The State of Peace Education in Sri Lanka: in Peace or in Pieces?

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Foreword

I am happy to present to the reader this MA thesis on:

‘The State of Peace Education in Sri Lanka: in Peace or in Pieces?’

With a background in International Relations, Conflict Studies and International Development Studies, and a special interest in Education and Development, I try to present an interdisciplinary view on peace education in Sri Lanka.

To make reading easier

To make this thesis accessible, it includes several summaries and ‘nutshells’. At the end of every chapter you will discover a textbox with a short summary. This might hopefully help the interested reader to remember the focal points and it might offer the fast reader some more insights than just the main summary. I would also like to refer you to the concluding chapter 7. This conclusion will provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the research results, including recommendations for the development of peace education in Sri Lanka and for further research on the topic. Naturally I will always be delighted to answer any of your further questions, or to receive further feedback on this thesis. I wish you a pleasant read.

Thank you

Many people deserve a sincere ‘thank you’. First of all I would like to thank my first and second supervisors Paloma Bourgonje and Margriet Poppema for their enthusiasm, inspiration and advice. I also want to express my gratitude to all respondents and other friends in Sri Lanka who have helped me with this research and made my stay in Sri Lanka so joyful. I am especially grateful to Jehan Perera, my local research supervisor in Sri Lanka, who did not hesitate to open doors to many interesting people, and who gave the possibility to organise a presentation on my preliminary findings in Colombo. Additionally, I appreciate the pleasant co-operation with Katherine Miles, and other Masters students who joined the research group meetings on Education and Development. Moreover, I especially want to thank my parents, Rikjan and all other family & friends I haven’t mentioned here directly, but who know they deserve my appreciation too.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Justification, research questions and conceptual scheme

‘Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.’

(Constitution of UNESCO, 1945)
Chapter 1 Introduction

Justification of research topic and location

The world nowadays is faced with all kinds of conflicts, which have an overwhelming impact on people’s lives. Education often is seen as one of the main instruments to achieve a ‘culture of peace’ through processes of peace building in (post-) conflict societies. Considering the presence of numerous conflict and post-conflict situations in developing countries, one would assume that post-conflict approaches and development strategies are combined. However, there is no consensus on how to accomplish this. Additionally, there is too little academic attention paid to the analysis of a comprehensive post-conflict development strategy. My argument is supported by the authors Junne & Verkoren, who state that Development Studies and Conflict Studies should take into account each others dimensions (2005: 1-7, 308-326). Considering my background, with this research I hope to draw from the combination of Development Studies, Conflict Studies and Educational Sciences. In my view, peace education could form a crucial element of comprehensive (post-) conflict development strategies.

Despite the large number of peace education initiatives all over the world, there is little research and programme evaluation to accompany such activities. Peace education is thus ‘an active field in need for research’ (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 1). Consequently, there are still manifold questions to be answered. Considering the often very complex nature of conflicts and the multidimensional challenge of building peace, what is the role of peace education? What are the challenges and obstacles peace education faces? Are there ways to successfully employ peace education, considering historical, cultural and political contexts? Is it possible to establish a ‘culture of peace’ within (post-) conflict societies through peace education? What are perceptions on peace education of the different actors?

Regardless of the lack of research and evaluation and various critiques in the literature, peace education programmes continue to be designed and implemented, even in countries such as Sri Lanka where violent conflict and animosity continue to exist. This research hopes to contribute to a wider understanding of peace education, since the discussion on peace education is not only relevant to regions of violent conflict like Sri Lanka, but also in multicultural societies all over the globe.

When looking at the broader theoretical debates on education and development, there is a connection between the topic of peace education and the more general international debate on quality of education. The international agenda for the improvement of Education For All (EFA) was created at the Dakar meeting in 2000. The sixth EFA goal is on improving the quality of education. It cites ‘essential life skills’, which can be related to peace education practices.1 Davies for instance, places peace education in the broader debate about quality education, including issues such as inclusion of all children (including minorities), the development of a critical and pluralistic mindset and active participation of students (Davies 2005). Likewise, a large number of experts on education in emergency situations have argued that ‘quality education limits the chances that trauma, abduction, forced labour or a range of social and economic obligations consume the lives of war-affected children and youth’ (Sommers 2004: 81). Adding

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1 As an example please see the newly implemented ‘life competencies’ subject by the Sri Lankan government mentioned in chapter 3 and 5.
to this, I would like to state that quality education in many senses helps children and youth to develop themselves, since they increase critical awareness of society and its dangers, as well as a fair amount of self-esteem. This can help children and youth to defend themselves against societal injustices. Moreover, quality education helps to bring back hope for the future, and alternatives to the above mentioned threats. Likewise, the fifth of the eleven objectives adopted by the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 explicitly focuses on the rights of children in emergencies. It stresses the importance of meeting the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conducting educational programmes which promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance to prevent violence and conflict (Sommers 2004: 7).

Many actors are involved in the creation and the implementation of peace education initiatives. This research focuses on three main actors in the field of peace education in Sri Lanka: peace educators (including principals, teachers and zonal education officers), programme-makers (including NGOs) and policy-makers (including the government and international donors). The research also includes a somewhat freestanding group of actors, namely the resource persons, including academics and (former) consultants. This research uses this specific term ‘resource persons’, taking into account the same use of it in the Sri Lankan context. On the one hand governments and (international) donors develop the policies and framework that shape certain peace education initiatives. On the other hand, civil society (including NGOs, unions, religious institutions and other grassroots civil organizations) develops peace education programmes as well. This can be in co-operation with a government and (international) donors, or without. In my view, including the views of peace educators in this research is essential. Policies and programmes can set the rules and approaches, nevertheless educators are the ones who ‘decide’ what is offered to students or participants, and how.

To study peace education in Sri Lanka is interesting for different reasons. First of all because of the complex situation in Sri Lanka, a country that on the one hand endeavours for peace, but on the other hand keeps falling back into violent conflict. According to the definition of Junne & Verkoren (2005), a post-conflict situation is when open warfare has come to an end. This has been the case in Sri Lanka until recently, where a ceasefire was signed in 2002. Unfortunately, during my fieldwork the situation in Sri Lanka became unstable again and violence has escalated once more. Secondly, there are several peace education initiatives existing in Sri Lanka. And finally, I have a personal fascination for this beautiful and at the same time troublesome country.

This research focuses on peace education initiatives for children (7-15), youth and adolescents (15-24), as defined by the United Nations (UN) (Ansell 2005: 1; UNICEF 2001). Children in the age of 7-11 develop their skills to understand the perspective of others (Ansell 2005: 16). This ability is a crucial

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2 Zonal education officers work at one of the 92 decentralized offices of the Ministry of Education.
3 Non Governmental Organisations
4 With ‘peace educators’ I refer to school principals, zonal education officers and to a wide range of teachers that educate about and for peace; not only in formal schooling but also in non-formal educational programs. The findings of this research reveal the valuable contribution of perceptions and actions of educators (please see the concluding chapter for more details).
skill when participating in peace education. Peace education therefore often starts from the age of 7. In the next stage of development, children from 12-15 years old begin to think reflectively (Ansell 2005: 16). Children in this stage can even benefit more from peace education, since they will be able to critically reflect upon concepts like violence, war and peace. The other group, namely youth and adolescents, is also included in this research, because they are especially vulnerable to social vices (Finn in Ansell 2005: 18; Lowicki-Zucca 2005: 4). During emergency situations (or right after conflict) a lack of livelihood opportunities forces many young people into violence, and sometimes even a life of crime (UNICEF 2001). Thus, peace education in this age-group can have an important impact and should not be left out. Due to its limited scope, this research will not touch upon early childhood and adult peace education programmes.

The research takes into account formal and non-formal peace education programmes and initiatives for children and youth from 7-24 years old. In Sri Lanka, children from 7-15 years old are in (or should be in) the last grades of primary education (approximately grade 4 and 5), in junior secondary education (grades 6 to 8) and in senior secondary education (grade 9-11). The research will however not include children and youth as respondents. Although their views on peace education are definitely worth being studied, due to time limits I was unable to incorporate these.

My fieldwork took place in different parts of Sri Lanka, both in rural and urban areas which are inhabited by different ethnic communities. In the fourth chapter I explain my research location and number of interviews in detail.

Due to the sensitive nature of a topic such as peace education, I chose to use qualitative research methods. This included informal and semi-structured interviews, as well as school and classroom observations. I also explain my methodological choices in more detail in the fourth chapter.

In terms of the two different levels of analysis (policy and implementation level), this research concentrates on perceptions of peace education and related actions of the different actors. By looking both at the policy/programme-level as well as at the school level I try to reveal the similarities and differences of the perceptions and actions on both sides. Considering all this, I designed a set of research questions that will guide my research.

Research question and sub questions

What are peace educators', programme-makers' and national/international policy-makers' perceptions of peace education in Sri Lanka, and what are their related actions?

In order to formulate a nuanced answer to the main research question presented above, I developed a series of sub questions. Each sub question is related to a certain phase of the research, and will be

5 For more information on peace education in formal and non-formal educational settings, please see chapter 3.
6 In Sri Lanka primary and secondary education is compulsory (grade 1 to 11) children from the age of 5 up to 14. Some students proceed to A-level (grade 12-13) as a preparation for university.
answered in the mentioned chapters. Before ‘entering the field’ to collect primary data, I elaborated extensively on the existing theories of peace education. This resulted in a theoretical framework as presented in chapter 2. This chapter answers the sub questions: What are existing theories and definitions on peace education? What are the main challenges and critiques to peace education according to academic literature? What are the roles of the different actors (policy-makers, programme-makers, peace educators) according to the literature?

Moreover, I also collected information on the historical, socio-economic, political and educational context in which peace education of Sri Lanka takes place. This is presented in chapter 3. Additionally, chapter 4 elaborates on the operationalization, methodology, research challenges and ethical considerations concerning this research.

In the second phase I collected data on the perceptions and actions of policy-making and programme-making actors. This provided me with a better overview of the framework and context regarding peace education in Sri Lanka. An analysis of the findings on this level, including links to theory, can be found in chapter 5. In this chapter the following sub questions are addressed: What are the perceptions of the government, donors, NGOs and resource persons on peace education? What policies, programmes and support materials are developed by policy-making and programme-making actors? What are the main challenges for peace education according to policy-making and programme-making actors and resource persons?

In the third phase I collected data on perceptions and actions of peace educators (school principals, teachers and zonal education officers). The findings of this part of the research are presented in chapter 6, which answers the sub questions: What are the perceptions of peace educators on peace education? Do peace educators implement the policies, programmes and support material offered by the policy-making and programme-making level? Do peace educators develop their own strategies to implement forms of peace education? What are the main challenges for peace education according to peace educators?

The fourth phase helped me to cross-check the collected data and the preliminary analysis while still being in Sri Lanka. In the fifth and final phase I analysed the collected data and answered the questions while writing this thesis. The concluding chapter 7 compares the findings and discusses the answers to the main research question.

