






From Tragedy to Reconciliation: Advocacy, Legal Strategies, and the Role of History Teachers in Integrating Peace Education in Post-Conflict Areas

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Abstract

Indonesia's post-conflict regions, such as Aceh, Poso, and Papua, continue to confront the legacies of violence, trauma, and contested historical narratives. In these areas, history education holds significant potential for promoting reconciliation and preventing the recurrence of conflict. This study examines the role of history teachers in integrating peace education within the broader frameworks of legal strategies and

advocacy in Indonesian post-conflict settings. Drawing on qualitative research, including in-depth interviews with educators, civil society actors, and local government representatives, the paper explores how history teachers navigate sensitive political and historical issues in classrooms marked by ethnic, religious, and ideological divisions. The study highlights how legal frameworks such as human rights education, truth-seeking efforts, and transitional justice initiatives—though limited in formal policy—are informally adopted by educators through civil society-led training and community advocacy. Findings suggest that when adequately supported, history teachers in Indonesia can act as frontline peacebuilders, helping students develop critical thinking, historical empathy, and a commitment to nonviolence. Moreover, advocacy networks play a crucial role in enabling educators to address topics such as mass violence, displacement, and state-perpetrated injustice in ways that foster healing rather than deepen polarization. By contextualizing peace education within Indonesia's unique socio-political landscape, this paper contributes to the global discourse on post-conflict education and provides practical pathways for integrating historical accountability into curriculum and teacher training programs.

Keywords

Peace Education, Reconciliation, Advocacy, Legal Strategies, History Teachers

A. Introduction

In the wake of violent conflict, societies are frequently confronted with the daunting task of rebuilding trust, reestablishing social cohesion, and addressing historical injustices.¹ Indonesia, with its vast archipelagic geography and diverse ethno-religious composition, has

¹ Haider, Huma. "Social repair in divided societies: Integrating a coexistence lens into transitional justice." *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, no. 2 (2011): 175-203. See also Cole, Elizabeth A. *Unite or divide?: The challenges of teaching history in societies emerging from violent conflict*. Vol. 163. United States Institute of Peace, 2006; Watson, Conrad William. *Of self and injustice: Autobiography and repression in modern Indonesia*. NUS Press, 2006; Wahyuningroem, Sri Lestari, and Dyah Ayu Kartika. "Learning Injustice: Historical Memory of the Indonesian 1965 Genocide and Education to Young People." *Indonesia* 116, no. 1 (2023): 103-116.

experienced several protracted conflicts over the past few decades, particularly in regions such as Aceh, Papua, and the former province of East Timor (Timor-Leste).² These areas have been marked by systemic violence, human rights violations, and deep-rooted grievances that have left lasting scars on communities. Despite official peace agreements and decentralization efforts, the path to meaningful reconciliation remains uneven and fragile, particularly in the realms of historical accountability and education.

In Aceh, the signing of the 2005 Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) marked a significant milestone in ending decades of armed struggle.³ However, while the agreement brought formal peace, the process of reconciling diverging historical narratives—particularly surrounding state violence and community displacement—has been slow and contested. Similar dynamics can be observed in Papua, where the legacy of military operations, political marginalization, and socio-economic disparity continues to fuel tensions despite ongoing government development initiatives. Meanwhile, Timor-Leste's path to independence in 2002 followed a violent referendum in 1999, with memories of mass killings, forced displacement, and cultural erasure still fresh in public consciousness.⁴ In all three cases, education has played a critical role in either reinforcing dominant state narratives or offering space for reflection, critique, and healing.

² See Scambray, James. *Conflict, identity, and state formation in East Timor 2000-2017*. Vol. 311. Brill, 2019; Smith, Claire Q. "Liberal and illiberal peace-building in East Timor and Papua: establishing order in a democratising state." *Conflict, Security & Development* 20, no. 1 (2020): 39-70.

³ Stange, Gunnar, and Roman Patock. "From rebels to rulers and legislators: The political transformation of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Indonesia." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 29, no. 1 (2010): 95-120.

⁴ McWilliam, Andrew, and Michael Leach, eds. *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Timor-Leste*. London: Routledge, 2019; Leandro, Francisco José BS, Enrique Martínez-Galán, and Paulo Gonçalves. "The Portuguese-Speaking Small Island Developing States: The Journey of Their Foreign Policies and International Relations." *Portuguese-speaking Small Island Developing States: The Development Journeys of Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2023. 353-475.

The role of education in post-conflict societies is well-documented in peace and conflict studies. It is widely recognized that education can be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it can promote tolerance, empathy, and democratic values; on the other, it can be instrumentalized to legitimize authoritarianism, suppress dissent, or perpetuate historical denial. In the Indonesian context, curricular content—particularly history textbooks—has long been shaped by centralized state control, often presenting sanitized or one-sided versions of national events. This includes the omission or distortion of sensitive topics such as the 1965 anti-communist purges, the occupation of East Timor, or the violent suppression of independence movements. In post-conflict regions, this poses a significant barrier to reconciliation, as affected communities frequently find their lived experiences absent or misrepresented in official educational narratives.⁵

In response to this, civil society organizations, legal advocacy groups, and educators themselves have increasingly pushed for more inclusive, rights-based approaches to history education. Initiatives such as the “*Sekolah Damai*” (Peace Schools) program in Aceh, and locally developed curricula in Timor-Leste that include oral histories and community storytelling, illustrate attempts to decentralize and humanize history education. These efforts often emphasize the integration of peace education—a pedagogical approach that fosters critical thinking, nonviolent conflict resolution, and intercultural dialogue. Peace education in Indonesia has gained traction in certain regions through NGO-led workshops and teacher training programs. However, such efforts remain sporadic, underfunded, and frequently encounter resistance from local authorities or conservative institutions.⁶

⁵ Citrawan, Harison, and Ganesh Cintika Putri. "Law, Memory, and Silence: The Case of Anti-Communism Laws in Indonesia." *The Age of Human Rights Journal* 22 (2024): e8021-e8021; Zurbuchen, Mary S. "History, memory, and the 1965 incident" in Indonesia." *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002): 564-581; Pratama, Alvaro, Fahmi Hidayat, and Faizal Junaid. "The Evolution of Indonesian Democracy: Challenges and Prospects in the Post-Reformasi Era". *Indonesian Political Transformation* 1, no. 1 (2025).

⁶ Istianah, Anif, Bunyamin Maftuh, and Elly Malihah. "Konsep sekolah damai: Harmonisasi profil pelajar Pancasila dalam implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar." *Jurnal Education and Development* 11, no. 3 (2023): 333-342; Mahayanti, Ni Wayan Surya, et al. "The trends of peace education research in

At the intersection of legal strategy and education, transitional justice frameworks offer a conceptual bridge between formal mechanisms of accountability (e.g., truth commissions, reparations, legal reform) and informal processes of memory, healing, and pedagogy. Yet, in Indonesia, transitional justice has been notably absent at the national level. Attempts to establish a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC), particularly following the fall of Suharto, have largely stalled or failed due to political resistance.⁷ This has left a legal vacuum in which historical grievances are addressed primarily through grassroots efforts rather than institutionalized processes. Consequently, the burden of fostering reconciliation often falls disproportionately on educators and local actors who lack formal guidance or protection.

This absence of a coherent transitional justice strategy significantly impacts the implementation of peace education. Despite references to human rights and democratic citizenship in Indonesia's 2003 National Education System Law and subsequent curricular reforms, there remains a disconnect between policy frameworks and classroom realities—especially in marginalized, post-conflict areas. Teachers often receive little to no training on how to address sensitive historical topics or facilitate dialogue among students with divergent identities and experiences. In some cases, fear of political retribution or social backlash leads to self-censorship, particularly when discussing issues related to state violence, military operations, or separatist movements.⁸

Compounding this issue is the centralized nature of curriculum development in Indonesia. Although decentralization laws nominally allow for regional variation, in practice, local schools must still adhere

Indonesia: A bibliometric analysis aligned with quality of education." *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* 5, no. 2 (2025): e02571-e02571; Wahyudin, Dinn. "Peace education curriculum in the context of Education Sustainable Development (ESD)." *Journal of Sustainable Development Education and Research* 2, no. 1 (2018): 21-32.

⁷ Skaar, Elin. "Reconciliation in a transitional justice perspective." *Transitional Justice Review* 1, no. 1 (2012): 54-103; Wahyuningroem, Sri Lestari. "Towards Post-Transitional Justice: The Failures of Transitional Justice and the Roles of Civil Society in Indonesia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Human Rights* 3, no. 1 (2019): 124-154.

