaders, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive engagement strategies (Shayan, 2015). Inclusive curricula and the promotion of critical thinking can be seen as mechanisms that empower learners to challenge marginalisation and conceptualise more equitable societies. While EiE is often positioned as a solution to academic disruptions, its implementation overlooks the cultivation of critical consciousness, which can reinforce existing power dynamics (Morrow and Brown, 1994; Shah et al., 2024; Novelli et al., 2016).

This limitation curtails education's potential as a catalyst for long-term social change (Novelli et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2011). For example, South Sudan's gender-equity curricula face resistance due to entrenched norms (UNICEF), highlighting the need for more context-sensitive, transformative approaches (Novelli et al., 2016). Similarly, in Syrian refugee settings, educators lack sufficient training to implement critical pedagogy, which limits the ability to foster critical consciousness among learners (Sellouti et al., 2020). Practical strategies, such as participatory workshops with local educators and students, can help operationalise critical theory by adapting its principles to culturally relevant contexts (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Jukes et al., 2021).

Integrating critical theory into EiE requires investment in teacher training, curriculum development, and collaborative learning models. These efforts must align with local norms to ensure cultural sensitivity and prevent misalignment with community values (Jukes et al., 2021). Resource constraints in emergency settings exacerbate these challenges, necessitating targeted international support and innovative funding mechanisms (Jukes et al., 2021). Table 8 outlines how critical theory and humanism address these challenges differently in conflict and disaster contexts.

**Table 8: Critical Theory and Humanism in EiE**

Framework	Conflict Context	Disaster Context	References
<b>Critical Theory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resistance from entrenched systems and polarised communities.</li> <li>Security risks for challenging dominant narratives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritisation of short-term recovery over long-term systemic change.</li> <li>Less visibility of systemic inequalities.</li> </ul>	Jukes et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2011; Obura, 2003; Novelli et al., 2016
<b>Humanism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing trauma and fostering trust in polarised communities.</li> <li>Cultural norms may resist ideals like autonomy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on immediate survival needs sidelines emotional recovery.</li> <li>Logistical challenges in implementing activities.</li> </ul>	Morrow and Brown, 1994; Jukes et al., 2021; Obura, 2003; Bush and Saltarelli, 2000.

*Table 8 (Author's Own, 2024)*

Humanism fosters respect for dignity and emotional resilience, while critical theory equips learners to challenge inequality and rebuild fractured communities. Translating these philosophical principles into practice requires innovative strategies that address both immediate needs and long-term peacebuilding goals. Examples like Rwanda's post-genocide education reforms and UNICEF's Back-to-School programmes demonstrate how these theories can be effectively applied in crisis settings.

## **F. Practical Applications of Peacebuilding Education Beyond the Classroom**

Transforming educational content and methods addresses the root causes of conflict, fosters resilience, and creates pathways to lasting peace. Rwanda exemplifies education's dual capacity as a tool for division or unity. During the genocide, discriminatory curricula fuelled ethnic divisions, enabling violence (Al Jazeera, 2017; Obura, 2003). Post-genocide reforms integrated genocide studies and peace education, fostering reconciliation through participatory methods that encourage dialogue and empathy (Obura, 2003; Ndahinda et al., 2023). Initiatives like 'Let's Learn Through Play' in Rwanda demonstrate the transformative impact of early education on children and educators, reaching over



250,000 children, 3,500 teachers, 2,400 school leaders, and 145,000 communities (VSO International, 2024).

EiE programmes must prioritise community engagement and context-sensitive approaches, such as Bangladesh’s BRAC programme, addressing post-disaster educational needs through locally tailored strategies (UNESCO, 2016). Similarly, UNICEF’s BTS programmes tackle logistical barriers while fostering reconciliation (Smith et al., 2011; UNICEF, 2013). However, their long-term success requires structural reforms to address systemic inequalities. BTS programmes embody Galtung’s positive peace by restoring infrastructure and promoting reconciliation through shared learning environments, acting as a 'peace dividend' to restore normalcy and mobilise communities for recovery (Smith et al., 2011). Table 9 highlights key achievements of BTS initiatives globally.



UNICEF’s BTS Programme in Madagascar (Ralaivita, 2022)

Table 9: Notable Back-to-School Programme Statistics and Achievements

Country/Region	Year	Key Achievements
Globally	1994-2012	UNICEF’s BTS initiative has been implemented across 55 countries (UNICEF, 2013).



<b>Angola</b>	2004	Recruited and trained 29,000 teachers; additional one million children enrolled in primary school (Reliefweb, 2004)
<b>Rwanda</b>	2009-2011	Curriculum: Genocide Studies and Peace Education. Constructed 8,600+ classrooms, winning the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award in 2012 (UNICEF, 2013).
<b>Liberia</b>	2003	\$6 million campaign targeting the return of 750,000 children to basic learning (UNICEF, 2013).
<b>Afghanistan</b>	2002	Enrolled 1.78 million children and 51,000 teachers in schools at the start of the academic year (UNICEF, 2013).
<b>Occupied Palestinian Territories</b>	2011	Mobilised nearly 50,000 children to return to school through partnerships with UN agencies and local governments (UNICEF, 2013).
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	2022	Distributed 56,305 school kits; provided 308 classrooms benefiting over 150,000 pupils over 10 years (UNICEF, 2022).

*Table 9 (Author's Own)*

While BTS programmes make progress, their long-term impact on systemic inequalities is limited without equity-focused reforms (UNICEF, 2013). Structural reforms must complement BTS to align with Galtung's vision of positive peace.



*(Buechner, 2017)*

Table 10 below, summarises key education programmes in emergencies, highlighting their approaches, challenges, and impact. These examples illustrate how varied strategies contribute to immediate recovery and long-term peacebuilding.