In short, the sub questions serve to give insight into the perceptions and actions of the three main actors in the field of peace education. Most of these sub questions can be subdivided under two basic questions:

- **What is peace education?**
- **How is peace education implemented or how should it be implemented?**

The first question relates to the perceptions, and the latter question is linked to the actions of the actors. The literature study conducted for this research showed a wide variety of theoretical perspectives on peace education. Thus, it was not possible to distinguish one clear definition or conception. Therefore I distinguished a set of ‘what-dimensions’ to represent the existing perceptions in recent literature on peace education. Similarly, I also developed a set of ‘how-dimensions’, representing the theoretical views

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7 An overview of the sub questions relevant for each chapter is presented in a textbox at the beginning of every chapter.
on ‘how to implement peace education’ (the actions). In order to analyse the data on the different perceptions of the actors, I compared the findings with the what-dimensions from theory. Additionally, the theoretical how-dimensions helped me to analyse the actions of the Sri Lankan actors. In the conceptual scheme, presented below, the main concepts of this research — **actors, perceptions, actions and dimensions** — are presented.

I would like to end this introduction with a statement from an NGO worker in the field of peace education in Sri Lanka: ‘Considering the many actors involved in peace education and the lack of clear guidelines for implementation, peace education is too open and vague currently in Sri Lanka. This leaves room for different actors or stakeholders to work with and promote peace education. These stakeholders have their own definitions of peace education and their own activities. So your research outcome can be a very interesting one for all stakeholders here.’

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8 An NGO worker expressed this in an email that answered some of my preliminary questions on peace education in Sri Lanka in December 2005.
Peace education

**What is peace education?**

**What-Dimensions**
1. Non-violence
2. Social justice & equality
3. Human Rights
4. Human security
5. Culture of peace
6. (Multi) cultural dimension
7. Historical dimension
8. Political dimension
9. Ethnic-religious dimension
10. Emotional dimension
11. Ecological balance
12. Multilevel focus 13+14+15
13. Global/international level
14. National level: unity
15. Inter-group level: perceptions
16. Inter-personal level

**How is peace education implemented?**
- policies and support materials
- programmes and support materials
- implementation at school level

**How-Dimensions**
1. Formal education
2. Non-formal education
3. Formal & non-formal
4. Long term commitment
5. Separate subject
6. Curriculum/school wide
7. Community participation
8. Process of peace building
9. Reflective dialogue + media
10. Peaceful class environment
11. Student participation/agency
12. Non-violent activities
13. Deal with trauma-emotions
14. Learner-centred/interactive
15. Bilingual education
16. Teacher training
17. Conflict resolution skills
18. Creativity, humour, play
19. Create co-operation, tolerance and empathy

**Conceptual scheme:**
operationalization of dimensions

- Policy-makers
  Government (NIE + MoE)
- Donors
  UNESCO, GTZ, UNICEF
- Programme-makers
  NGOs (SEDEC, AHIMSA & NPC)
- Resource persons
  Academics & consultants

- Formal education
  (Peace) educators
- Non-formal education

- Perception
- Action
Chapter 2  Theoretical framework

Theory relevant to peace education in Sri Lanka

Seeing the world from the perspective of ‘the other’ is a difficult task:

‘As often have been noted, one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter’.

(Shapiro 2002-II: 3)
Chapter 2  Theoretical framework  
Theory relevant to peace education in Sri Lanka

Sub questions answered in this chapter:
- 2.1 What is peace education according to theory?
- 2.2 How to implement peace education?
  - What are existing theories and definitions on peace education?
  - What are the main challenges and critiques to peace education according to academic literature?
  - What are the roles of the different actors (policy-makers, programme-makers, peace educators) according to the literature?

This theoretical framework will elaborate on concepts that are used in the conceptual scheme of this research and address the above mentioned sub questions. First the main historical roots of peace education are introduced. Subsequently an overview of recent conceptualizations of peace education, derived from current academic literature, is presented. The main critiques and challenges to peace education are also taken into account in the discussion. An overview of the relevant literature is visualized in two tables showing the main dimensions of peace education, drawn from several authors. The first table presents the so called ‘what-dimensions’ (what is peace education?) and the latter the ‘how-dimensions’ of peace education (how is - and how should - peace education (be) implemented?). The relevant actors in the field of peace education for this research are discussed. In the latter chapters of this thesis, the dimensions introduced in this theoretical framework will be linked to the conceptualisations and actions of the main actors in the Sri Lankan peace education field, namely peace educators, programme- and policymakers.

2.1 What is peace education according to theory?

History of peace education

Peace education is not a new phenomenon. Peace education was already mentioned by Comenius (a Czech educator) in the 17th century as well as by Immanual Kant (in his book Perpetual peace, 1795). In the beginning of the 20th century, World War I created an even greater emergency to teach about non-violence. During the Interbellum Social Studies educators began to teach about international relations and alternatives to war (Harris 2002: 19). As stated by Simpson, these first forms of peace education were designed based on the notion of a ‘negative peace’ – the absence of war. It focused mostly on the notions of non-violence and non-war (Simpson 2004: 1-4). Peace educators sought to unite students through a vision of the world without war and violence. An interesting fact is that during the two World Wars, peace education (in the US) was deemed ‘un-American’ and subversive (Johnson in Simpson 2004: 5). In the period after World War II, UNESCO encouraged peace education activities, both for policy makers as
well as educators (Aspeslagh & Burns 1996: 28). The first academic peace studies programme was established at Manchester College (Indiana) in 1948 (Harris 2002: 20).

Bar-Tal (2002: 28) and Burns & Aspeslagh (1996) report that peace education initiatives mainly developed over the last three decades. Both the Vietnam War and the rise of a global nuclear threat stimulated peace educators to warn their students against these devastating developments. In the 70s an influencing educational approach was that of the Brazilian Paulo Freire. He linked education to liberation from oppression, through cultural action and ‘conscientisation’ (Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 10; Shor 1993). In this same decade, an American peace education initiative arose; in 1974 the Quaker Project on Community Conflict in New York⁹ developed a curriculum for teachers of young children. This Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet publication focused on self-esteem, strengthening the community and creative conflict resolution skills. It was translated in seven other languages and used in schools in several other countries (for instance in El Salvador) (Harris 2002: 20).

In the 80s the threat of a nuclear war gave an incentive for three publications on peace education. Brocke-Utne (1985) wrote Education for Peace, Reardon (1988) was the author of Comprehensive Peace Education and finally Harris had the book Peace Education published in 1988. In the 90s a somewhat more humanistic view on peace education developed, focusing on civil, domestic, cultural and ethnic forms of violence (Harris 2002: 20-21). These contemporary peace education approaches are thus based on a more structural and holistic notion of ‘positive peace’, aiming at the development of a culture of peace. UNESCO has been a great influence on this contemporary holistic approach to peace education (Simpson 2004: 3-4; Harris 2002: 21).

There has been considerable international documentation dealing with the importance of peace education. The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Constitution of UNESCO (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949) all contain statements emphasising the significance of peace education. Since then, the value of peace education has been affirmed in official documents of UNESCO, the international co-ordinator of peace education efforts (1974, 1980, 1994/95, 1996), UNICEF (1996, 1999), the United Nations General Assembly (1978, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2002) and the Hague Appeal for Peace (1999). There is also a firm institutional commitment to peace education. UNESCO listed 580 peace research and training institutes around the world in 2000. The past three decades there has been a growing body of critical literature within the field of peace education (Page 2004: 4; Burns 2000: 1). In this same period the Peace Education Commission (constituted in 1972), within the International Peace Research Association, has been a forum for peace educators to exchange ideas, materials and experiences (Burns 1996: xi, 10).

Yet, according to Salomon, there is still insufficient scholarship in this field. And, maybe even more important, thorough evaluation of peace education practices is still missing (Salomon 2002: xi; 2003: 8). In this line of argument Seitz mentions that ‘the diversity of the individual programmes for education

⁹ Quakers are members of a religious (Christian) society in the United States, http://www.quakerinfo.org/.
assistance with a peace education objective – the majority of which are impressive and some of which certainly pioneering – cannot mask the fact that a systematic review and justification of their conceptional bases and implications is lacking, as is the formulation of acknowledged guidelines and minimum standards for the corresponding pedagogical intervention; a particularly urgent desideratum is, above all, the lack of evaluations and impact analyses, with the effect that there is scarcely any empirical knowledge of the suitability and use of the respective methodical approaches’ (2004: 77). In order to make a coherent evaluation of peace education programmes, there needs to be some consensus on what peace education is, or should be, in a certain context. This research might hopefully contribute to the conceptualisation of peace education in Sri Lanka. Now, first the main concepts that are relevant to this research will be discussed.

Concept of peace
As for the concept of peace, in this research I apply the terms negative and positive peace, as defined by the Norwegian peace researcher Galtung. Negative peace refers to the elimination of war and all forms of direct violence (fights, abuses). Positive peace, on the other hand, focuses on the elimination of all structural and cultural obstacles to peace. Positive peace therefore addresses issues beyond the ending of only direct violence, such as structural violence (oppression, racism, poverty), justice and equity (Ardizzone 2001: 7; Salomon & Nevo 2002: xi, 5; Perkins 2002: 38; Bretherton 2003: 12; Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 10).

Concept of conflict/post-conflict
The situation in Sri Lanka currently is difficult to characterise. Whereas the ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 officially still counts, violent attacks from all different warring parties occur on a daily base. When applying the definition of Junne & Verkoren (2005) which was discussed earlier, a post-conflict situation is when ‘open warfare has come to an end’, as was the case in Sri Lanka when the fieldwork of this research started. Unfortunately now it is more difficult to define the situation, as the country seems to be on the fringe of war/non-war. The situation is Sri Lanka is everything but stable, and can change any time, hopefully in the direction of peace.

The impact of conflict on (formal and non-formal) education depends on the specific nature and dynamics of violence, and is specific to different regions as well. While ethnic conflict may ethnicise education (affecting curriculum content and narrowing the diversity of the student population), the general disruption caused by widespread (militarised) conflict may also have a positive impact by opening opportunities to challenge restrictive ideas, practices and roles’ (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 24). As explained by Bush & Saltarelli, women in Sri Lanka for instance broke with societal expectations by taking up leadership roles in peace movements and politics (2000: 24). The table beneath shows a useful overview of different types of violence related to educational settings.
Peace education for whom?

Children often begin to define their own ideas of war between the ages of six and seven. The author Hicks therefore concludes that peace education needs to start at the primary school level, to help children develop their personal relationship with and conceptual understanding of peace. Reardon also emphasizes the importance of peace education programmes to start at the primary level, because this learning stage is often bypassed when looking at sensitive and controversial issues (both authors in Simpson 2004: 2, 6).

Primary school aged children and youngsters in secondary education are in the midst of the development of their image-forming of ‘the rest of the world’. As mentioned in the introduction, children between 7 and 11 are able to develop more complex thought processes. Piaget’s (1972) theory on child development states that children in the age of 7-11 are in a stage of ‘concrete operations’. And although this is still tied to concrete experience, children in this stage begin to be able to look at things from the perspective of others (in Ansell 2005: 16). In this line of thought, it is possible to argue that the ability to understand another’s perspective is a crucial skill when participating in peace education.

Children from 12 to 15 years old are in the following stage of ‘formal operations’. Piaget states that in this stage the abstract reasoning begins and children can begin to think reflectively (Ansell 2005: 16). Children in this stage can even benefit more from peace education, since they will be able to critically reflect upon concepts like violence, war and peace. Concerning Sri Lanka, children in this age group could develop their own perceptions on the societal situation, the ongoing violence, collective and historical narratives and their perception of their own group and ‘the other’.