⁸ Canter, Martin John. *Perceptions of education change in post-conflict environments and fragile states: The case of Timor-Leste*. University of Pennsylvania, 2015.

to national curricula set by the Ministry of Education. This often means that teachers in Aceh or Papua are required to teach historical content that either ignores or contradicts their community's experiences. Without institutional support, teachers who attempt to introduce alternative perspectives or local histories do so at personal and professional risk. Nevertheless, many persist in this work, acting as informal advocates for peace and social justice within their classrooms and communities.⁹

Thus, history teachers in post-conflict regions become not only educators but also mediators, storytellers, and advocates. Their role extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to the cultivation of empathy, historical awareness, and critical civic consciousness. In areas like Aceh, some teachers have collaborated with local NGOs to design peace-oriented curricula that incorporate survivor testimonies and community histories. In Timor-Leste, post-independence curricula have included space for reflection on the resistance movement, with teachers encouraged to facilitate classroom discussions on truth and reconciliation. These efforts demonstrate the transformative potential of pedagogy when aligned with broader advocacy and legal support systems.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the lack of a cohesive national framework for peace education, combined with the lingering effects of militarization and political sensitivity around historical narratives, creates significant challenges. Advocacy groups continue to lobby for curriculum reform, legal protections for educators, and the institutionalization of memory work within formal education systems. Yet, these efforts require sustained political will and cross-sectoral collaboration. Without

⁹ Sakhiyya, Zulfa, and Teguh Wijaya Mulya. *Education in Indonesia: critical perspectives on equity and social justice*. Springer, 2023; Solehuddin, Muhammad, and Vina Adriany. "Kindergarten teachers' understanding on social justice: Stories from Indonesia." *SAGE Open* 7, no. 4 (2017): 2158244017739340.

¹⁰ Boughton, B., C. Brock, and L. Pe Symaco. "Timor-Leste: Building a post-conflict education system." *Education in South-East Asia* (2011): 177-196; Shah, Ritesh. "Goodbye conflict, hello development? Curriculum reform in Timor-Leste." *International Journal of Educational Development* 32, no. 1 (2012): 31-38; Butcher, Jude, et al. *Timor-Leste: Transforming education through partnership in a small post-conflict state*. Springer, 2015.

strategic alignment between legal frameworks, advocacy initiatives, and educational practice, peace education risks becoming a fragmented or symbolic effort, rather than a substantive tool for reconciliation.¹¹

This paper argues that addressing this fragmentation requires a multidimensional approach that recognizes the interconnected roles of advocacy, legal strategies, and teachers—especially history teachers—in bridging the gap between post-conflict rhetoric and actual societal healing. By examining how educators navigate the constraints and possibilities of teaching in post-conflict environments, and how their work is supported or undermined by legal and advocacy frameworks, this study seeks to illuminate both the potential and the limitations of peace education in Indonesia's contested regions.

B. Conceptual Framework: Peace Education, Legal Strategies, and Advocacy

1. Peace Education

Peace education is a broad and evolving concept that encompasses efforts to foster understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals and communities affected by conflict. It is fundamentally concerned with promoting non-violence, conflict resolution, and the development of democratic values, with the ultimate goal of creating a culture of peace within societies recovering from violent conflict.¹² In post-conflict settings like Indonesia, peace education serves as a pivotal tool for healing the wounds of violence and moving toward long-term social stability.¹³ It aims to challenge the cycles of violence and

¹¹ See Affolter, Friedrich W., and Anna Azaryeva Valente. "Learning for peace: Lessons learned from UNICEF's peacebuilding, education, and advocacy in conflict-affected context programme." *Children and peace: From research to action*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019. 219-239.

¹² Harris, Ian M. "Peace education theory." *Journal of Peace Education* 1, no. 1 (2004): 5-20; Reardon, Betty A. *Peace education: A review and projection*. Routledge, 2004; Fountain, Susan. *Peace education in UNICEF*. UNICEF, Programme Division, 1999.

¹³ For further cases, see Wibowo, Dody. "The role of school culture in teacher professional development for peace education: the case of Sukma Bangsa School Pidie in post-conflict Aceh, Indonesia." *Journal of Peace Education* 19, no. 2 (2022): 182-204; Riyani, Mufti, Nugroho Trisnu Brata, and Fitri Amalia Shintasiwi. "Making Peace with the Past: Peace Education in Post-Conflict Aceh

victimhood by fostering alternative narratives grounded in justice, empathy, and collective responsibility.

At its core, peace education emphasizes teaching non-violence and providing individuals, particularly young people, with the skills necessary to address conflicts without resorting to physical or psychological harm.¹⁴ This is particularly important in post-conflict societies, where cycles of retaliation and historical grievances often perpetuate communal divisions. By focusing on conflict resolution, peace education offers practical tools for managing interpersonal and community disputes in constructive ways, allowing individuals to navigate tensions with respect and understanding. Furthermore, peace education advocates for the promotion of democratic values, which include the principles of equality, justice, and human dignity—values that are essential for rebuilding trust and cooperation in post-conflict societies.

In divided communities, where social trust has been severely eroded by violence, peace education can play a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and tolerance.¹⁵ In regions like Aceh, Papua, and Timor-Leste, where ethnic, religious, or ideological divisions persist, peace education offers a space for dialogue and critical engagement with diverse historical narratives. By integrating the experiences of marginalized groups and promoting a more inclusive understanding of history, peace education can help bridge the gaps between conflicting communities. For example, in Aceh, the inclusion of reconciliation-oriented history curricula has been shown to encourage dialogue

Societies through the Application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy." *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 12, no. 2 (2021): 330-376; Kristimanta, Putri Ariza. "Grass-roots post-conflict peacebuilding: A case study of Mosintuwu women's school in Poso District, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia." *Decolonising conflicts, security, peace, gender, environment and development in the anthropocene*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021. 569-590.

¹⁴ Yemenici, Alev. "Peace education: Training for an evolved consciousness of non-violence." *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace* 5.1 (2016): 5-25; Andrzejewski, Julie. "Education for peace and nonviolence." *Social justice, peace, and environmental education*. Routledge, 2009. 111-132.

¹⁵ Sekibo, George Thompson, and Samuel Iroye. "Exploring Peace Education in a Post-Conflict Society: Challenges and Opportunities." *NIU Journal of Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (2024): 295-308.

between students from different backgrounds, enabling them to engage in meaningful discussions about the past and its implications for the future.¹⁶

2. Legal Strategies in Post-Conflict Reconciliation

Legal strategies play a crucial role in supporting reconciliation in post-conflict societies, particularly in efforts to establish accountability for past atrocities, restore justice, and ensure long-term peace.¹⁷ These strategies often include Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), reparations laws, and human rights legislation, which provide formal mechanisms for addressing the legacies of conflict while promoting societal healing. TRCs, for instance, have been used in numerous post-conflict countries as a means of uncovering the truth about human rights violations, offering victims an opportunity to testify about their experiences, and providing a platform for perpetrators to acknowledge their crimes.¹⁸ In Indonesia, the failure to fully implement a national TRC, as seen in the aftermath of the 1998 reform era, has left many historical grievances unresolved. However, localized TRC efforts, such as those conducted in Aceh after the 2005 peace agreement, have provided a model for reconciliation through truth-telling and the recognition of victims' suffering.

¹⁶ See Saefudin, Arif, et al. "Discourse Analysis of Conflict and Resolution in History Textbooks: Representations of the Referendum in Indonesia." *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 6, no. 5, (2024): 433–446; Tappe Ortiz, Juliana. *Peace spoilers and peace supporters: how individual characteristics influence the outcome and duration of civil conflicts*. Diss. Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky, 2023.

¹⁷ Theissen, Gunnar. "Supporting justice, co-existence and reconciliation after armed conflict: strategies for dealing with the past." *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict: The Berghof Handbook*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004. 421–440; Peter, Olowonihi A., and Christopher M. Osazuwa. "A Conceptual Framework to Analyse Consequences of Post-Conflict Reconstruction Interventions." *The American Journal of Political Science Law and Criminology* 6, no. 9 (2024): 105–136.

¹⁸ Liana, Nora, et al. "Position of Resolving Human Rights Violations through The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Mechanism in Indonesia." *International Journal of Law, Social Science, and Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2025): 222–231.

Reparations laws are another essential component of legal strategies in post-conflict reconciliation. These laws are designed to compensate victims for the harm they have suffered and provide restorative justice measures.¹⁹ In the Indonesian context, reparations have been a contentious issue, particularly for the survivors of the 1965 anti-communist purges, where compensation for victims has been minimal and highly politicized. However, recent initiatives, particularly in Aceh, have set precedents for how reparations can be integrated into local peace agreements, providing a legal framework for acknowledging the past and fostering economic and social healing.

