
Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance

Report of Canada

*Prepared in reply to the request of the Director-General of UNESCO
for information on steps taken to apply
the Declaration and the Integrated Framework of Action on Education
for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy
adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1995*

**Prepared for
The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO**

by

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INTERNATIONAL DECADE 1 0 0 2 2 0 1 0 AND NON-VIOLENCE
FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD



COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA

CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO



Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is Canada's response to the request of the Director-General of UNESCO for information on steps taken by the member States to apply the Declaration and the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1995.

Overview

The 1995 Declaration and the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy are not well known in Canada, but the principles they express are important elements of education policy, both in formal school systems and in many areas of non-formal education. Despite many pressures for a "back to basics" style of education in Canada's formal education systems, policy-makers, researchers, and teachers continue to develop citizenship education curricula and to integrate peace, human rights, and global education into school programs. There has also been growth in postsecondary and non-formal education in these fields.

During the period under study, the most noticeable trend has been a much higher level of integration of the themes of peace, democracy, human rights, international understanding, and tolerance in both formal and non-formal education programs.

Highlights

- Citizenship education is the subject of considerable renewed interest in Canada. Ministries of Education in several provinces and territories are developing new curricula in this field. Policy-makers, researchers, and educators are exploring the meaning of active citizenship in a country of considerable ethnic, linguistic, and geographic diversity that is, at the same time, open to the multiple influences of the rest of the world.
- Peace education has received support from the federal government's Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative. It provides support for several educational initiatives designed to promote conflict resolution and a culture of peace.
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission has developed "Teaching Human Rights in Ontario" (THRIO), an educational package for use by teachers in Ontario schools to teach students about the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the work of the Commission. Released in 1995, the package was reviewed for use in Ontario schools and has been endorsed by the Ministry of Education.
- Several Canadian universities have launched new academic programs in human rights.
- Cégep international is an organization of 22 Quebec colleges that promotes international activities and works toward the internationalization of the curriculum. The college-level project, "Éducation à la citoyenneté dans une

perspective planétaire” (ECP), focuses on introducing curriculum and training content in the areas of international understanding and solidarity, peace education, rights and democracy education, environmental and sustainable development education, and intercultural education. This program is currently being voluntarily implemented in 14 colleges.

- Public concern over the issue of school safety has been increasing. Governments, departments of education, school boards, and individual schools have been under pressure to address actual and anticipated violence in schools. This has evoked an array of responses across the country. In Nova Scotia, the League of Peaceful Schools has developed an effective Peer Mediation Program for non-violent conflict resolution. In Alberta, the provincial government has implemented the Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) initiative to promote safe and caring learning and teaching environments in Alberta schools. A number of projects are currently operating as part of this initiative, including the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s SACS Project, a comprehensive violence-prevention endeavour designed to encourage socially responsible and respectful behaviour.
- There are many interesting examples across Canada of efforts to respond to the needs of vulnerable groups, including those with handicaps as well as children and youth at risk because of socio-economic factors. British Columbia’s extensive distance education services and open learning systems are exemplary, as is Saskatchewan’s program of integrated services for children and youth at risk.
- The Government of Canada has made a formal Statement of Reconciliation to Aboriginal peoples for the history of abuse in the Residential Schools system. It is implementing a plan to transfer authority for education to First Nations communities and to respond to the needs of Aboriginal youth through a variety of other programs, including multi-purpose urban Aboriginal youth centres to provide career planning, employment opportunities, and recreational activity in a supportive, culturally relevant environment.
- The Pan-Canadian Education Research Agenda (PCERA) was initiated by the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC), a partnership of Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). As a joint federal-provincial initiative to promote research on education policy issues, PCERA has identified citizenship and social cohesion, diversity and equity, Aboriginal education, and special-needs programming among its highest research priorities.
- Resources and information about education for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding, and tolerance in Canada are now widely accessible on the Internet.

Conclusions

The principles of the Declaration and the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy have been well received and widely applied in Canada. Many educators already had considerable experience working with these

principles before 1995. Canadians increasingly see all of these areas as aspects of a general effort in education for democratic values.

Considering the importance of the principles of the Declaration and the Integrated Framework to ongoing debates about educational priorities in Canada, it would be beneficial to have them produced and disseminated in popular forms that make them more accessible.

In the year and decade for building a Culture of Peace, some see a need in Canada for more systematic linkages between programs offered by members of the United Nations family that address various aspects of this common theme, including the United Nations Association in Canada, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and UNICEF. This would enable them to secure a more comprehensive level of cooperation and engagement from Canada's education systems.