Furthermore, peace education programmes should also focus on young adolescents\(^\text{10}\) (Lowicki-Zucca 2005: 4). As stated before, young people in this age-group are often at risk (Finn in Ansell 2005: 18; Nicolai & Triplehorn in Sommers 2004: 56). Young adolescents living in emergency situations, like Sri

\(^{10}\) According to the definition of Lowicki-Zucca, young adolescents are in the age group from 18-24 years old.
Lanka, frequently have to take on enormous responsibilities. Extended social, political and economic unrest affects the social fabric and culture of families, households and communities, all of which are important for young peoples’ development. During emergency situations in or right after a conflict, a lack of livelihood opportunities forces many young people into a culture of violence, and sometimes even a life of crime. ‘Their unaddressed needs and squandered potential seriously undermines their abilities to contribute positively to stability and state reconstruction’ (UNICEF 2001). It can be concluded that peace education in this age-group can have an important impact, and therefore should also be prioritised. Especially when taking into account the recent lack of attention to youngsters, since only primary education is prioritised at the global and most national levels (Lowicki-Zucca 2005: 1)\(^{11}\).

The focus of this research will be on the perceptions and actions of policy/programme-makers and peace educators on peace education programmes designed for children, youth and young adolescents. Within the literature there is also some attention to the need for peace education for adults.\(^{12}\) However, this is out of the scope of this research and therefore this will not be discussed. Peace education in relation to early childhood development is not so much mentioned in the literature, yet it was brought up in one of the interviews during the fieldwork. Unfortunately this issue is also out of the scope of this research. Additionally, the perceptions and actions of children and youngsters themselves are not included in this particular research. It will focus on peace education programmes included in primary and secondary education, as well as workshops or other peace education activities focused on the whole younger generation.

Based on the literature, I conclude that in a complex and unstable situation like Sri Lanka\(^{13}\), a critical and reflective younger generation (defined in this research as the age-group between 7 and 24 years old) is a necessary means in the broader process of building peace. Peace education could help to build such a generation.

**Peace education: what's in a name?**

Peace education programmes all over the world differ considerably in terms of ideology, objectives, focus, curricula, contents and practices (Bar-Tal 2002: 28). Furthermore, peace education also has many different names, such as peace building education, education for conflict resolution, education for international understanding, education for human rights, education for mutual understanding, global education, education for democracy/citizenship, critical pedagogy, education for liberation and empowerment, social justice education, tolerance education, environmental education, life skills education & disarmament and development education (Simpson 2004: 1; Ardizzone 2001: 1; Davies 2005: 61; Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 23). In some cases, governments do not permit the critical elements of peace education, and therefore many different names are used instead (Davies 2005: 61).


\(^{13}\) For a description of the historical and current situation of Sri Lanka, please see the last part of this theoretical framework.
Although the amount of literature on peace education and related educational fields is considerable, there is not one clear concept, path or method to follow (Simpson 2004: 1-2). Simpson argues that peace education has presented itself as one aspect of social studies that may ultimately serve to link a fragmented body of knowledge together. Or it could ideally link the many forms mentioned above into a comprehensive and clear concept of peace education leading to a practical approach. In-depth research is however still needed in order to create a clear conceptualization of peace education (Simpson 2004: 9; Salomon 1999). According to Salomon & Nevo (1999), it is obvious that peace education shares some characteristics with related programmes, such as appreciation for ‘the other’, and a peaceful approach to conflict resolution. But what exactly is peace education, and are there some unique elements that define the core nature of peace education? What are the different dimensions of peace education according to recent academic literature?

**Conceptualization of peace education**

A clear conceptualization of ‘peace education’ is essential when developing a wider body of scholarship and knowledge. Conceptual clarity is also crucial if we want to benefit from experience and lessons learned from existing peace education initiatives (Salomon 2002: 4). When evaluating the literature on peace education, some authors do come up with their own conceptualisation and categorisation of peace education. Yet, there is no consensus on what exactly peace education is, and how it could be implemented. Different authors define and emphasise different dimensions of peace education. In this conceptualisation I will give an overview of the dimensions discussed in the literature. There will be a division between ‘what-dimensions’ – which refer to the perceptions of the actors (what is peace education) and ‘how-dimensions’ – which refer to the actions of the actors (how is peace education implemented?). These dimensions formed a framework when doing research on the perceptions and actions of the three actors in the peace education field in Sri Lanka. In the latter chapters I will elaborate on the following questions; which dimensions are valued by the Sri Lankan actors? What dimensions are put into practice? And what dimensions should be implemented according to the respondents?

**What-dimensions**

The table presented below is an interpretation of the main dimensions that relate to the concept of peace education. This table thus represents my personal interpretation of a relevant overview of the literature related to the question: what is peace education?

Some of the what-dimensions get a lot of attention in the literature, and these will be discussed in detail. Other dimensions were less prominent in the literature, nevertheless did relate to the peace education reality in Sri Lanka. To stay concise, I will therefore not discuss all of these dimensions at length. Although there is a high density of information presented to the reader, this is necessary in order to gain a thorough insight into present debate on peace education.
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<th>WHAT- DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
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<td>1. Non-violence</td>
<td>-All</td>
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As becomes clear from the ‘what-dimensions’ table, not all authors agree upon the importance of all sixteen what-dimensions. For instance, there is debate about what the focal point of peace education should be. Whereas Reardon advocates human rights as the starting point, Selby (among others) states that peace education should concentrate on a global focus, creating a deeper understanding of students’ role and relationship with the natural world. Jardine adds to Selby’s view that ecological balance should be the main concern of peace education programmes (Simpson 2004: 5).

Ardizzone presents a set of core peace education values, derived from Reardon’s ideas, the DHR (Declaration of Human Rights) and UNESCO, namely ‘human security, equity, justice and intercultural understanding through the promotion of global citizenship, planetary stewardship and humane relationship’. These values should shape the content and pedagogy of peace education (Ardizzone 2001: 1). According to Ardizzone, the relevancy of peace education not just derives from its perspective on outbreaks of war, violence and terrorism, but on its attempts to address structural threats to human
security (2001: 2). The UNDP Human Development Report 1994 on human security provides the most authoritative and quoted formulation of this term: people can exercise their choices safely and freely – and they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow. Human security does not narrowly focuses on the classical national notion of security, but on ‘safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life’ (Zambelli, date unknown).

Reardon’s concept of peace education includes ‘a variety of knowledge, skills and attitudes for interpreting ideas and the development of reflective, critical and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge’ (Ardizzone 2001: 2). This definition might appear multi-interpretable; however, it is still worth mentioning, because it is widely used by numerous authors who are authorities on peace education nowadays.

In the eyes of some authors, there is also a logical link and even commonalities between peace education and quality education. Bush and Saltarelli stress that (short term) peace programmes alone are not enough when striving for a peaceful society. What really is benefiting is the provision of good quality education. Moreover, ‘school systems themselves must become more equitable and democratic, starting from the experiences children have in the classroom. Lessons characterised by repeating information and the absence of open debate, where rules must be obeyed without question, undercut children’s confidence and inhibit their participation as active members of their society’. School systems as a result need to change, to facilitate genuine possibilities for effective peace education programmes. Although it is easier to choose for solutions that are merely additive, rather there is a need for transformative processes within the education system (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 21, 33).

Peace Education programs in emergencies frequently include components focusing on promoting tolerance, preventing violent behaviours, and providing young people with conflict management skills. According to the ‘good practice guide’ of the INEE14, peace education programs often include a selection of the following concepts and values: similarities/differences, inclusion/exclusion, self-esteem (in some societies), communication, self-respect, emotional literacy, social pressure, reflection, co-operation, conflict prevention/management/resolution, human rights, children’s rights, gender rights, marginalisation, demobilisation, reintegration, preservation of socio-cultural norms, rule of law, civic participation/responsibility, democracy, good governance, accountability, human dignity, humanitarian acts, peace (internal, external), peace building, reconciliation, truth and justice, disarmament, escalation and de-escalation of conflict, compassion, empathy, kindness, family values, respect for human life, dignity, love, caring, tolerance, diversity, freedom, honesty, humility, happiness, ethics/morality, equity, forgiveness, spirituality, patience, and unity/patriotism for national unity after conflict.

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Peace education faces several challenges, among which there is a **political challenge**. This political challenge results in a need for some sort of societal agreement on the objectives (content, curricula, projects) of peace education. Public debate should ideally develop particular peace education objectives, which are responsive to societies’ own political dictates. Without legitimisation of society on the role and objectives of peace education, it would become a very difficult task to implement it successfully (Bar-Tal 2002: 30). Looking at it from the policy-side, political or ideological forces itself often have a large influence on education, making necessary changes of intolerant (education) systems extremely difficult (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v).

Some authors relate peace education to the creation of **national unity**. The complex ‘politics of difference’ can cause difficulties for educators who have to choose between the twin discourses of ‘unity in difference’ and ‘unity in sameness’. Unity in difference is about affirming diversity, and being critical on how ‘unity’ is discussed. Unity in sameness on the other hand, is about conforming and accepting the dominant discourses on unity within a society. Educators who follow the ‘unity in sameness’ discourse, avoid discussing differences. This refers to essentialized national identities created in many countries during colonial times. ‘Unity in difference’ is therefore preferable, in order to negate differences that connect individual identities to a shared national identity (Dei 2005: 282).

Burns & Aspeslagh, inspired by the Brazilian educator Freire, plead for **equality and social justice** as the starting point for peace education. Peace education in their view is part of a radical paradigm that challenges dominant power structures and discourses, and it should put forward alternatives. Inequality is the central outcome of processes and structures (a war culture) that form obstacles to the formation of a culture of peace. Peace education should try to break with this war culture (1996: 3-7; Shapiro-II: 2-3). Besides, in order to create a culture of peace, peace education should address issues such as poverty and the growing polarisation of income and wealth (Shapiro-II: 3). In Freire’s words: ‘Without changing the social arrangements which prevent the great majority of human beings from being fully human beings, we will never have peace with justice. And, without making education for peace part of a concrete process of socio-political action towards progressive change, we will never have education for peace and justice; we will just have a new kind of nonsense’ (Freire 1975: 70, in Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 125-126).

The use of the concept of ‘a culture of violence’ (as opposed to ‘a culture of peace’) can result in a rather vague conceptualisation of peace education and its goals. To posit a ‘culture of violence’ without further explanation as the root cause for conflict, as happened in Guatemalan textbooks, ignores the complexity and a thorough understanding of the multiple causes of the conflict (Oglesby 2004: 28). Yet, as will become clear in chapters 5 and 6, this concept is often mentioned by Sri Lankan peace education actors.

Simpson questions the effectiveness of peace education programmes that try to challenge existing **power structures**, and decrease the gap between powerful and powerless: ‘we cannot be sure that the oppressor will peacefully relinquish their power over the oppressed’ (2004: 7). It can thus be argued that
peace education in (post-) conflict societies cannot succeed on its own, and needs to be integrated in a broader (peace building) approach.  