Human rights laws and international legal frameworks also play a significant role in ensuring that perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their actions. Indonesia is a signatory to various international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture, which place obligations on the state to protect individuals from human rights violations and ensure justice for victims.²⁰ However, while these frameworks exist, the enforcement of these laws at the national level has often been inconsistent, particularly in conflict-affected regions. Restorative justice, a key principle embedded in international legal frameworks, emphasizes repairing harm through reconciliation and dialogue rather than through punitive measures alone.²¹ This approach is particularly relevant in post-conflict

¹⁹ Leyh, Brianne McGonigle. "Reparations for victims." *Research Handbook on Post-Conflict State Building*. (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), pp. 228-240; Moffett, Luke. "Transitional justice and reparations: Remedying the past?." *Research handbook on transitional justice*. (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), pp. 377-400.

²⁰ Joseph, Sarah. "Civil and political rights." *International Human Rights Law*. (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 105-122; Joseph, Sarah, and Melissa Castan. *The international covenant on civil and political rights: cases, materials, and commentary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²¹ Johnstone, Gerry, and Daniel Van Ness, eds. *Handbook of restorative justice*. Routledge, 2013. See also Aryanda, Avila Deva, Ali Masyhar, and Cahya Wulandari. "Restorative Justice Approach in Handling Sexual Violence Criminal Cases." *International Journal of Education and Literature* 4, no. 1 (2025): 305-311; Sukardi, Sukardi, and Hadi Rahmat Purnama. "Restorative Justice Principles in Law Enforcement and Democracy in Indonesia." *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (2022): 155-190; Arifin, Ridwan, et al. "Striking a balance:

societies like Indonesia, where fostering long-term peace requires addressing the root causes of conflict and offering opportunities for societal reintegration.

Moreover, legal mechanisms designed to protect vulnerable populations, including women, children, and displaced communities, are integral to the success of peacebuilding efforts. In the aftermath of conflict, these groups often face heightened risks of exploitation, marginalization, and further violence. Legal protections for these populations, such as those enshrined in Indonesia's Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, provide a framework for addressing the specific needs of these groups and ensuring their participation in post-conflict rebuilding processes.²² Ensuring that legal structures protect the rights of all citizens is essential for fostering peace, particularly in areas where societal divisions are deeply entrenched.

3. *Advocacy*

Advocacy is an essential driver of change in post-conflict societies, particularly in pushing for the inclusion of peace education in national and regional curricula, as well as advocating for legal reforms that promote reconciliation and restorative justice.²³ Civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in advocating for peace education by mobilizing communities, raising awareness about the importance of inclusive history teaching, and advocating for curriculum reforms. In Indonesia, where the state has historically played a strong role in controlling educational content, CSOs and NGOs have become key actors in

navigating peace, justice, and restorative justice in Indonesian prosecutorial process." *The Prosecutor Law Review* 1, no. 3 (2023): 73-96; Ardiansyah, Indra, et al. "Taking Restitution Seriously? Victim-Oriented Gaps in the Criminal Justice System." *Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 1-44.

²² See Taum, Yoseph Yapi, et al. *Meraih Cahaya: Memori Kolektif Timor-Leste Pascakonflik*. Sanata Dharma University Press, 2025; Habibah, Siti Maizul, et al. *Hukum Internasional: Pilar Keadilan dan HAM Universal*. CV. Ruang Tentor, 2025.

²³ Harber, Clive. *Schooling for peaceful development in post-conflict societies*. Springer International Publishing, 2019.

pushing for greater diversity and accuracy in the teaching of history, especially in post-conflict regions like Aceh and Papua.

One of the primary challenges in advocating for peace education is ensuring local ownership of the process. Advocacy efforts must be tailored to local contexts, engaging communities in the design and implementation of educational programs. In Aceh, for example, local NGOs have worked closely with teachers and local authorities to incorporate peacebuilding principles into school curricula, drawing on the region's history and experiences with violence. This bottom-up approach ensures that peace education is relevant, culturally sensitive, and reflective of local needs. Similarly, in Timor-Leste, advocacy for the inclusion of peace education has been intertwined with the efforts of former resistance fighters and civil society actors, who have worked to include stories of resistance and victim testimony in the curriculum.

Furthermore, advocacy for legal reforms is essential for ensuring that peace education is supported by a comprehensive framework of legal protections and justice mechanisms.²⁴ This includes lobbying for the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, the implementation of reparations laws, and the development of human rights education initiatives within the national curriculum. In Indonesia, where political resistance to comprehensive truth-telling processes has been strong, advocacy groups have played a crucial role in raising awareness about the need for restorative justice and the role of education in promoting healing.

Finally, the role of international advocacy networks cannot be overlooked. Organizations such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) and Human Rights Watch have been instrumental in pressuring the Indonesian government to address human rights violations and consider transitional justice measures. These international networks often collaborate with local advocacy groups to amplify their voices and

²⁴ Stempel, Jeffrey W. "Legal Ethics and Law Reform Advocacy." *St. Mary's Journal on Legal Malpractice & Ethics* 10, no. 2 (2020): 244-289; Susanti, Martien Herna, Suhartono Suhartono, and Siti Winarsih. "Sosialisasi Advokasi Hukum bagi Masyarakat Desa Sambiyah." *Jurnal Bina Desa* 5, no. 1 (2023): 77-83. *See also* Martitah, Martitah, et al. "Pseudo-Kebijakan Otonomi Desa: Analisis Kritis Berdasarkan Praktek di Lapangan." *Jurnal Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1-17.

ensure that international legal standards are applied to domestic peacebuilding efforts. In this context, advocacy serves not only as a tool for local change but as a means of connecting global principles of peace and justice to the realities of post-conflict societies.²⁵

C. The Role of History Teachers in Peace Education

1. *Teaching the Past for Reconciliation*

In post-conflict societies, the teaching of history plays a critical role in shaping collective memory and fostering reconciliation. History education, if approached thoughtfully, can provide a platform for healing and mutual understanding. However, in divided societies recovering from violent conflict, it also has the potential to perpetuate division, if not taught with care and responsibility. The importance of teaching history for reconciliation lies in its ability to promote shared understanding, encourage critical reflection on past injustices, and provide a collective framework for addressing the legacies of violence. Rather than reinforcing nationalistic or exclusionary narratives, history education must engage students in inclusive historical dialogue that acknowledges the diversity of experiences during conflict, offering space for marginalized voices, victims' testimonies, and previously silenced narratives.²⁶

History teachers are instrumental in shaping the ways in which students engage with the past.²⁷ In societies like Indonesia, where ethno-religious tensions and historical grievances remain entrenched, history educators must walk a fine line between presenting a balanced view of

²⁵ Betts, Wendy S., and Gregory Gissvold. "Conflict Mapping: Innovation in International Responses in Post-Conflict Societies." *Human Rights Brief* 10, no. 3 (2003): 6.

²⁶ See Skårås, Merethe. "Teaching and learning the most recent history in divided societies emerging from conflict: A review of the literature through the lens of social justice." *Journal of Peace Education* 18, no. 3 (2021): 282-308; Ahonen, Sirkka. "History education in post-conflict societies." *Historical Encounters* 1, no. 1 (2014): 75-87; McDonald, Jared. "Inclusive histories for inclusive futures: interactions and entanglements then and now." *Yesterday and Today* 15 (2016): 66-83.

²⁷ Seixas, Peter. "Historical consciousness." *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness* 3 (2005): 141.

the past and maintaining a sense of national unity. History teaching in post-conflict contexts must address the trauma experienced by communities, often including issues of violence, displacement, and loss. At the same time, it must actively challenge biased or one-sided narratives that serve to entrench social divisions and perpetuate a cycle of resentment and hatred. For instance, in regions such as Aceh, where decades of armed conflict and military repression left deep scars, history teachers have the unique responsibility of helping students understand the complexity of historical events without glorifying violence or fueling animosity.²⁸

Moreover, history teachers must encourage critical thinking by allowing students to engage with conflicting historical interpretations.²⁹ The task is not only to teach what happened, but to encourage students to reflect on why things happened, who benefitted, and who suffered. This process of critical engagement fosters empathy and provides students with the tools to navigate complex political and social realities in their post-conflict societies. In doing so, history education can actively contribute to building a more just and democratic society, where students understand the importance of truth, reconciliation, and non-violence as fundamental principles.

2. Curricular Integration of Peace Education

One of the most significant challenges in post-conflict education is the integration of peace education within formal curricula, especially when it comes to history teaching. In Indonesia, as in many post-conflict regions, the historical curriculum has traditionally been designed to emphasize national unity and state-approved narratives,

²⁸ Rajasingham-Senanayake, Darini. "Transnational peace building and conflict: Lessons from Aceh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 24, no. 2 (2009): 211-235; Ahonen, Sirkka. "History education in post-conflict societies." *Historical Encounters* 1, no. 1 (2014): 75-87; Smith, Catherine. *Resilience and the localisation of trauma in Aceh, Indonesia*. NUS Press, 2018.