**Table 10: Education Programmes**

Programme	Approach	Impact
<b>Save the Children's HEART</b>	Uses art-based therapies to promote emotional stability, process trauma and readiness to learn (Save the Children, 2024).	Reached 1 million children across 30 countries; improved emotional resilience and readiness to learn (Save the Children, 2024).
<b>IRC's Healing Classrooms</b>	Equips teachers to create inclusive, nurturing environments for refugee learners to develop academic, social, and emotional skills to thrive (de Ruijter, 2024).	Trained 2,212 educators; positively impacted 9,056 students (de Ruijter, 2024).
<b>UNICEF Back-to-School (BTS)</b>	Focuses on rapid reintegration of children into education by repairing infrastructure and providing kits (UNICEF, 2013).	-2012, BTS initiatives had been implemented in over 55 countries (UNICEF, 2013). - In Liberia, UNICEF's distribution of 4,662 School-In-A-Box education kits, enabled thousands of children to resume their education (UNICEF, 2013).

*Table 10 (Author's Own, 2024)*

Programmes like Save the Children's HEART and IRC's Healing Classrooms provide holistic solutions to psychological challenges in crisis settings. These initiatives combine creative therapies and inclusive pedagogy to build resilience and trust but require flexible delivery and local partnerships to overcome logistical constraints (Save the Children, 2024; de Ruijter, 2024).

Digital tools offer innovative pathways for EiE, as outlined in Table 11. These tools provide foundational learning for displaced learners and enable remote learning in areas with limited infrastructure.

**Table 11: Digital Tools Supporting EiE**

Digital Tool	Purpose
<b>Akelius</b>	Language and foundational learning for refugee and migrant learners (UNICEF, 2024b).
<b>SolarSPELL</b>	Solar-powered digital library offering offline access to educational resources (SolarSPELL, 2024).
<b>MoodleBox</b>	Portable, offline learning server providing access to educational content in remote areas (Moodle, 2024).

*Table 11 (Author's Own)*

The integration of tools demonstrates innovation in EiE; however, challenges remain. Tools require culturally relevant content, robust infrastructure, and trained facilitators, often unavailable in crises. For instance, the implementation of SolarSPELL in rural Fijian schools faced challenges due to the lack of locally relevant content, particularly regarding climate change in Fiji. Teachers highlighted the need for materials tailored to the community's specific context and language (Hosman et al., 2020). This highlights the critical role of community partnerships in scaling these technologies effectively (OECD, 2023).

Practical peacebuilding education requires balancing immediate recovery efforts, such as BTS programmes, with long-term reforms that address systemic barriers. Together, these initiatives align with Galtung's positive peace framework, transforming education into a vehicle for equity, resilience, and sustainable peace.

## G. Conclusion

EiE holds transformative potential to address systemic inequalities and promote social cohesion. However, EiE's effectiveness is often undermined by short-term solutions and externally driven models that fail to address root causes of inequality. In contrast, examples like Rwanda's post-genocide reforms and UNICEF's BTS programme demonstrate that when EiE is tailored to local needs, it has the potential to foster peace and resilience. These examples illustrate how EiE can not only respond to immediate educational needs but also catalyse long-term transformation by fostering social cohesion and addressing historical divisions.

Despite its potential, EiE is constrained by systemic issues such as underfunding (INEE, 2020), rigid curricula and a lack of localised frameworks. While EiE frameworks are effective in mitigating the immediate disruptions caused by conflict and disasters, they often fail to challenge the underlying socio-political and economic inequalities that perpetuate educational disparities. The critical question of whether EiE addresses the symptoms of inequality or tackles its root causes remains central to its long-term impact.

For EiE to achieve its transformative potential, it must be integrated into the early stages of humanitarian response, not confined to the development phase. By addressing both immediate educational needs and the deeper structural inequalities that perpetuate marginalisation, EiE can evolve into a long-term, context-sensitive solution. Frameworks like Galtung's positive peace and Illich's decentralised education provide pathways to address these challenges by promoting equity, reconciliation, and learner autonomy. These frameworks offer a vision for EiE that not only mitigates the impacts of crises but also fosters systemic change, empowering communities and promoting social justice through education.

Furthermore, EiE's future success will depend on the adoption of locally driven, culturally relevant approaches (Smith et al., 2011) that prioritise inclusivity and community engagement. To achieve this, partnerships between governments, NGOs, and local educators must be strengthened, ensuring that educational interventions reflect the unique needs and aspirations of affected communities. Innovative funding mechanisms, scalable training models, and the integration of critical theory (Morrow and Brown, 1994) into pedagogy are crucial to overcoming the structural barriers that currently hinder EiE's effectiveness.

The decolonisation of EiE is essential, as Western-led models often reinforce power asymmetries. To dismantle these hierarchies, EiE must embrace community-driven frameworks from the Global South (Novelli et al., 2016), which emphasise mutual capacity-building, equitable decision-making, and

cultural sensitivity (Veugelers, 2011). Only through the continuous dismantling of racialised power dynamics (Novelli et al., 2016) and the amplification of local voices can EiE transform from a tool of external intervention to a vehicle for lasting change and peace.

EiE's success depends on addressing both the symptoms and root causes of inequality. By prioritising context-sensitive approaches (Novelli et al., 2016), strengthening local partnerships (Obura, 2003), and adopting transformative frameworks (Galtung, 1967; Illich, 1970), EiE can foster peace, equity, and resilience in crisis-affected communities. EiE's effectiveness is often limited by barriers like underfunding, cultural misalignment, and rigid models (INEE, 2024), raising the question of whether it addresses the root causes of inequality or only mitigates its symptoms.

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