Another common critique on peace education programmes is that it would be ‘another form of western imperialist indoctrination’ (Ardizzone 2001:1). Gur Ze’ev (2001) criticises peace education as being a justification or rationalisation of what is often a violent status-quo - or hegemonic violence (Page 2004: 4). However, many authors argued instead that the contemporary framework provided by on the one hand the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (DHR) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and on the other hand the holistic approach to peace education of UNESCO, addresses ‘the attempt to mislabel peace education as indoctrination’ (Reardon in Simpson 2004:4, Ardizzone 2001:1-6, Hart 2002: 1).

Simpson also critically reflects on the current situation regarding peace education. The author states that peace education has recently been sidelined ‘in favour of education that promotes patriotism and nationalism under the guise of democratic principles and ironically, the preservation of human rights’. Peace education therefore faces a challenge, and peace educators need to shift their focus to a more positive and constructive approach to peace (Simpson 2004: 5).

Salomon emphasises a closely linked challenge, namely the built-in inequalities inherently linked to most conflict situations and therefore also present within peace education programmes. Peace education is often confronted with two different and opposing agendas. Peace education might have to formulate different goals for the different groups participating in a peace education programme (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 9). The concept of peace for instance, is perceived in different ways by the stronger and the weaker conflict parties. In the case of Israelis and Palestinians, the stronger party (Israelis) sees peace as the absence of violence (‘negative peace’, according to Galtung (1996) in Ardizzone 2001:7), whereas the weaker group regards peace as the structural attainment of equality and independence (Biton in Salomon 2003: 6). Biton mentions in his study (2002) on peace education programmes an increase of participants’ association with ‘positive peace’ (peace as cooperation and harmony, according to Galtung, 1996) This evaluation provides some evidence for the positive effect peace education can have (Biton in Salomon 2003: 6, 16-17).

In addition, Salomon distinguishes three different categories of peace education, based upon the socio-political contexts in which programmes take place (Salomon 2002: 5-6). First of all, Peace education programmes in regions of relative tranquillity will emphasise education for cooperation and harmony, promoting a culture of peace, and focusing on the inter-personal level (‘conflict resolution education’ according to Salomon). This could be called ‘education about peace’. Secondly, there is peace education in regions of interethnic tension, without overt acts of violence (for instance Latinos in the US, or immigrants in the Netherlands). Thirdly, and also the focus of this author, is peace education in regions of intractable conflict and hostilities (Salomon 2002: 5-7). As stated by the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, peace education programmes in emergency situations often include

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15 For the link between peace education and the broader process of peace building, please see the discussion following the table with ‘how-dimensions’.
‘components focusing on promoting tolerance, preventing violent behaviours, and providing young people with conflict management skills’. 16 Within Sri Lanka all types of peace education can be found, since all types of regions are present.

Salomon & Nevo's conceptualisation refers to this last category of ‘peace education in regions of intractable conflicts’. Their conceptualisation of peace education is rather specific:

‘We can see peace education, in its best form, attempting to change peoples’ mind-sets about the ‘other’, including five interrelated outcomes: 1) accepting the ‘other’s’ narrative and its specific implications (in theory and practice), 2) experiencing and showing empathy and trust towards the ‘other’ (emotional dimension), 3) critically seeing one’s own group faults and misdeeds towards the other group, 4) viewing the conflict with the ‘other’, including the narratives involved, in relativistic rather than absolute terms, and 5) engage in non-violent activities (actively seek reconciliation with the ‘other’)’ (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 5). Moreover, peace education may not only change perceptions in a positive way, it may also serve as a barrier against the adverse effects of harmful external events that can deteriorate attitudes and perceptions (Salomon 2003: 17).

Although Salomon & Nevo put a strong emphasis on changing peoples’ mindsets about ‘the other’, they also outline the difficulties such an approach entails. Especially during protracted conflict, excessive emotions like anger and fear often interfere with and hinder more rationale judgements and perceptions. Furthermore, peace education frequently needs to cope with a context of animosity, fear and belligerence. This would require the support of the education system, politicians, the media and members of the involved community, which is hard to get during or right after active conflict (Bar-Tal in Salomon 2003: 7, 10). Shapiro also remarks that having to see the world from the perspective of ‘the other’ is a difficult task. ‘As often have been noted, one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter’ (2002-II: 3).

Additionally, there is another challenge to peace education related to Salomon and Nevo’s conceptualisation. ‘Genuine peace education’ faces the challenge of dealing with a historical dimension: politicians, historians, textbooks, school curricula, traditions, rituals and media reinforce certain collective memories of the past about ‘the other’ (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 4; Salomon 2003: 5). Multicultural education also tries to deal with different collective narratives, like peace education. However, the narratives peace education faces have a deep historical and traumatic dimension, and therefore they often contribute heavily to a group’s identity (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 5). Some other authors also mention the importance of a historical dimension within peace education programmes. Peace education should thus include a critical historiography, that recognises the fact that there are competing sets of facts and multiple interpretations of historical events (Bush & Saltarelli 2000:12; Davies 2005).

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Levels
There is also discussion on which level peace education should focus. Hicks, Carson and Lange not only state peace education should begin with the inter-personal level (starting at primary school level), it should also be the main focus. On the contrary, Salomon clearly states peace education programmes should consider the inter-group level, whereas the inter-personal level is the focus of conflict resolution programmes within schools. Since teaching conflict resolution (within formal schooling) usually means teaching about self-perceptions and social skills (Salomon 2003: 4), peace education should rather deal with ‘existing conflicts based on ethnic, racial, national or religious hostilities crossed with developmental inequities that have a long history and a bleak future’ (Fisher in Salomon & Nevo 1999: 4).

Hicks concept of peace education focuses on the multidimensional and multilevel character peace education should have: ‘Peace education is holistic and transformative, incorporating a number of ideas in its definition and practice. [As] a multi-disciplinary, international field, peace education calls for long-term responses to conflict on the national, international and interpersonal level in order to create more just and sustainable futures’ (Hicks 1988 in Ardizzone 2001: 2).

Page, among others, also emphasises the multilevel nature of peace education. According to Page, the (philosophical) basis of peace education can only be established through an integrative approach encouraging a ‘culture of peace’ at different levels of society. ‘The culture of peace is a multifaceted phenomenon, involving attitudes, values and behaviours. It follows that if peace is itself multifaceted, then the philosophical approach to providing a rationale for peace education should also be diverse.’ (Page 2004: 11) In this author’s view, peace education thus tries to respond to the problems of conflict and violence on the global, national, local and personal level.

Although many authors stress the importance of a multilevel approach to peace education, there is nevertheless still criticism about peace education programmes; they are often too narrowly focused on just one or two levels (Selby in Simpson 2004: 4).

Cultural and context sensitive approach
Ardizzone (2001), Reardon (1997), Carson & Lange (in Simpson 2004), Davies (2005) and Burns & Aspeslagh (1996) outline the importance of a cultural and context sensitive approach to peace education. A quick-fix or one-size-fits-all approach to peace education, which fails to account for specific contexts, will not work (Ardizzone 2001: 1). The Interagency network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) as well states that peace education should be based on indigenous knowledge and traditions of peace: ‘Programs may include the exchange of traditional stories, sayings, and songs that promote respect and tolerance, as well as discussion of approaches to conflict resolution within the community. These traditional modes of conflict resolution can be complemented by discussions of international human rights such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as structured activities such as those
focusing on active listening, understanding emotions, cooperation, problem solving, prejudice reduction, and mediation skills.’

A practicing peace educator in (post-) conflict countries all over the world, Dr. Green, explains that ‘no two workshops are alike, as the regions, participants, needs and stages of conflict vary enormously. In [our] method of learner-centred […] education, the agenda develops through the participation of the group, and shifts as needs are identified and new realities or new conflicts emerge’ (1997: 4).

2.2 How to implement peace education?
When analysing the literature, it becomes clear that there are also many ideas on how to implement peace education. From the literature reviewed for this research, several ‘how-dimensions’ can be distinguished. To complete a comprehensive overview of the literature on peace education, these how-dimensions will be also presented in a table. Yet, first we will turn to the ones that put peace education in practice: what is the role of the different actors in the peace education field?

Actors
When elaborating on the question ‘how to implement peace education’, the role of the different actors in the peace education field cannot be left out. These specific roles of the main actors, as presented in the academic literature, are now discussed briefly. Although I refer to ‘the government’, ‘the (international) donors’, ‘the NGOs’ and ‘the peace educators’ in general terms now, I will elaborate on the specific actors that will be the focus of this research.

Jehan Perera, the Media Director of Sri Lanka’s National Peace Council (NPC), visualised peace initiatives in the shape of a triangle. The top-level government negotiations could not work without the demand for peace from the grassroots level. According to Perera, justice and peace depend on understanding the other communities’ grievances. Taking into account the broader context in which peace education often operates, peace education should ideally also form a triangle. This triangle represents a multilevel approach in which different levels of society and different actors cooperate:

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Role of peace educators

Many authors emphasize the important role of peace educators (Harris 2002; Baxter & Ikobwa 2005; Bar-Tal 2000; Bretherton 2003, among others). Peace educators are the ones that eventually put into practice peace education. They might use the framework and instruments that are provided by governmental or non-governmental institutions, or they might develop their own strategies to implement peace education.

Generally, peace educators warn about the problems of violence and teach about alternatives to violence – in its broadest sense. Peace educators adapt their approaches to peace education depending on the specific social context. Whereas peace educators in North-Ireland focus on mutual understanding, peace educators in Korea try to strive for reunification. Currently, peace educators in North America and Europe promote conflict resolution education. This type of peace education concentrates on the interpersonal level and provides participants with peacemaking skills (Bar-Tal 2002:33).

Bjerstedt provides a comprehensive overview of the ambitions of peace educators while they work with peace education. The first is ‘to give children and young people an opportunity to express their feelings’. Second, is ‘to give knowledge of an important sector of today’s reality’. Third, peace educators try ‘to make them [students] optimally prepared to function ‘peacefully’ in their relations with other people’. And finally ‘to make them optimally prepared to be willing and able to work for peaceful resolutions and against violent solutions at all levels as future citizens’ (1990, in Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 38).

‘The success of peace education is more dependent on the views, motivations, and abilities of teachers than traditional subjects are’ (Bar-Tal 2002: 33). Teachers who teach peace education therefore have to be in line with the objectives of the programme. This may work out problematic, because most teachers [in formal education] do not start their career because they hold peace education objectives (some may even have opinions that are contradictory) (Bar-Tal 2002: 33). Moreover, the teacher as a person and...
the relationship of a teacher with his students both function as a role model. In a respectful and trustful class environment, students can experience an actual culture of peace.

Peace educators should teach participants/students about the concept of peace and the dangers of violence, as well as practical skills about how to put peace into practice (Harris 2002: 22). Students should learn about the concept of peace, as well as how to enact peace – ‘the methodology of peace’. Peace is active and participatory, and so its pedagogy should be too. Next to texts, role-plays, games and group activities children should learn about negotiation, cooperation and working together. ‘A teacher who tries to convey peace culture without some practice, is like a moral rascal teaching ethics’ (Bretherton 2003: 13). ‘Experiential learning is the key method for the acquisition of values, attitudes, perceptions, skills and behavioural tendencies, in other words, their internalization. […] Setting up experiential learning in schools is a difficult task for educators. It not only requires pedagogical expertise, […] it also demands that teachers have the skill and ability to manage the learning environment while serving as role models for the students’ (Bar-Tal 2002: 33). Perkins adds to this the statement that peace education should be ‘feet first’ rather than ‘head first’ in many respects; peace education should cultivate practical behaviours along with understanding, rather than expecting appropriate behaviours to flow naturally from understanding (Perkins 2002: 52). Most people ‘learn by doing’, through (non-violent) actions they engage in. In Staub’s words: ‘children who made toys for poor hospitalised children, were later more helpful in society’ (Staub 2002: 81).