²⁹ Nuzzaci, Antonella, Fabio Orecchio, and Rosa Romano. "The role of critical and civic thinking in citizenship education." *INTED2024 Proceedings*. IATED, 2024; Ten Dam, Geert, and Monique Volman. "Critical thinking as a citizenship competence: teaching strategies." *Learning and Instruction* 14, no. 4 (2004): 359-379.

often glossing over the darker chapters of history, such as the 1965 anti-communist purges, the occupation of East Timor, or the Aceh insurgency. To foster reconciliation and prevent future conflict, there is a pressing need to reform history curricula to include peace education principles, which emphasize human rights, non-violence, and restorative justice.³⁰

In post-conflict areas, such as Aceh and Timor-Leste, the integration of peace education within history teaching requires a shift from an exclusive focus on glorifying national achievements to incorporating diverse historical experiences and fostering critical dialogue around contentious events. For example, the Aceh Peace Agreement of 2005 laid the groundwork for educational reforms, wherein local educators worked alongside NGOs and international peace-building organizations to develop curriculum materials that not only address Aceh's history of violence but also foster reconciliation and trust-building. These curricula incorporate local narratives, including those of victims, survivors, and former combatants, allowing students to learn about the past in a more nuanced and inclusive way.

Similarly, in Timor-Leste, history curricula have been designed to integrate restorative justice principles alongside historical accounts of the resistance struggle and the violations of human rights during the Indonesian occupation. In both Aceh and Timor-Leste, history teaching is not merely about transmitting facts but also about providing students with the analytical skills to engage with historical content critically, fostering the capacity to discern between biased historical accounts and more balanced, fact-based narratives. Peace education principles are embedded in these reforms, encouraging students to understand the long-term impacts of violence and to embrace the values of mutual respect, dialogue, and reconciliation.

The reform of history curricula in post-conflict societies requires collaboration between government institutions, local educators, civil society groups, and international organizations. It is not enough to simply add peace education as a module within existing curricula; rather, peace education should become an integral component of all

³⁰ Walters, Denine. *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Comparative Case Studies*. University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2011.

subjects, especially history, where the past has a profound impact on current social relations. Teachers must be empowered with the resources, knowledge, and pedagogical skills to implement these reforms effectively and sensitively.

3. *Case Studies of Successful Integration of Peace Education*

In examining successful case studies of peace education integration, Aceh provides a noteworthy example. In the years following the 2005 peace agreement, local educators, in partnership with NGOs, designed history teaching materials that reflected the lived experiences of Acehnese people during the conflict. This approach aimed to create a more inclusive historical narrative that allowed students to understand the complexities of the conflict, including the suffering of both victims and former combatants. The history curriculum in Aceh has incorporated storytelling and oral history methods, where survivors of violence, former fighters, and community leaders share their experiences, allowing students to appreciate the diverse perspectives surrounding the conflict.

In Timor-Leste, after its independence from Indonesia, the country's education system undertook significant reforms to integrate the country's struggle for independence and the experiences of its people under Indonesian rule into the national curriculum. History teachers were trained to teach sensitive topics, including the 1999 referendum and the violence that followed, through a peace-building lens. Educational programs emphasized the importance of dialogue, forgiveness, and the importance of recognizing the shared humanity of those involved in the conflict. As a result, Timor-Leste's national identity has been shaped by a strong commitment to restorative justice, with history education playing a central role in promoting national unity.³¹

These case studies illustrate how history teachers, with the proper training and resources, can integrate peace education into post-conflict curricula in ways that foster understanding, healing, and social

³¹ Leach, Michael. *Nation-building and national identity in Timor-Leste*. (London: Routledge, 2016); Grenfell, Damian. "Reconciliation: Violence and nation formation in Timor-Leste." *Rethinking Insecurity, War and Violence*. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 193-205.

cohesion. They also highlight the importance of local ownership in the development of curriculum reforms, ensuring that the history taught in schools resonates with the lived experiences of students and communities.

4. Challenges Faced by History Teachers

Despite the potential of history education to contribute to post-conflict reconciliation, history teachers in post-conflict areas face significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the teaching of controversial or sensitive topics related to the conflict. In regions like Aceh and Papua, where the scars of violence are still raw, discussing topics such as state violence, war crimes, or ethnic cleansing can be highly charged and fraught with emotional weight. Teachers must navigate the risk of retraumatizing students while also confronting the danger of reinforcing division by either minimizing or distorting historical events.

Balancing the educational need to address historical grievances with the broader goal of promoting national unity is another significant challenge. On the one hand, it is crucial to acknowledge the pain and suffering caused by conflict to validate the experiences of victims. On the other hand, teaching history in a way that promotes unity and understanding among diverse communities requires careful thought and sensitivity. Teachers must find ways to address historical trauma without reinforcing victimhood or perpetuating the cycle of blame.

Finally, training and supporting history teachers is essential to ensuring that peace education is taught effectively. Teachers must be equipped with the skills to handle sensitive topics, create a safe and inclusive learning environment, and encourage critical thinking among students. Professional development programs, which focus on peacebuilding and reconciliation, are essential for teachers working in post-conflict regions. Furthermore, teachers need continuous institutional support—including access to resources, curricular guides, and safe spaces for dialogue—to enable them to teach history in a way that fosters reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Therefore, the role of history teachers in peace education is central to the success of reconciliation efforts in post-conflict societies. By teaching the past in ways that promote mutual understanding, challenge

biased narratives, and address historical trauma, history educators can contribute significantly to the healing process. However, they must be supported through curricular reforms, teacher training, and institutional support to navigate the complex challenges of teaching history in a post-conflict context.

D. Legal and Policy Frameworks Supporting Peace Education in Post-Conflict Areas

1. National Legal and Policy Frameworks

Indonesia's national legal system offers a complex yet critical foundation for supporting peace education, particularly in post-conflict areas. Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System (*Sisdiknas*) is one of the primary legal documents that establishes the overarching principles of education in the country. The law outlines that the purpose of education is to foster the development of learners into individuals who are moral, democratic, and responsible citizens. Specifically, Article 3 of the law emphasizes the necessity for education to instill values such as tolerance, human rights, and democratic participation—all central to the concept of peace education. This theoretical framework, however, requires active application in post-conflict regions where historical traumas and divisions may persist.³²

The law's emphasis on creating a democratic and responsible society aligns well with the goals of peace education, which seeks to address societal fractures by promoting non-violence, reconciliation, and coexistence. In practice, however, the law's mandates have not always translated into meaningful reforms in the educational systems of conflict-affected areas, such as Aceh or Papua, where entrenched historical grievances continue to influence inter-group relationships. Although *Sisdiknas* advocates for the moral and civic development of students, the challenge lies in adapting the curriculum in regions where the need for reconciliation is urgent. Thus, there remains a substantial

³² See Tuhuteru, Laros. *Pendidikan Karakter Untuk Menjawab Resolusi Konflik*. CV. Azka Pustaka, 2022. See also Hasudungan, Anju Nofarof, and Lianda Dewi Sartika. "Model Pendidikan Perdamaian Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Pela Gandong Pada Pembelajaran IPS Pasca Rekonsiliasi Konflik Ambon." *Indonesian Journal of Social Science Education (IJSSE)* 2, no. 1 (2020): 20-32.

gap between legal frameworks and their practical implementation, particularly in the realm of peace education.

In Aceh, the Peace Agreement (2005) following the end of the long-running conflict with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) provided specific provisions related to education that could support peacebuilding efforts. The Aceh Government Law (2006) mandates local adaptation of education policies that include values of peace, reconciliation, and the integration of local historical narratives that reflect the region's complex past. Article 13 of this law directly addresses education as a tool for post-conflict healing, stipulating that educational institutions play a critical role in fostering social cohesion by teaching shared history and reconciliation.³³

Despite these advances, the integration of peace education into school curricula is often hindered by insufficient resources and limited training for educators on how to effectively teach contentious issues. The challenge remains in translating legal provisions into curriculum reforms that not only acknowledge the past but also promote a future of collective peace.

³³ Following the peace agreement, Aceh Governance Law No. 11 of 2006 established special autonomy for Aceh and provided the legal basis for adapting education policies to the needs of the post-conflict region. Some relevant points in this law are: *First*, Mandate to Integrate Peace Values: Article 13 of this law explicitly states that education in Aceh must support reconciliation and social healing efforts by teaching a shared history that reflects the experiences of the conflict in Aceh and the values of peace. This makes education a tool for rebuilding social harmony. *Second*, Education and Local History: This law also encourages the Acehnese curriculum to include local historical narratives, covering the experiences of the Acehnese people during the conflict with the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and fostering a broader understanding of the complexities of Aceh's past. *Third*, Focus on Citizenship and Reconciliation: Education in Aceh must build an inclusive civic identity that accommodates diverse perspectives and strengthens unity among groups previously divided by the conflict. See Shah, Ritesh, and Mieke Lopes Cardozo. "Education and social change in post-conflict and post-disaster Aceh, Indonesia." *International Journal of Educational Development* 38, no. 1 (2014): 2-12; Schiller, Rachel. "Reconciliation in Aceh: Addressing the social effects of prolonged armed conflict." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 39, no. 4 (2011): 489-507; Rahman, Aulia, et al. "National Integration Education Practices in Post-Conflict Regions." *SEUNEUBOK LADA: Jurnal ilmu-ilmu Sejarah, Sosial, Budaya dan Pendidikan* 12, no. 1 (2025): 28-43.