Since the success chances of peace education are teacher dependent, training programmes for peace educators are a necessity (Bar-Tal 2002: 33). The content of peace education needs to be combined with a ‘good pedagogy’. Unless teachers, next to the material support, receive a detailed but clear training on how to use it, they are unlikely to put (the offered forms of) peace education into practice (Bretherton 2003: 16-17). Moreover, it is a challenge to overcome resistance of teachers to new educational innovations, such as peace education (Davies 2005).

Since the importance of the role of peace educators for the implementation of peace education, it is interesting to know if they at all – and how – use the guidelines and material provided by the other two actors that are considered in this research. First we will have a look at what exactly the role of the programme- and policymakers is.

Role of NGOs

A broad and functioning civil society consists of NGO’s, labour organizations, religious institutions and other grassroots civil organizations (Fernando 2005). In the beginning of the 90’s there was a shift from the use of the term NGO’s to the broader concept of civil society, because different kinds of social movements and organizations became more effective and more widely known (Mitlin 2001: 151). However, although in this research I consider local NGOs as a part of the wider concept of civil society, I will focus on a few NGOs that play an important role in the field of peace education.

NGOs were the forerunners of international and national advocates for peace education, and they still are. In the Interbellum, a landmark in establishing peace education was made by the League of
Nations, which brought together NGOs and intergovernmental institutions (Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 27). In Sri Lanka, when neo-liberal policies were implemented in the 80s, and the market gained influence, local leftist NGO’s came into being. From that moment on Sri Lankan civil society and state had a love-hate-relationship. NGO’s are often dependent on the state, and on international donors. They cooperated and struggled with each other at the same time (Fernando 2005). In this regard, Burns discusses the cleavage between internationalism by donors and local concerns of the NGOs. Both parties try to legitimize their own concept of peace education, while it would be more effective to combine international knowledge and supplies with local expertise (1996: 124).

NGOs often fill the gaps left by the government in the formal school system. It can therefore be concluded that they focus more on non-formal peace education initiatives, designing and implementing several peace education programmes.19 Although there also might be interesting differences within the broad group of programme-making actors (NGOs) in Sri Lanka, because of time constraints this research will only focus on a few NGOs.20

**Role of the government and (inter)national donors**

According to the Dakar Framework for Action, that calls for Education for All, during emergency situations governments (and especially ministries of education) have a significant role to play in an area that has been dominated by the actions of NGOs and United Nations organisations. Nevertheless, the leading role of governments in the education sector often becomes uncertain in times of conflict or immediately after conflict. While national governments struggle for legitimisation or mere survival, a lack of capacity and even corruption often occurs (Sommers 2004: 7, 18; Talbot 2006). The education sector frequently moves downwards on the priority list.

From the literature it can be concluded that most governmental institutions that work in the field of peace education focus on formal education. However, there is not always a clear strategy and different governmental institutions sometimes do not seem to cooperate. Besides, as set forth above, the government also influences the NGO sector, whilst NGOs try to stay as independent as possible. And to make it even more complex, international donors also have a hold on both governmental and non-governmental institutions. ‘Peace programs are sometimes thrust upon divided communities because of the desire of the international community to assist the peace process.’

The peace education policies developed by a government could for instance result in guides for teachers, a curriculum, content for textbooks and other educational material, a set of guidelines for the political/organizational climate of the school, extracurricular activities, training for teachers and rules that oblige students to participate (Bar-Tal 2002: 27).

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19 Therefore in this particular research NGOs are also referred to as ‘programme-makers’.

20 For more detailed information on the NGOs included in this research, see chapter 4.

As for international donors it is harder to generalize. They often either support the government, or a local NGOs - or both - in their approaches. This research focuses on UNICEF, UNESCO and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) who are major international donors in this field. Put shortly, UNICEF defines peace education as ‘the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level’ (UNICEF 1999: i). GTZ supports the Sri Lankan government in the process of improvement of primary education, including peace education initiatives. UNESCO, being an international authority in the field of peace education, in Sri Lanka also aims at an important facilitating role. The Delors Report of the UNESCO Commission on Education for the 21st Century (1996) expands the idea of a global learning society, emphasising four pillars for future-viable learning:

- learning to live together,
- learning to know,
- learning to do,
- learning to be.

Accordingly the International Bureau of Education at UNESCO regards the pillar ‘learning to live together’ as a framework concept for peace education, including various topic areas such as conflict management, human rights, civic education, international and intercultural understanding (Seitz 2004: 62).

Finally we could question ourselves what the role of academics could be. Ideally, academic advisors and researchers would be linked to both the policy-making and the programme-making actors. As became clear from the fieldwork in Sri Lanka, in reality academics are not ‘used’ (enough) as resource persons with regard to policy and programme-making practices. There is also little attention for research and evaluation by academics, while there is a strong need for this.

Co-ordination of actors

Sommers brings forward the issue of co-ordination in relation to peace education, especially in emergency situations. The responsibility for the co-ordination of the education sector in many conflict cases is shared among several parties (Seitz 2004:46), since national governments do not always demonstrate or exercise the necessary capacity to co-ordinate the activities of foreign actors. However, the INEE22 - among others – argues for the strengthening of government capacities to co-ordinate education activities, because ‘the government will be able to better respond to current crisis and those in the future’ (INEE in Sommers 2004: 42). Ideally, a national level co-ordination committee consists of a UN organisation (either UNESCO or UNICEF) and ‘the concerned education ministry official’ (Sommers 2004: 60).

While co-ordination is essentially a method for getting different institutions to work together, it is evidently not always synonymous with ‘togetherness’. In poor and conflict affected countries, the

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22 Interagency network for Education in Emergencies
education system principally depends on funds from wealthy donors. On the one hand these powerful donors might have the potential to enforce co-ordination. On the other hand these donors may also have own policy and ideological restrictions that stand in the way of a facilitating role in co-ordination processes. Moreover, every international actor – donor countries, NGOs and UN organisations alike – aims at positive media attention in order to raise funds. The competition for visible ‘results’ can also undermine co-ordination efforts (Sommers 2004: 11-17).

Interestingly, the different UN organisations often also have their own conflicts because of overlapping mandates. UNESCO’s mandate is education and UNICEF’s mandate is child protection (Sommers 2004: 17). Both mandates relate to the topic of peace education, but it is unclear who will take the lead, or how effective co-ordination could be accomplished. Still, Talbot argues that UNICEF and UNESCO could form an ideal team, since ‘UNESCO has the brains, and UNICEF has the resources available at the spot’ (2006).

As mentioned above, the many actors active in the peace education field are interlinked. In theory it seems almost impossible to implement different peace education initiatives without effective co-ordination. In reality issues like power, trust, competition and priorities often stand in the way of co-ordinating practices (Sommers 2004: 79). How this works out in practice in Sri Lanka will be discussed in the following chapters.

**How-dimensions**

Similar to the ‘what-dimensions’, there is no consensus in the literature on the importance of the ‘how-dimensions. In the discussion below on community participation and formal and non-formal approaches to peace education, most of the how-dimensions are elaborated on. The discussion could easily be extended into more length, however in order to stay concise, I would like to refer interested readers to the mentioned authors in the table for more detailed information on their views. In the chapters 5 and 6 I discuss which of these dimensions are valued and put into practice by the actors in Sri Lanka.

Before entering the discussion on the how-dimensions, I would first like to introduce an alternative approach to peace education, namely ‘peace building education’. The authors Bush & Saltarelli argue for this extensive ‘peace building education’, because some peace education programmes seem to use a rather narrow recipe book. According to these authors, peace education needs to be extended into peace building education. ‘Peace building education is a process rather than a product, long term rather than short term, relying on local rather than external inputs and resources, seeking to create opportunities rather than impose solutions’ (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v). To move towards this new evolutionary direction, there is a need to focus on education in its broadest sense, including ‘formal and non-formal education, content and teaching methods, arts and sciences, child- and adult-centred [education]’. Peace building education cannot be restricted to the classroom, it needs community projects involving children and adolescents from across ethnic borderlines, and even inter-ethnic economic development projects (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v, 23, 27).
The earlier mentioned INEE ‘good practices guide’ also sets forward a list of **skills** and **knowledge** that form important elements in peace education programs. To mention a few of them: active listening, questioning, communication, working together, cooperation, social integration, accurate perceptions, recognising stereotypes, assertiveness, life skills training, analysis/critical thinking, identifying root causes, reflection, problem-solving, making choices, identifying dilemmas, seeing that actions have consequences, having multiple perspectives, values clarification, negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, advocacy, teaching, sharing, bias, tolerance, consensus-building, networking, principles of human rights, the UN Decade of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World 2001-2010, HIV/AIDS awareness and related interpersonal skills, tools such as information technology, research, publications/media, writing, case studies, networking.\(^23\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW-DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. Peace education as a separate subject/programme</td>
<td>Bretherton (2003) (starting point, afterwards dimension 8 &amp; 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Use creativity, humour and play</td>
<td>Davies (2005), Bar-Tal (2002)</td>
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Community participation and multi-level dialogue

Hart (2002), Baxter & Ikobwa (2005), Davies (2005) and the INEE (2006) stress the importance of parental and community participation in peace education programmes. To be effective, peace education programmes in schools should be complemented with activities and discussions with the larger community and especially with parents. It can thus be argued that these authors also support a wider conceptualisation of peace education, such as peace building education. Educators, school administrators and NGO workers should be trained in ‘behaviour modelling’, since this is a powerful tool for shaping community interactions. Children can become confused if taught conflicting moral frameworks in school and home.24 Also looking at the community level, Simpson emphasizes the need to encourage students, who might feel alienated in multicultural and (post-) conflict societies, to express their feelings and negotiate their understandings. This way they will not feel torn between teaching at home and teaching in the classroom (2004: 7).

Another important issue that needs to be discussed is the role of (mass) media in creating a culture of peace, or in sustaining a culture of war. Firer emphasizes the need to create new narratives, spread by the media. Mass media often has the tendency only to deal with a ‘war appeal’, including catastrophes, conflicts and aggression. A main challenge for a holistic approach to peace education - nation wide - is to create and distribute a ‘peace appeal’ that includes new peace promoting narratives (Firer 2002: 57).

A dominant discourse within a peace education programme has to be avoided, by creating an open dialogue and by developing a critical and reflective attitude (Burns & Aspeslagh 1996: 3-7, Reardon in Simpson 2004). In this line of argument, stereotyping both in textbooks as by teachers must be avoided. In the case of Sri Lanka, a review of textbooks of the 70s and 80s showed that Sinhalese textbooks were full of images that portrayed Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese. These same books also tended to represent Sinhalese Buddhists as the only ‘true’ Sri Lankans (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 10, 13). Balasooriya et al. also point out that researches in the 80s and 90s showed series of biases in school texts in Sri Lanka (2004: 399). Moreover, as revealed in chapter 6, many peace educators viewed a lack of open dialogue as one of the challenges for successful peace education in Sri Lanka.

As mentioned before, Bar-Tal argues that successful peace education programmes require the support of the education system, politicians, the media and members of the involved community, which is a difficult task during or right after a conflict (Bar-Tal in Salomon 2003: 7, 10). Bilingual education for instance could have a positive impact in increasing inter group understanding, and decreasing community tensions. Moreover, learning in the mother tongue - at least in the first grades - makes the classroom a less alien place for minority children. There is also no evidence that teaching of minority languages necessarily reduces a sense of (political) unity (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 16-18).

As discussed earlier, a major challenge for peace education programmes is to address the structural inequalities and power relations. It therefore needs to be incorporated in a broader process of peace building. ‘Curriculum packages that promote tolerance will have little impact if they are delivered within educational structures that are fundamentally intolerant. Peace education cannot succeed without measures to tackle the destructive educational practices that fuel hostility’ (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v).

According to Baxter and Ikobwa, peace education and peace building are two different things, but they strive for the same goal. Peace education attempts to change people’s behaviour, and peace building incorporates social and economic justice and legal reform. Both try to make human rights a reality (2005: 28). As stated by Miall et al. (1999), van der Borgh (2004), Ball (2001) and Licklider (2001), peace building is a complex and multidimensional process, and it can be argued that peace education should be an integral part of such a holistic process. Such a process consists of political, economical and societal transformations that aim at reducing inequalities and building peace.

Regarding the different phases of conflict and the implementation of peace education initiatives, Schell-Faucon argues that ‘peace building education and youth work is required above all when there is a latent conflict, and in post-war and peace phases. There is very little opportunity to have any influence during violent conflicts’ (Schell-Faucon 2001; Ropers 2002, 74; both in Seitz 2004: 41). Seitz questions this common opinion, above all represented in the German literature, that peace-building measures in the main phase of an armed conflict “are neither possible nor effective” (DED 2003: 9 in Seitz 2004: 40). Peace education in emergencies should not merely be understood as ‘a humanitarian emergency relief measure but as a quality education programme, which sows the seeds for reconstruction and which […] includes significant peace education components. Explicit peace education-oriented approaches that take into account the challenges of education in emergencies, ‘can […] certainly be regarded as peace building work with population groups directly affected by armed conflicts’ (Seitz 2004: 40,41). This table shows which types of educational activities could be implemented during social unrest and conflict.25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict status and type of educational initiative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict status</td>
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<td>Type of educational initiative</td>
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Source: Tawal/Holley 2004, 11

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25 This table was derived from Seitz 2004: 40.
Formal and non-formal peace education

Carson and Lange (1997) outline two different approaches to peace education. First they distinguish the **integrative approach**, which offers students the opportunity to critically reflect upon peace and existing inequalities. Peace education here is integrated in the curriculum and it aims at creating a culture of peace.26 The second is the **additive approach**, which remains separate from the existing curriculum and takes place within non-formal education (Carson and Lange in Simpson 2004: 3). Authors that promote the integrative approach to peace education stress the importance of integrating peace education into the **formal schooling** system. The underlying idea is that the education system can fulfil an important role in creating a peaceful society. Schools have the authority, legitimacy, the means and the conditions to build such a society. ‘Schools are often the only institutions society can formally, intentionally and extensively use to achieve this mission’ (Bar-Tal 2002: 27). The government and the Ministry of Education have an important role to play in an integrative approach to peace education.

Supporters of this approach see a considerable role for the **government**. ‘A Ministry of Education can set the objectives for peace education, develop the curriculum, draw the contents for textbooks and other educational material, set guidelines for organising the political climate in schools, add extracurricular activities, train teachers, instruct schools to show initiative, and oblige students to participate is this learning (Bar-Tal 2002: 27). In this regard, Salomon & Nevo state that ‘school-based curricula can be quite effective in imparting knowledge which may serve as a mind-opener, a precursor to genuine peace education’ (1999: 5).

Simpson argues that in theory peace education is an obvious choice for educators working in the formal education system. Yet, what mostly lacks is the practicality of peace education programmes, taking into account the pressure teachers face while meeting curriculum standards (2004: 7). Shapiro expands this argument, by stating that ‘peace education is very far removed from the compulsive quest for higher test scores which has so emptied educational experience of meaningful intellectual, emotional and spiritual purpose’ (2002-II: 2). Moreover, most teachers in developing countries face other challenges, such as big class sizes, a lack of training and low wages resulting in multiple jobs. In order for peace education to succeed, I believe teachers need to be supported in different ways. They need a sufficient wage, proper training, a practical ‘guidebook for peace education’ and ideally a range of supportive materials. Moreover, the findings of this research show that after such training teachers also feel the need for further guidance.

Davies mentions the current challenge to demonstrate to schools and education policy makers that a **curriculum** that includes peace education does not destroy the fabric of the school, but in facts helps achievements in other areas. The second challenge according to Davies is to enable teachers to feel comfortable in (and exited by) taking risks of **student participation**. Research in this area is however still needed (Davies 2005: 64). What is argued by several authors is that peace education should follow a **learner-centred** teaching method. Although the importance of **dialogue and critical reflection** in

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26 UNESCO promotes the development of an international movement for a culture of peace. More information can be found on [https://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sommaire.htm](https://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sommaire.htm).
relation to peace education seems accepted widely, many schools still continue to operate with a banking approach in which students learn through the passive memorisation of information (Shapiro 2002-II: 5).

The opinions on both approaches vary greatly. Whereas Carson and Lange, Bar-Tal, Davies & Bretherton support the integrated approach to peace education, Reardon on the contrary argues for a combination of both approaches ‘to create a more balanced program’ (Simpson 2004: 3). Burns & Aspeslagh also outline that peace education can be taught within both formal education (as being the interface between knowledge and identifiable social complexes), as well as through non-formal education (as an agency within and between nations for the transmission of knowledge, values and worldviews) (1996: 16). However, Burns points out that although most education systems pay some lip service to UNESCO’s ‘culture of peace’, peace education is only partly included in most formal education systems (1996: 121-122).

Ardizzone promotes the ‘non-formal’ additive approach; because (non-governmental) grassroots level peace education programmes have more flexibility to design their own programme with fewer restrictions from the government. However, the reality in Sri Lanka showed that NGOs are restricted still in their opportunities to work with schools. According to Ardizzone, peace education often meets a lot of resistance because of its radical nature: those in power could want to preserve the status quo. Formal education then needs to support their dominant system, and not stimulate a critical reflection on it (as peace education is supposed to do) (Ardizzone 2001: 4-6; Burns 1996: 122). Since NGOs bypass certain formal structures, peace education in a non-formal educational setting has some advantages. There is more space for criticism and the development of agency for social change. According to Burns, knowledge obtained in non-formal education is often broader in its scope (1996: 124).

Another specific form of non-formal or ‘indirect’ education is through ‘peace museums’ or ‘peace education centres’. Although there is not a lot of attention to this specific form of peace education in the literature, there is quite some attention given to this concept in Sri Lanka. Yamane argues for peace museums at the national and community level, as well as an international network of peace museums (1996: 319). In Sri Lanka similar initiatives called ‘peace education resource centres’ can be found, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Some authors underline the fact that schools sometimes even contribute to violence and conflict within society (Smith & Vaux and Harber in Davies 2005: 61; Bush & Saltarelli 2000: vii). Good quality education can have a socially constructive impact on inter group relations. It is therefore equally evident that education could also have a socially destructive impact (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 9).

A strongly segregated education system helps to ensure inequality, lowered self esteem and stereotyping, according to Bush & Saltarelli. ‘On a societal level, the [direct and indirect] discrimination endured in schools can plant the seeds for ethnic divisions and conflict (2000: 14-15). Pigozzi’s therefore presents a provocative hypothesis that emergencies and reconstructions should be viewed as opportunities for transformation of education systems. Post-conflict societies should not return to previous education systems which contributed to conflict. However, to date there is no clear evidence that supports this hypothesis (Davies 2005: 67).
The discussion about the effectiveness of the often used workshop-method also needs to be mentioned here. A workshop covering one up to a few days is a frequently used peace education practice, often in the non-formal education sector. McCauley points out to the surprising fact ‘that such workshops aim to change hearts and minds of participants, but typically offer little support for behavioural change’. A solution to change the negative and threatening perceptions of ‘the others’ would be more regular contact between members of different groups (2002: 247-251). This solution can be linked to the ‘contact hypothesis’ of Allport (1954). This author assumes that ‘people typically have a favourable view of their own ingroup while maintaining more negative stereotypes and prejudices toward out groups. Interaction between members of opposing groups can lead to a reduction in prejudice and hostility’ (in: Tal-Or, Boninger, Gleicher 2002: 90; Kadushin and Livert 2002: 120). Derived from the theory of Fanon on the ‘decolonisation of the minds of formerly colonised peoples’, Bush & Saltarelli advocate the ‘desegregation of the minds of formerly segregated peoples’ (2000: 16).

Furthermore the ‘re-entry’ problem after such a workshop needs to be addressed. A new heart and mind will not be able to change behaviour in a context that does not support these new ideas (McCaugley 2002: 255; Allport in Tal-Or, Boninger, Gleicher 2002: 90). It is also advisable, according to McCauley, to recruit groups of participants instead of individuals, since a group of ‘changed hearts and minds’ when returning to their community might feel less isolated (2002: 255-256).

Finally, genuine peace education (unlike many other similar programmes) should entail a long term investment in order to change the states of mind, which are often anchored in widely shared national, ethnic or religious narratives. This involves group narratives (expressed through textbooks, media and even through academic discourse) and its way of seeing ‘the other’ (Salomon & Nevo 1999: 4). Curriculum development and textbook revisions are often a necessary, but long-term process (Talbot 2006). Moreover, national and international actors also need to commit themselves to peace education initiatives for a longer period in order to make the programmes sustainable and thus effective (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 27).

Based on the literature one can conclude that a combination of the integrative and additive approaches is desirable for most developing countries, because some children are excluded from the formal education system (or the education system as a whole), which leads to their exclusion from peace education programmes with an integrated approach only. A solely additive approach has a minor reach, in addition to the fact that NGOs are sometimes also restricted in their actions. However, in Sri Lanka it became clear that NGOs, although restricted in their possibilities to cooperate with schoolchildren, were able to create opportunities for children of different backgrounds to ‘mix & meet’. Schools often did not have the facilities or contacts to make these intercultural meetings a reality. The earlier introduced ‘peace building education’, which includes formal and non-formal education, might be a welcome new approach.
Some concluding remarks based on theory

In conclusion, peace education is a complex phenomenon. Although many authors discussed in this theoretical framework have already contributed to the conceptualization, there is no general clear-cut concept of peace education yet. And maybe it is questionable if this is a goal to strive for. Doesn’t each country or region need its own context-specific conceptualization of peace education, accompanied by a practical guidebook and training on how to implement peace education? According to Samoff, there is no such thing as ‘best-practice’ that should form a blueprint for other situations (Samoff 2005:3-5). In line of this argument, this research does not aim to contribute to the development of a general conceptualisation of peace education. Instead, this research can hopefully contribute to a context-specific conceptualisation of peace education, taking into account the perspectives and actions of policy-makers, programme-makers and peace educators in Sri Lanka.