Further supporting peace education in post-conflict areas is Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, which underpins the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to education. Article 43 of this law asserts that the state must ensure the protection of every individual's right to education, which includes promoting peace and preventing violence. In this context, the law provides a strong basis for integrating human rights education into the national curriculum, which is vital for fostering respect and understanding in post-conflict settings. While the law lays down the foundations for education that emphasizes non-violence, its implementation often fails to engage with the depth of historical trauma that communities in conflict-affected regions experience.³⁴

2. *International Legal Frameworks*

Indonesia's adherence to international legal instruments further supports the inclusion of peace education in its educational system. One of the most influential frameworks is UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), which recognizes the importance of gender equality and the active participation of women in peacebuilding processes. Resolution 1325 highlights the need for gender-sensitive educational programs that promote women's rights and inclusive peacebuilding. Indonesia's commitment to implementing this

³⁴ Iswahyudi, Eko. "Human Rights and Legal Reforms in Indonesia: Challenges and Progress." *The Journal of Academic Science* 2, no. 2 (2025): 734-743; Aziz, Firman, et al. "The future of human rights in the digital age: Indonesian perspectives and challenges." *Journal of Digital Law and Policy* 2, no. 1 (2022): 29-40. *See also* Yuliana, Novi. "Human Rights and Climate Change: The 2011 National Human Rights Action Plan (RANHAM) and Its Role in Promoting Climate Justice". *Indonesian Climate Justice Review* 2, no. 2 (2025); Salle, Salle, and Wafia Silvi Dhesinta Rini. "Development of Artificial Intelligence Regulations and Implications for Intellectual Property Rights Protection". *Contemporary Issues on Indonesian Social Justice and Legal Reform* 1, no. 1 (2025); Said, Muhtar, Ridwan Arifin, and Zaka Firma Aditya. "Faith, Fear, and the Constitution: Religious Freedom and Identity Politics in Indonesia's Constitutional Jurisprudence". *Indonesian Constitutional Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 53-76; Arifin, Ridwan, Per Nilsson, Teresa Ruiz, and Souad Ezzerouali. "Decolonizing International Human Rights Law: Rethinking Universality from the Global South". *Journal of Transformative Legal and Social Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025).

resolution can be seen in efforts to integrate gender perspectives in educational curricula, particularly in post-conflict regions where women often bear the brunt of violence. Article 7 of the Resolution encourages member states to develop educational programs that empower women as agents of peace and justice, ensuring that women's voices are heard in both peace negotiations and education reform processes.

In addition to Resolution 1325, Indonesia has ratified several international human rights treaties that promote peace education. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) provide explicit rights to education that should foster understanding and tolerance across national and cultural divides. Article 13 of ICESCR, for example, mandates that education should aim to promote human dignity, peaceful coexistence, and understanding among nations. These principles are directly relevant in post-conflict areas like Aceh and Papua, where education plays a pivotal role in both healing and building long-term peace.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Indonesia has ratified, also lays the groundwork for the inclusion of peace education in schools. Article 29 of the CRC stipulates that education should be directed at developing the child's personality in a way that fosters understanding, tolerance, and respect for the rights of others.³⁵ In the context of Indonesia's post-conflict regions, these international frameworks provide both guidance and legal obligations for integrating peace education into national educational policies. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that these international obligations are effectively translated into regional policies and educational practice, particularly in areas with historical divisions.

³⁵ See Latief, Ammar Aziz Abdul, Rizal Mohamad Saleh, and Zidan Abrar. "Child Protection Systems in Indonesia and Malaysia: Between Theories and Practices." *Journal of Creativity Student* 7, no. 1 (2022): 87-112; Ismail, Dian Ekawaty, et al. "The Comparative Study: Protecting Children's Rights Through Law Reform of Restorative Justice in Juvenile Cases." *Journal of Law and Legal Reform* 6, no. 2 (2025): 411-452.

3. *Government and NGO Collaboration*

The successful implementation of peace education in post-conflict regions of Indonesia relies heavily on collaboration between the government, local communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs play an essential role in advocating for education reforms, providing resources for teacher training, and facilitating community dialogues on issues of peace and reconciliation. In Aceh, organizations such as Yayasan Aceh and KontraS (Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) have been instrumental in pushing for the inclusion of peacebuilding and restorative justice principles within the school curriculum. Their work focuses on ensuring that historical trauma and human rights violations are addressed in a manner that promotes understanding and healing.³⁶

Moreover, NGOs act as intermediaries between the government and local communities, particularly in areas where there is a history of distrust towards central authorities. In Aceh, local peace organizations have facilitated partnerships between the Ministry of Education and local school districts to develop curriculum materials that include reconciliation-based teaching methods. These partnerships are critical in ensuring that peace education does not become a top-down imposition but rather a locally owned process that reflects the unique needs and historical realities of each region.

The role of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in facilitating these reforms is also indispensable. The Ministry has collaborated with NGOs to train educators in how to address sensitive topics related to conflict and trauma. Through workshops and training sessions, teachers are equipped with the tools to facilitate difficult conversations and create safe spaces for students to engage with the complex legacies of conflict. This form of capacity-building is essential to the success of peace education programs, as it empowers educators to teach with empathy and promote critical thinking.

Additionally, international organizations such as UNICEF and UNDP have played a significant role in supporting governmental and

³⁶ Sulistiyanto, Priyambudi, and Sentot Setyasiswanto. "Still Seeking Truth and Reconciliation for the 1965 Victims: Is it possible?." *Asia-Pacific between conflict and reconciliation* (2016): 69-86.

non-governmental efforts in peace education.³⁷ By providing financial resources and technical expertise, these organizations have helped develop teacher training programs and peace education materials that are culturally relevant and context-specific. The collaboration between these various stakeholders is crucial in ensuring that peace education initiatives are sustainable, inclusive, and capable of fostering long-term societal reconciliation.

E. Advocacy for Peace Education: Challenges and Strategies

1. Advocacy Strategies

Advocacy plays a crucial role in institutionalizing peace education, particularly in post-conflict societies, where the wounds of the past are still fresh and the road to reconciliation remains difficult. The primary goal of advocacy for peace education is to push for legal and policy reforms that embed peace education into national curricula, ensuring that future generations are equipped with the tools to foster social cohesion, tolerance, and non-violence. Advocacy can take many forms, from grassroots mobilization to formal lobbying at the governmental and international levels. The key strategy involves aligning advocacy efforts with legal frameworks, making the case that peace education is not just a moral or social necessity, but also a legal obligation under human rights conventions and national laws that emphasize the importance of education for all citizens.

One critical strategy for advocacy is the formation of coalitions among civil society organizations (CSOs), international bodies, and educators to present a united front in pushing for policy changes. In Indonesia, for example, organizations such as Yayasan Aceh and Komnas HAM (National Human Rights Commission) have collaborated with international NGOs like UNICEF and UNDP to advance peace education as part of post-conflict rehabilitation efforts. Their combined efforts in policy advocacy, public awareness campaigns, and educational reforms have begun to influence national and regional governments to integrate peace education into the curriculum.

³⁷ Barakat, Sultan, et al. "The role of basic education in post-conflict recovery." *Comparative Education* 49, no. 2 (2013): 124-142.

The media also plays a pivotal role in advocacy by acting as both a platform for raising awareness and a tool for generating public support. In post-conflict areas, the media has the potential to highlight the importance of peace education and expose the consequences of not addressing historical grievances in the educational system. By promoting stories of reconciliation, trauma recovery, and successful peace-building initiatives, the media helps frame peace education as a central element of long-term peace and social stability.

At the international level, organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and the International Crisis Group have used their global platforms to advocate for the inclusion of peace education in national policies of post-conflict countries. Their advocacy is based on the recognition that peace education is fundamental to sustainable development and conflict prevention. As peace education is increasingly recognized as a tool for preventing future conflicts, the pressure for governments to institutionalize such education grows.