I would like to conclude from the literature that peace education is not only conceptually a complex phenomenon; it is also a complexity in itself to put peace education into practice in an effective manner. Moreover, I would also like to plead for an interdisciplinary approach to peace education in complex situations like Sri Lanka. As stated by Bush & Salterelli: ‘complex and multidimensional problems must be matched with multifaceted responses’ (2000: 33). In short it can be stated that peace education cannot succeed on its own. It needs to be incorporated in a broader process of peace building, including wider socio-economic and political approaches.

Bush & Salterelli therefore come up with ‘the next step in the evolution of peace education’, being ‘peace building education’. This very promising and comprehensive approach to education that aims at creating a peaceful society might be a welcome alternative to all the different conceptualisations discussed above.

I would like to conclude with the same statement brought forward in the introduction by Salomon & Nevo: peace education is an active field in need for research. This also counts for Sri Lanka. there is a need for research on peace education that includes all levels of the field: ‘Sri Lanka must still work toward the goal of establishing a system that is characterised by an institutional research culture […]. The centralised, national-level focus of [a limited number of educational] researches [on the extend to which education has brought about social cohesion and national integration] is a cause for concern, because it limits the capability and commitment of school personnel to analyse their own practices’ (Balasooriya et al 2004: 408).

We will now turn to the ‘practical part’ of this thesis. In the following chapters a thorough analysis will be given of the data collected during the fieldwork in Sri Lanka, in order to finally answer the main research question:

What are peace educators’, programme-makers’ and (inter)national policy-makers’ perceptions of peace education in Sri Lanka, and what are their related actions?
Chapter 2 in a nutshell

What is peace education according to theory?

- There is no clear conceptualization of peace education; however, a table with ‘what-dimensions’ shows an overview of present focal points in the literature.
- A clear approach on ‘how to implement peace education’ also lacks; the wide range of the presented ‘how-dimensions’ imply the need for a holistic approach (such as the ‘peace building education’ approach), including wide community participation, integration into the broader process of peace building and a combination of both formal and non-formal initiatives. Thus: peace education cannot succeed on its own.

Main challenges to peace education include:
  - a political challenge concerning equality and social justice,
  - a historical and social challenge implying a change of people’s deep-rooted perception of ‘the other’,
  - a multilevel challenge; inclusion of global, national, regional, local and personal levels

How to implement peace education?

- a contextual challenge: creating a context sensitive approach aiming at open and critical dialogue
- a practical challenge; learning how to enact peace.

Peace educators fulfil a crucial role with regard to successful implementation of peace education. However, they face several difficulties as resources and flexible curricula miss: training is a first priority.

NGOs generally fill the gaps in the education system left by the government, providing non-formal peace education initiatives. Their influence depends on the context.

Governments by and large focus on peace education within the formal education system.

(International) donors can play a crucial facilitating role; long-term commitment is a must.
Chapter 3    The Sri Lankan context

The historical, socio-economic, political and educational context of Sri Lanka

‘Sri Lanka with its luscious landscapes, white beaches, smiling, graceful inhabitants and the bounteous fruits of the trees, is a paradise on earth. [It] is a place of beauty, charm and startling paradoxes.’

(P. Harris 2001: i)
Chapter 3  The Sri Lankan context

Sub question answered in this chapter:
- In what historical, socio-economic, political and educational context does peace education in Sri Lanka take place?

This chapter elaborates on the historical, socio-economic, political and educational context of Sri Lanka in which peace education takes place. However, it will only focus on the context factors relevant for this research, as it is impossible to cover the whole situation. First a short historical outline is given. This includes attention for past and present politics and conflict, since these two issues are strongly interlinked in Sri Lanka (Sprang 2003). In addition, a short analysis of the conflict is presented. This is followed by a description of the most important socio-economic aspects of Sri Lankan society. Finally, an overview of the educational situation is provided, highlighting those elements relevant to peace education.

Sri Lanka: a short historical outline and political situation

In the late 6th century B.C. the Sinhalese arrived in Sri Lanka, most probably coming from northern India. Buddhism was introduced (third century B.C.), and a great civilization developed around the cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. There were Tamil migrants in Sri Lanka as early as the 3rd century B.C. By the 13th century, a south Indian dynasty seized power in the north and established a permanent Tamil kingdom (Da Silva in Richardson 2005: 27). Occupied by the Portuguese in the 16th century and by the Dutch in the 17th century, the British took control of the island in 1796. It became a crown colony in 1802, and was united under British rule by 1815. The British recruited a large group of 'Indian Tamils' to work on the newly created tea plantations in the hill country of Sri Lanka. Most of them have little in common with the Sri Lankan Tamils, although they share the same language and religion (Richardson 2005: 29). Named Ceylon, the island became independent in 1948. In 1972 its name was changed to Sri Lanka. Both the Dutch and British introduced administrative systems that identified Tamils as a distinct community and emphasised their differences from Sinhalese (Richardson 2005: 27).

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has an elected parliament.27 Although officially Sri Lanka is still a united state, in reality the country is divided in ‘the Tamil North and East’ and the ‘Sinhalese South’. When reporting on Sri Lanka, today’s newspapers almost always refer to the violent conflict originated in a power struggle between ‘the North and the South’. Politics in Sri Lanka are strongly intertwined with this power struggle. Interestingly, during the fieldwork for this research several respondents (both at the policy and implementation level) complained about the amounts of money spend on the war and peace talks, instead of on the development of the country.

The current conflict had its roots in political uprisings in the early 70s. In the South of Sri Lanka, a radical Sinhala political movement - the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP – People’s Liberation Front) -

led a left-radical (non-ethnic) insurrection in 1971. This was suppressed by the government with enormous human cost to the JVP. In the period 1987-89 the JVP and the state fought another extremely violent war. Currently, the JVP forms a Marxist political party (Balasooriya et all 2004: 387-388).

Another root cause of the Sri Lankan conflict lies in the majority-minority division, which still causes violent struggle between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists. Earlier, tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamils erupted into war in 1983. Tens of thousands have died in this conflict since.

After two decades of fighting, the government and the LTTE formalized a ceasefire in February 2002, with Norway mediating the peace negotiations. Although generally only two warring parties are mentioned when referring to Sri Lanka’s conflict – the government and the LTTE - in reality a range of actors are involved. Indeed the LTTE is the largest and most active Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka. Yet, other militant Tamil groups have been formed, united and split up during the last two decades. These Tamil organisations and paramilitary groups play a role in the present conflict as well.

Currently, a series of violent incidents in Jaffna and the Eastern districts of Sri Lanka in December 2005 and from April 2006 onwards almost broke the ceasefire between the government and the LTTE. The situation is very unstable, and can change any time.

**Analysing Sri Lanka’s conflict**

Sri Lanka’s conflict seems to fit in the recent international trend; almost all of the current conflicts are intrastate. There is also a tendency to label these conflicts ‘ethnic’, mostly to distinguish them from earlier conflicts that were more or less based on ideological and (geo-) political ideas (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: vii). This can be linked to the theory of Kaldor on ‘new and old wars’. Old wars – before and during the Cold War – were based on ‘politics of ideas’. New wars, which occur roughly since the end of the Cold War, are influenced by the globalisation process and based on ‘politics of identity’. ‘The political goals of the new wars are about the claim to power on the basis of seemingly traditional identities [like] nation, tribe, religion’ (Kaldor 2001: 69). In my opinion, Sri Lanka’s conflict chiefly fits Kaldor’s description of a ‘new war’, since it is a struggle about power and it is mostly based on identities.

Being a minority within a country or region often leads to the enhancement of an exclusive and strong identity. Interestingly, in the case of Sri Lanka it is not only the Tamil minority suffering from a ‘minority complex’. The fact that Sinhala language and culture have no centre outside Sri Lanka has been used by political entrepreneurs to create both a siege mentality and a regional minority complex among the Sinhalese (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 5).

Although the conflict of Sri Lanka is often also referred to as being an ‘ethnic struggle’, a more complex definition would be more appropriate. In opinion of Balasooriya et all the Sri Lankan conflict is ‘complex and multidimensional […]’, with its genesis in ideological, historical, social, political and 28 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.


31 For more detailed information on these different warring parties, I would like to refer to Balasooriya et all 2004: 388.
economic factors’ (2004: 381). After independence, unresolved structural weaknesses in the post-colonial economy lead to disillusionment and militant movements like JVP. Moreover, the neo-liberal structural adjustment programme at the end of the 70s and democratic governance failures afterwards were also root causes of social instability and unrest (Richardson 2005: 39-42). These developments lead to unequal socio-economic opportunities and processes of inclusion and exclusion, still existing today. A vast majority of Sinhalese within governmental bodies is an example of this.

The author Perkins argues that ‘although it would seem that only two parties need to agree to peace between them, stable peace generally involves a network of interested parties, policies, mechanisms, and so on that surround the two parties in question and help to sustain peace’ (2002: 42). Related to the complex case of Sri Lanka, this would mean that the process of peace building incorporates much more than just the formal peace talks between the government and the LTTE. In order to create genuine peace, grassroots processes that build peace from within society – like peace education – need to be included in the wider process of peace building.

Sri Lanka: socio-economic context

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Sub-Continent (435km from North to South and 225km from East to West). For administrative and educational purposes, the country is divided into nine provinces. In Sri Lanka 72.2 percent of the population live in rural areas, 3.6 percent live in the plantation sector and the rest in urban areas (Lal Perera 2000: 1). The population of Sri Lanka is around 19 million. It has an annual growth rate of 1.4%. In the past, the major source of external income was the export of tea, rubber and coconut. At present non-traditional exports such as textiles have become the main sources of export income. The largest share of foreign exchange comes from the remittances from emigrant workers (Lal Perera 2000:1). Sri Lanka is a poor country. In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI), Sri Lanka ranks 96th with an index of 0.740 (among 177 other countries).32

32 The Human Development Index measures achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. The HDI value to the sixth decimal point helps to rank countries according to their human development situation. The higher the value, the better the result (website of Human Development Reports of the UNDP, http://hdr.undp.org ).
The country’s first Millennium Development Goals Report shows that despite huge strides made in health and education, the goal of halving poverty by 2015 is not on track. Rising poverty and unemployment, worsened by the tsunami in 2004 and slow development in conflict-affected areas, threaten Sri Lanka’s social sector improvements. ‘Two decades of conflict have hindered Sri Lanka’s economic progress. The war has further aggravated the poverty situation and unemployment, especially in the northern and eastern provinces and border villages to the conflict areas.’ There are discrepancies in the provision of health and education services across the nine districts of Sri Lanka. Because of the conflict, there is a lack of data on eight districts of the country.33

According to UNICEF (2003), there are six million children in Sri Lanka. As a general impact of war, children are the most affected group within society (Balasooriya et al. 2004: 390). The internal conflict has (had) severe impact on the lives of children: families have broken up and the education, health, water and sanitation systems are severely damaged. In regions directly affected by the conflict the attendance rate drops. This is a result of displacements, psychosocial problems, a lack of teachers, nutritional deficiencies, health problems and damaged infrastructure caused by the war (Balasooriya et al. 2004: 391). It was estimated by the provincial Ministry of Education (Northern and Eastern provinces) that 94,000 children between five and eighteen were not in school in 2003.34 Furthermore, a few years ago Sri Lanka had one of the highest suicide rates in the world, including school going children or young adults. When young people go into universities they often use violence to sort out problems with authorities or with peers. ‘Generations of children in the North and East have known nothing but war. They learned fear, prejudice, hatred and violence, and came to demonise the enemy and idealise martyrdom. Children living in other parts of Sri Lanka, even those unaffected directly by the war, learned those same lessons’ (Balasooriya et al. 2004: 391). All this is part of a culture of war and violence which is present in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. According to government statistics, there is a Sinhalese majority representing 74 percent of the population, principally Buddhist, and mostly living in the Southern and central part of the country (Lal Perera 2001: 1). Sri Lankan Tamils (primarily Hindus) account for 18 percent of the population and are mostly located in the North and East, while the Moors form 7 percent of the population35 and the remaining 1 percent is made up of Indian Tamils, Europeans, Eurasians and Malays (Lal Perera 2000:1).