2. Challenges in Advocacy

Despite the promising strategies, advocacy for peace education in post-conflict regions faces substantial resistance and challenges. One of the most significant barriers is the resistance from communities with deep-rooted historical grievances or those influenced by political opposition. In places like Aceh, Papua, and previously East Timor, communities are often hesitant to adopt peace education due to the persistent trauma and mistrust stemming from prolonged conflicts. Many individuals in these areas view peace education as a political tool designed to either downplay the suffering of certain groups or promote narratives that are incompatible with their lived experiences. This skepticism can undermine efforts to institutionalize peace education, as it is perceived as an attempt to rewrite history or impose foreign ideologies.

In addition, resistance often emerges from political elites who might perceive peace education as a challenge to their control or authority, especially in regions where ethnic, religious, or political

divisions remain entrenched.³⁸ The governmental resistance to changes in the educational curriculum can be motivated by a reluctance to address controversial topics, such as human rights violations, war crimes, or the legacy of colonialism. These sensitive topics, often perceived as divisive, make peace education a politically charged issue. In Indonesia, the national curriculum remains contentious, with various groups advocating for different versions of history that align with their political or ideological views.

Another challenge faced by advocates of peace education is the issue of conflicting narratives surrounding past conflicts. Different ethnic or religious communities often have contrasting accounts of events, especially when it comes to violence, human rights violations, or political oppression. Teaching these narratives in a way that does not further exacerbate divisions or provoke re-traumatization is a complex challenge for educators. In post-conflict societies, where communities have been deeply polarized, presenting a unified historical narrative in peace education is not only difficult but also fraught with danger. Advocates must therefore tread carefully, ensuring that peace education fosters critical thinking while also being sensitive to the emotional and psychological impact on students and communities.

Re-traumatization—the reawakening of past wounds—is a major concern when integrating peace education. In post-conflict settings, students may find themselves revisiting painful memories or encountering narratives that reignite feelings of anger, grief, or betrayal. This is particularly challenging when victim and perpetrator communities are forced to coexist in a shared educational space. Peace education must, therefore, be designed in such a way that it acknowledges trauma without retraumatizing individuals. Advocates must carefully consider the psychosocial aspects of teaching about historical violence and ensure that there are adequate support systems in place to help students process their emotions and reactions.

³⁸ See Kamil, Fikri, Suchada Jirakorn, and Nashitah Idris. 2025. “Religious Nationalism and Secularism in Indonesia: A Complex Relationship”. *Studies in Indonesian Contemporary Religiosity and Modern World* 1, no. 1 (2025).

3. *Successful Advocacy Campaigns*

Despite these challenges, there have been notable examples of successful advocacy for peace education in other post-conflict countries, which offer valuable lessons for Indonesia. One such example is Northern Ireland, where a deeply divided society emerging from the Troubles (1968-1998) turned to education as a means of fostering long-term peace. Advocacy groups, led by organizations such as Education for Reconciliation and the Northern Ireland Education Authority, successfully lobbied for the integration of reconciliation principles into the curriculum. This included teaching students from different religious and political backgrounds about the history of the conflict in a way that emphasized mutual understanding, empathy, and respect. The advocacy efforts were not limited to curriculum changes but also involved training teachers to handle sensitive discussions and providing psychological support for students dealing with trauma. The success of these efforts lies in the inclusion of local communities in the design and implementation of peace education programs, ensuring that the process was both top-down and bottom-up.

In South Africa, another example of successful peace education advocacy occurred in the aftermath of apartheid. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, advocated for educational reforms that would teach future generations about the atrocities of apartheid while fostering reconciliation and national unity. One of the TRC's key recommendations was to implement history education reforms that would encourage students to learn about both the suffering of victims and the responsibility of perpetrators in a balanced way. The success of this campaign can be attributed to the wide support it garnered from civil society, international bodies, and the South African government, all of whom recognized that peace education was essential for healing the nation's wounds. The TRC's efforts to combine education with reconciliation provided a powerful example of how education can be used to build trust and understanding in a divided society.

These case studies offer several lessons that can be applied to the Indonesian context. First, it is clear that advocacy for peace education is most successful when it is inclusive, involving local communities, teachers, and victim groups in the process of curriculum development.

The voices of those most affected by conflict must be central to the conversation on what constitutes peace education. Second, successful advocacy efforts in post-conflict areas recognize the importance of psychosocial support for students and teachers, acknowledging that education is not just about teaching facts but also about healing emotional wounds. Finally, advocacy must be sustained over time, using a combination of media campaigns, political lobbying, and grassroots mobilization to push for policy changes that prioritize peace education as an essential component of national recovery.

F. From Tragedy to Reconciliation: The Impact of Peace Education in Post-Conflict Communities

1. Psychosocial Healing through Education

In post-conflict societies, the lingering effects of violence, trauma, and displacement often extend far beyond the cessation of physical hostilities. The psychological toll on individuals and communities can span generations, creating deep emotional scars that hinder social cohesion and impede efforts toward sustainable peace. Peace education serves as an essential intervention, not only to provide a space for acknowledging the past but also to facilitate psychosocial healing in the aftermath of conflict. This healing process, which is critical to rebuilding the fabric of post-conflict societies, involves both individual recovery and community restoration, addressing the psychological damage caused by years of violence.

Psychosocial healing through education goes beyond mere emotional relief; it plays a crucial role in reshaping the way communities perceive themselves and each other. In places like Aceh and Papua, where conflicts have left enduring societal divisions, peace education provides the necessary framework for emotional processing. Through structured curricula and pedagogical strategies grounded in trauma-informed care, students are given tools not only to understand the historical context of the conflict but also to express and process their emotions in a safe and constructive environment. In these settings, education acts as both a mirror and a mediator, allowing individuals to confront their personal trauma while simultaneously participating in collective healing.

Moreover, peace education is instrumental in addressing the intergenerational transmission of trauma, a phenomenon where the psychological scars of previous generations are passed down, often unconsciously, to younger generations. In many post-conflict communities, children are born into environments already shaped by the echoes of violence, with limited avenues for emotional expression or resolution. Peace education offers these younger generations the opportunity to break free from cycles of trauma by creating safe spaces where they can learn about conflict, explore their emotional responses, and gain the tools for resilience. By incorporating empathy training and non-violent communication into the curriculum, peace education fosters an emotional literacy that can help future generations avoid perpetuating violence as a means of conflict resolution.

Importantly, peace education plays a vital role in deconstructing the normalization of violence. In societies where violence has been a common response to political, ethnic, or religious disputes, peace education challenges these entrenched norms and offers a more constructive and peaceful alternative. By engaging young people in activities that emphasize non-violence, mutual respect, and dialogue, peace education works to replace the tendency toward aggression with a culture of peaceful problem-solving. This shift is not instantaneous, but over time, it fosters the creation of a peace-oriented generation that does not view violence as a natural or acceptable way to resolve differences.

Teaching the Aceh conflict requires diverse strategies tailored to the school's sociocultural context. The central approach lies in fostering historical empathy—the ability to understand past perspectives and experiences both cognitively (perspective recognition) and affectively (caring). Teachers often apply affective learning and experiential learning methods to nurture this empathy, for example, by encouraging concern for historical actors who faced injustice and linking historical study to students' personal and social relevance today. Such approaches are particularly vital in post-conflict societies, as they promote care,

humanity, and a commitment to reconciliation through history education.³⁹

2. *Promoting a Culture of Peace*

In post-conflict communities, the process of transforming a culture of violence into a culture of peace is one of the most critical challenges faced by educators, policymakers, and civil society actors. Peace education plays a central role in this transformation, as it helps dismantle the deeply ingrained cultural norms that perpetuate violence and promote division. In regions such as Aceh and Papua, where a history of armed conflict has shaped local identities and attitudes, peace education offers an alternative narrative—one that emphasizes unity, understanding, and cooperation over entrenched differences.

At its core, peace education serves as a vehicle for social transformation, shifting the prevailing attitudes towards conflict and violence. In societies that have been deeply polarized by years of civil strife, peace education provides the tools to begin unlearning the destructive cultural scripts that glorify violence and victimize communities. By teaching students the principles of non-violent conflict resolution, empathy, and democratic engagement, peace education directly counters the narratives of war and resistance that have historically defined post-conflict identities. These shifts in attitude are crucial not only for healing past wounds but also for preventing future violence.

The impact of peace education on future generations is particularly profound. In the absence of peace education, young people may inherit the hostile and divisive ideologies of their parents or communities, thus perpetuating a culture of violence. However, by embedding peace education in the school curriculum, societies have the opportunity to reshape the next generation's worldview. In the post-conflict landscape, this new generation is empowered with the tools to navigate difference, challenge prejudices, and embrace coexistence. The lessons imparted

³⁹ Tsabit Azinar Ahmad et al., "Unraveling the Threads of Difficult History in the Classroom: A Systematic Literature Review," *Paramita: Historical Studies Journal* 34, no. 1 (2024): 161–73, <https://doi.org/10.15294/paramita.v34i1.47346>.

through peace education—whether through conflict resolution exercises, inclusive history curricula, or discussions on human rights—form the foundation of a future that prioritizes social cohesion over division.

Peace education's role in promoting a culture of peace extends beyond individual and generational change; it has the potential to impact broader societal values. By fostering a culture that recognizes the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and diversity, peace education facilitates the formation of social norms that are more conducive to peaceful coexistence. This cultural shift is often gradual but ultimately essential for ensuring long-term peace. In regions like Papua, where ethnic and religious divisions have fueled conflict, peace education encourages the integration of diversity as a strength rather than a source of division, cultivating a national identity that is not defined by historical grievances but by collective aspirations for peace.

3. The Long-Term Impact on National Unity

One of the most profound contributions of peace education in post-conflict settings is its role in fostering national unity. In countries such as Indonesia, where historical divisions have been marked by ethnic, religious, and political conflicts, the challenge of reintegrating marginalized communities and promoting national cohesion is immense. Peace education provides a critical tool for rebuilding national identity and ensuring the social reintegration of communities that were once considered outsiders or enemies.

Peace education works to construct a shared national identity that honors diversity while simultaneously promoting a sense of unity. In the context of Indonesia, where regions such as Aceh and Papua have experienced long-standing separatist movements and armed insurgencies, peace education offers an opportunity to cultivate a national consciousness that transcends regional and ethnic identities. Through education, individuals can come to understand their place within a larger national narrative that respects their cultural uniqueness while promoting collective goals of peace and social justice.

Moreover, peace education is instrumental in fostering social cohesion by encouraging marginalized communities to reclaim their rights and their voices within the national framework. In post-conflict

societies, marginalized groups—whether they are ethnic minorities, refugees, or former combatants—often face significant barriers to reintegration. Peace education, through its focus on social justice, human rights, and democratic participation, provides the tools for these groups to become active and engaged citizens in the rebuilding of their nation. For instance, the integration of human rights education into school curricula can help students from disenfranchised communities understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, thus encouraging active participation in the political process and the democratic life of the nation.

The long-term impact of peace education on national unity also lies in its ability to challenge and deconstruct divisive historical narratives. In societies where the past is marked by deeply entrenched ethnic or religious conflicts, peace education helps to rewrite the historical narrative in a way that acknowledges past injustices while focusing on reconciliation and shared experiences. For example, in regions like Aceh, where the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government had been at odds for decades, peace education can promote an understanding of the conflict's root causes while also emphasizing the shared desire for peace. Through the educational process, the younger generation can learn that while their communities may have different histories, they also have a shared future in a united Indonesia.

Finally, peace education helps create national resilience by fostering a shared commitment to peace among all citizens. By embedding the values of peace and reconciliation in the education system, Indonesia can cultivate a collective sense of responsibility for maintaining peace. Peace education in schools, communities, and government programs contributes to building resilience by ensuring that future generations are equipped with the necessary skills, values, and mindsets to face challenges in a peaceful and constructive manner. As a result, peace education is not only a tool for healing historical wounds but also a means of laying the foundation for a more cohesive and peaceful nation.

G. Policy and Legal Recommendations for Integrating Peace Education

1. *Policy Reforms for Peace Education*

Integrating peace education into Indonesia's national educational framework requires comprehensive policy reforms, especially for regions that have been affected by prolonged conflict, such as Aceh, Papua, and Maluku. To ensure that peace education becomes a lasting feature in the education system, reforms must focus on curricular integration, teacher training, and regional customization of the curriculum.

a. Integration into the National Curriculum

The current National Education System Law (Law No. 20/2003) provides the foundation for Indonesia's education policy, emphasizing character education and social values. However, it lacks a dedicated provision for peace education. This gap can be addressed through an amendment to the law, specifically Article 37, which details the guidelines for curriculum development. The reform would mandate the integration of peace education into the national curriculum, making it a compulsory subject, especially in post-conflict areas. Peace education should not be an optional subject, but rather a core component within civics education, history, and social studies.

The content of peace education must address reconciliation, trauma healing, conflict transformation, and social justice. In regions like Aceh, where the peace process followed the 2005 Helsinki Agreement after decades of conflict, peace education could focus on the lessons of peacebuilding, the role of dialogue in conflict resolution, and the importance of national unity. Integrating such concepts into school curricula would ensure that future generations are better equipped to contribute to a peaceful and cohesive society.

Moreover, it is vital that the curriculum is developed inclusively, allowing local voices to shape how peace education is approached. The integration of peacebuilding concepts must not only cover theoretical knowledge but also practical skills such as conflict resolution and dialogue facilitation, ensuring a well-rounded approach to peace education.

b. Regional Customization and Adaptation

While a national policy is essential, post-conflict regions like Papua and Aceh have unique historical contexts that require tailored peace education strategies. The Local Government Law (Law No. 23/2014) gives regional governments autonomy over certain educational decisions. This autonomy should be used to develop context-specific peace education curricula. For instance, Papua's history of political conflict with the central government could be addressed in peace education programs that focus on self-determination, cultural identity, and reconciliation. Local adaptations would allow regional governments to work with local communities in designing peace education that resonates with their specific historical and social realities. This ensures that peace education is culturally sensitive and contextually relevant, fostering a deeper connection with the issues at hand.

2. Legal Reforms to Support Peace Education

In parallel with policy reforms, Indonesia must also undertake significant legal reforms to ensure that peace education is adequately funded, protected from political changes, and able to serve the needs of post-conflict communities in the long term. The legal framework surrounding peace education and its funding needs to be more robust and explicitly linked to national education priorities.

a. Financial Support and Legal Protections for Peace Education

One of the primary challenges facing the implementation of peace education in post-conflict areas is the lack of consistent funding. While the National Education Fund (Law No. 15/2004) allocates resources for general educational purposes, it does not earmark funds for peace education initiatives. Therefore, a reform of the education funding law is required to guarantee that peace education receives dedicated financial support. The reform should ensure that a specific percentage of the national education budget is allocated for peace education in post-conflict regions like Aceh and Papua. This funding could support the development of curriculum materials, teacher training programs, and extra-curricular activities aimed at fostering peacebuilding and social cohesion.

Additionally, peace education programs must be protected by legal safeguards to prevent them from being undermined during political

shifts or budget cuts. The Law on National Education should include specific protections for peace education, ensuring that it remains a priority even in times of political transition or economic difficulty. A constitutional amendment could provide legal guarantees for the continued support and implementation of peace education programs, making them impervious to political instability.

b. Legal Framework for Restorative Justice in Education

Indonesia's Law on Human Rights (Law No. 39/1999) provides protections for human rights but does not explicitly incorporate the principles of restorative justice into the education system. Restorative justice, which seeks to repair harm and foster reconciliation through dialogue and mutual understanding, is a crucial tool in post-conflict reconciliation. Therefore, a new legal framework should be introduced that mandates the integration of restorative justice principles into peace education. The law could establish protocols for restorative justice education in schools, emphasizing the importance of truth-telling, accountability, and healing as part of the peacebuilding process.

In practice, restorative justice programs should be integrated into history education, where students can learn about the legacy of conflict, the impact of violence on communities, and the role of forgiveness and justice in moving forward. These programs should focus on promoting dialogue, empathy, and understanding across community lines, especially in regions where historical trauma is a significant barrier to reconciliation. Restorative justice programs can also help prevent the recurrence of violence by teaching students the skills necessary to engage in peaceful conflict resolution, fostering long-term peace in communities affected by conflict.

c. Legal Protections for Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Education

The Law on the Protection of Victims of Violence (Law No. 13/2006) offers essential protections for victims of violence, but it does not fully integrate the needs of victims within the educational sphere. As part of the proposed reforms, this law should be expanded to include provisions for integrating trauma-informed education and victim support into the school curriculum. Special provisions could be made for victims of past violence—whether survivors of armed conflict or marginalized groups—ensuring that their needs are addressed through sensitive teaching practices and support networks within schools. This

approach would help ensure that victims of violence, particularly in post-conflict areas, are supported through the educational process, which can be a key avenue for psychosocial healing.

3. Government and NGO Roles in Peace Education Implementation

The success of peace education in Indonesia depends not only on policy and legal reforms but also on the collaboration between the government, civil society, and local communities. NGOs play a pivotal role in the implementation and advocacy of peace education, while the government is tasked with ensuring that these efforts are properly coordinated and supported.

a. Collaborative Role of Government and NGOs

The government, as the primary policymaker, must create the legal and financial structures necessary for the widespread adoption of peace education. However, NGOs and civil society organizations are critical in advocating for and supporting the implementation of peace education at the grassroots level. NGOs can provide training programs for teachers, develop educational materials, and support community-based peacebuilding efforts. They also have the flexibility to address the local needs of post-conflict communities, making peace education more effective and context-specific.

A partnership model between government agencies and NGOs could ensure that peace education programs are not only comprehensive but also contextually relevant. This partnership would help local authorities and educators design programs that are tailored to the historical, cultural, and social contexts of post-conflict regions, ensuring the success of the programs. An example of such collaboration is the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), which works alongside national governments to support the integration of justice and peace education in post-conflict countries. Indonesia could look to such models to foster effective collaboration between state and non-state actors.

b. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

For peace education to achieve its intended outcomes, it is essential that it be regularly monitored and evaluated. The Law on Educational Evaluation (Law No. 20/2003, Article 58) mandates evaluation of education programs; however, it currently lacks provisions for

monitoring peace education initiatives specifically. Therefore, a new regulatory framework should be introduced to establish clear indicators for the evaluation of peace education programs. These indicators might include improvements in interpersonal relations, shifts in attitudes towards violence, and increases in cooperation and dialogue between previously divided communities.

The evaluation process should also involve feedback mechanisms that allow local communities to participate in assessing the effectiveness of peace education programs. This participatory approach will help identify gaps in the curriculum and provide valuable insights for program improvement. Moreover, monitoring and evaluation results should be publicly available to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of peace education policies.

4. Key Recommendations for Reform

a. Amend the National Education System Law (No. 20/2003) to Make Peace Education a Mandatory Subject

One of the foundational steps towards institutionalizing peace education in Indonesia's post-conflict regions is amending the National Education System Law (No. 20/2003) to explicitly incorporate peace education into the national curriculum as a mandatory subject. The existing law provides a broad framework for education in Indonesia, emphasizing general goals like character development, but it does not specify the integration of peace education as a key component. To address this gap, an amendment to Article 37, which governs curriculum development, should be introduced. This would make peace education a core part of civic education, history, and social sciences, ensuring that students across all grade levels, particularly in post-conflict regions like Aceh and Papua, are systematically taught about conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the importance of non-violence.

By embedding peace education within the formal education system, Indonesia can create a generation of citizens who are not only aware of their shared history but also equipped with the skills to foster dialogue, prevent future conflict, and contribute to national unity. This reform would emphasize national cohesion by teaching students to view diversity as an asset rather than a source of division. Furthermore, incorporating peace education into the national curriculum ensures that

the values of peace, justice, and human rights are instilled in young people at an early age, equipping them to become active contributors to the peacebuilding process.

b. Revise the Local Government Law (No. 23/2014) for Regional Autonomy in Designing Peace Education Curricula

Given Indonesia's diverse ethnic, cultural, and historical contexts, it is crucial that peace education is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The Local Government Law (No. 23/2014), which grants regional autonomy over certain matters, must be revised to enable local governments, especially in post-conflict areas, to design contextualized curricula that reflect the specific historical experiences and needs of their communities. For example, Aceh, which experienced decades of conflict, might require curricula that focus on post-conflict recovery, healing from trauma, and rebuilding relationships. On the other hand, Papua might require an emphasis on ethnic diversity, self-determination, and the importance of inclusion in peacebuilding.

This revision would allow regional governments to have the flexibility to adapt peace education to the specific social dynamics and challenges faced in each region. It also ensures that local communities are not passive recipients of a national curriculum but active participants in shaping the content and delivery of peace education. Empowering local authorities in this way can foster a sense of ownership over the peace education process, which is essential for its long-term sustainability.

c. Reform the Law on National Education Funding (Law No. 15/2004) to Include Peace Education as a Key Area

Another crucial reform involves the Law on National Education Funding (No. 15/2004), which governs how the national budget is allocated for education. Currently, the law does not allocate dedicated funds for peace education programs, which presents a significant barrier to the comprehensive implementation of these initiatives, particularly in regions recovering from conflict. To address this, the law should be amended to create a specific funding stream for peace education programs, ensuring that these initiatives are sufficiently supported in post-conflict areas like Aceh and Papua.

This amendment would guarantee that peace education is not only seen as an optional or supplementary part of the curriculum but as a

priority area that requires financial support for its development and implementation. The dedicated funds could be used to develop teaching materials, train teachers in peace education methods, organize community-based peace programs, and create safe spaces for dialogue in schools. By earmarking funds specifically for peace education, the government would demonstrate its commitment to building long-term peace and social cohesion.

d. Enact a Law on Restorative Justice Education

The concept of restorative justice—focusing on repairing harm through dialogue, mutual understanding, and accountability—has proven to be a powerful tool in post-conflict reconciliation. However, restorative justice principles are not yet formally integrated into the educational system. To address this, a Law on Restorative Justice Education should be enacted, mandating the inclusion of restorative practices within the school curriculum. This law would help students learn how to address conflicts constructively, understand the concept of justice in post-conflict societies, and facilitate healing for individuals and communities.

The law could require schools to introduce programs that encourage truth-telling, forgiveness, and community-based reparations as part of their peace education initiatives. By embedding restorative justice principles in education, this law would promote a culture of dialogue and understanding, enabling students to engage with past injustices in a way that promotes healing rather than division. Additionally, it would foster an environment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and contribute positively to their communities, ensuring the sustainability of peace.

e. Create a Government-NGO Partnership Framework

The implementation of peace education cannot be solely the responsibility of the government; it requires collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs that have expertise in conflict resolution, human rights, and reconciliation. To facilitate this, a Government-NGO Partnership Framework should be established. This framework would formalize the cooperation between governmental agencies and non-governmental actors in the development, implementation, and evaluation of peace education programs.

NGOs play a crucial role in providing expertise, training, and resources to schools and teachers in post-conflict regions, often with a more direct connection to local communities. By working with the government, these organizations can ensure that peace education is tailored to local contexts and resilient in the face of political or social change. For example, international organizations like UNICEF and local NGOs could partner with local authorities to develop curricula, train teachers, and even fund educational initiatives. A formal framework would streamline this cooperation, ensuring that both government and NGOs work toward a common goal: the promotion of sustainable peace through education.

f. Establish a Regulatory Framework for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Peace Education

Finally, to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of peace education programs, a regulatory framework for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of these initiatives should be introduced. This framework would define clear indicators of success, such as increased social cohesion, reduced incidents of violence, and improved attitudes toward conflict resolution. It would also require regular assessments to determine whether peace education programs are achieving their intended outcomes, and whether they are adaptable to the changing needs of post-conflict societies.

This M&E framework should be inclusive, incorporating feedback from students, teachers, and communities to assess the real-world impact of peace education. By establishing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation, the government can ensure that peace education is not a one-time intervention, but a continuous process that evolves alongside the social and political changes in post-conflict regions. This also allows for accountability, ensuring that funds allocated for peace education are being used effectively and efficiently. Moreover, it provides a platform for community involvement, which is essential for the long-term success of peace initiatives.

Through these comprehensive legal and policy reforms, Indonesia can lay the foundation for a robust and sustainable peace education system. These reforms will address the immediate needs of post-conflict regions while also ensuring that peace education is integrated into the broader national agenda. By implementing these changes, Indonesia can

move towards a future where reconciliation, healing, and social cohesion are not just idealized goals but tangible outcomes of a well-structured, legally supported education system.

H. Conclusion

In summary, this paper highlights the essential roles of advocacy, legal strategies, and history teachers in promoting peace education within Indonesia's post-conflict regions. Advocacy efforts, often spearheaded by civil society organizations and international bodies, are crucial in shaping legal frameworks that support the inclusion of peace education in curricula. Simultaneously, history teachers in post-conflict areas play a key role in addressing historical trauma, fostering critical thinking, and challenging biased narratives to promote understanding. The integration of peace education into the national curriculum is vital for fostering reconciliation, healing, and long-term national unity in regions such as Aceh, Papua, and Maluku, where historical grievances continue to shape social and political dynamics.

Looking ahead, future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of peace education on intergenerational conflict resolution, as well as its role in transforming societal attitudes toward violence. There is also a need to further explore the intersection between legal reforms and the practical implementation of peace education in schools, particularly how national laws can be effectively adapted to support localized peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, research should investigate how restorative justice principles can be more deeply integrated into the curriculum to enhance the impact of peace education in post-conflict contexts. The continued evolution of Indonesia's peace education policy will be pivotal in securing the long-term success of these efforts.

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to emphasize peace education as a critical tool for post-conflict reconciliation and nation-building, not just in Indonesia, but globally. By prioritizing peace education through comprehensive legal reforms and targeted advocacy, the country can contribute to healing divided communities and fostering a more unified national identity. Peace education should not be seen as an optional subject, but as an essential component of

Indonesia's educational framework, which holds the potential to shape future generations committed to peace, justice, and societal harmony.

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“If there is to be
reconciliation, first there must
be truth.”

— Timothy B. Tyson

Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story

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All authors declared that this work is original and has never been published in any form and in any media, nor is it under consideration for publication in any journal, and all sources cited in this work refer to the basic standards of scientific citation.

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