The ‘Indian Tamil’ population lives mostly in the Central provinces, while Muslims and Christians live scattered throughout the island. Catholics and other Christians belong to both Tamil and Sinhala communities (Balasooriya et all 2004: 384).

The data on religious and ethnic groups tends to vary. For this research I chose to use the ‘official’ data offered by the government of Sri Lanka. These numbers are most frequently used and therefore broadly accepted. Other data presented by Balasooriya et all is more recent, but also less widely used.


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**Religion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Percent of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>74 (69 % Buddhists + 5% Christians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>18 (15 % Hindus + 3 % Christians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
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**Education system in Sri Lanka**

During colonial times the education system in SL was mainly designed for the elite. The European powers employed a ‘divide-and-rule’ tactic in Sri Lanka, privileging the Tamil minority with access to education so that they could act as local functionaries. After independence this resulted in a relatively large group of highly educated and well employed Tamils (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 10). Ethnical differences were emphasised by the British. By favouring the Tamil minority, the colonial power hoped to reduce the power of the Sinhalese majority (Sprang 2003: 13). The colonisation brought European style education to Sri Lanka, but the majority of the population was left without it.36 Among the Sinhalese, monks would

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teach few students at the village level, and among the Tamil population, some village schools were also run by educated and literate religious leaders.

Since independence in 1948, education is on the top of the priority list for the government of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka’s education system has seen an impressive progress since. Education is highly valued by all groups in Sri Lankan society (Lal Perera 2000: 1). To change the privileged situation for the minority, in 1974 the District Quota System was introduced, setting university entrance quotas for students in rural and educationally disadvantaged regions. Many Tamils considered these changes deliberately discriminatory (Balasooriya et al 2004: 396).

As stated in the Education for All country Report on Sri Lanka, the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (1978) affirms the need to eradicate illiteracy and assure the citizens the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels. This policy relates to Article No. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which proclaims that every citizen has a right to education (Lal Perera 2000). In 1990 devolution of power to the provincial level took place (Balasooriya et all 2004: 394). Zonal education offices were established in 92 ‘zones’, to implement and evaluate national policy at the local level. In the late 90s the government played a large role in providing free mid-day meals, subsidised transport, free text books, free uniforms and giving financial assistance through scholarships at various levels and with a nation-wide government control system (Lal Perera 2000: 1). However, there is a tendency on the part of Sri Lankan governments that come into power, to either change or deemphasise whatever the previous government was doing. Even a change of ministers within the same government can lead to policy-changes and even the end of specific programmes (Balasooriya et all 2004: 393).

Children aged 5-10 attend primary school (grade 1-5); from age 11-14 children go to junior secondary school (grade 6-9). They can continue with senior secondary education (grade 10-11), and after

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Educational situation in Sri Lanka

- Nowadays there are more than **10,000 schools** in Sri Lanka.
- Education from primary up to University level is free.
- Education is compulsory between the ages of 5-14.
- UNICEF at the **primary** level currently notes an **enrolment rate of 97%** and a **completion rate of 97%**.
- UNICEF states that at the **secondary** education level (from grade 9), the **drop-out rate is 14%**. This varies from place to place. In the North East, in the plantation sector and in the rural areas there is a higher drop out than the rest of the country: **inter-district disparities** are there.
- According to UNICEF, the **education budget is 3 % of GDP**, and **10% of the total Government expenditure goes to education**; it has increased recently.
- General Education Reforms state that education should be **child-centred**.
- **Primary education curriculum (grade 1-5)** incorporates: 1) the Mother Tongue, 2) Religion, 3) Mathematics and 4) Environment Related Activities.
- **Language policy: medium of instruction** is the mother tongue, **English** is taught from **grade 3 onwards** and students are **encouraged** to use the **other national language**, in addition to their own.

*Sources: General Education Reforms 1997, Lal Perera 2000, interview UNICEF Sri Lanka*
entry tests some students go on to A-level (grade 12-13), preparing for higher education.\textsuperscript{37} The fact that 97% of the children complete primary education (see textbox above) would implicate that a great majority of Sri Lankan children is included in the formal education system, at least until the first year of secondary education.

Due to the conflict and related refugees and insecurity, the education situation in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country is less flourishing. Provinces directly situated next to unstable regions have problems with providing schooling to refugee children (Lal Perera 2000: 1). Interestingly, the governmental neglect of or incompetence to reach Northern and Eastern Tamil regions created space for church schools to enter the education system there (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 21). The recent tsunami disaster in December 2004 likewise caused damage to the educational system in directly and indirectly (through refugees) affected areas.\textsuperscript{38}

Schools in Sri Lanka can be divided into two categories: a small minority of non-government and a majority of government schools. Non-government schools consist of estate schools, pirivenas (Buddhist educational institutes), special schools, approved/certified schools, pre-schools and international schools.\textsuperscript{39}

In 1997 there were approximately 190,000 teachers (General Education Reforms 1997). Two out of three teachers are female. Around 27 percent are university graduates, 20 percent are professionally untrained and the others are trained or certified teachers (Lal Perera 2000: 1).

Based on the 2001 census, Balasooriya et al explain that of the total number of around 10,000 schools, two-third of the schools teach in Sinhala medium, almost one-third uses Tamil medium of instruction and only 70 schools used both media. In all government schools, the two official languages are to be taught to all children, as part of the core curriculum. Due to a lack of (sufficiently trained) teachers, in reality this is often not the case. Historically, as a consequence of the geographical location of different ethnic communities, children have been segregated by medium of instruction (Balasooriya et al 2004: 393-369, 402). As became clear in practice during the research, the school system in Sri Lanka is indeed very much segregated among ethnic and religious lines.

History and social studies, religion and civics are three other subjects that – like language - strongly relate to the issue of social cohesion and thus also relate to the topic of peace education. Following global educational trends, the subject of history was integrated into the subject of social studies. However, Balasooriya et al mention that currently most stakeholders argue again for a separate subject focusing on history. In addition, this new subject would have to overcome the present shortcomings of the textbooks (being prescriptive rather than open for multiple interpretations, failing to present all communities, avoiding issues such as ethnicity and conflict).

Concerning the subject of religion in the current context of Sri Lanka, it almost seems impossible to reorganise these sensitive learning contents into a more comparative subject. Still, a comparative way of educating about religion and thus creating a ‘culture of religions’ would be the best option for the multicultural society of Sri Lanka. The subject of civics was long ago integrated into other subjects (such as social studies), and it has lost its strength. Recently there have been discussions about reintroducing either civics or human rights education as a separate subject into the curriculum (Balasooriya et all 2004: 406).

Peace education in Sri Lanka

As shown in the textbox, peace education as such - or related ‘peace and value’ issues - are included in the General Education Reforms of 1997. Based on the findings of this research, in Sri Lanka there is consensus on the need for integration of peace education into all subjects and into the school environment. Thus, peace education is not a separate subject. Balasooriya et all emphasise the need for further research on the successes of this implementation of peace education through cross-curricular integration (2004: 410-411).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peace education in the General Education Reforms (1997)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Reforms focus on 5 major areas: 1) extending educational opportunity, 2) improving the quality of education, 3) developing practical and technical skills, 4) education and training of teachers and 5) management and resource provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Concepts relating to peace education - national harmony, democratic principles, human rights, gender equality and environmental conservation - will be built into the Social Studies and other subjects as appropriate. This will help in developing and re-enforcing the proper attitudes and patterns of behaviour relevant to social responsibilities, civic consciousness, national integration and harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Extra-curricular activities will help to develop qualities of leadership, teamwork, ideas of cooperation, organisational and practical skills, concern for others and a sense of justice and fair play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Values and morals are taught continuously through all subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● The teaching of religion contributes greatly to the building up of correct values and morals. Pupils will also learn to understand the religious practices of other groups of children and also to understand and respect other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● This implies that responsibility for value education rests firmly on the shoulders of the principal, the teachers and adults in the child’s environment. The teaching and learning environment if properly oriented will include justice and fair play in pupils, regardless of caste, creed, or social class […] The pupil must be able to distinguish right from wrong, not on the basis of a particular culture but also on the basis of universal acceptance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1997 educational reforms proposed that there had to be a new emphasis within (pre-service and in-service) teacher education on education for human values, human rights, national cohesion, gender rights, the environment and language skills in all three languages (Sinhalese, Tamil and English). According to these reforms, trainee teachers are expected to develop skills of empathetic listening, democratic leadership, developing children’s self esteem and conflict resolution through role plays (Lal Perera 2000: 1). As argued by Balasooriya, these expectations might be too high, since the quality of teacher training colleges is not always sufficient. Moreover, successful training programmes need to overcome the resistance from in-service teachers to such reforms and new developments (Balasooriya 2004: 407-408).
As discussed in chapter 5, not all Teacher Colleges include peace education in their pre-service programme. Balasooriya in an article explained that a recent study on Human Rights Education in Sri Lanka (commissioned by the Asia Foundation) highlights that ‘the most glaring gap is the non-inclusion of Teacher Colleges in planned activities to institutionalise human rights in the schools’. The report goes on to say that ‘making human rights part of teacher training both in pre-service and in-service will accelerate the institutionalisation of human rights in the school system’ (Balasooriya 2004: 412). This arguments also counts for the institutionalisation of peace education in the Sri Lankan education system.

In the early 90s, a joint Education for Conflict Resolution (ECR) programme of the government and UNICEF was implemented, and is an example of an integrated approach, principally aimed at formal (and to some extend also non-formal) education. Often Sri Lankan peace education actors referred to this programme as one of the first ‘peace education’ initiatives in the country.40 However, as argued by Salomon, this approach only fits the prescription ‘conflict resolution’, and not peace education, since the project mainly focuses on inter-personal relationships (what-dimension 15). According to the authors Bush & Saltarelli, the joint ECR programme provides an example of ‘how the process and content of the new curriculum packages might draw on and resonate with the cultural environment within which they are set – even when the environment is bifurcated into Hindu and Buddhist’ (2000: 27). Although the withdrawal of UNICEF as donor resulted in the end of this ECR programme, it can be argued that some of its ‘peace education elements’ still exist within the policies of the Ministry and NIE, and within UNICEF’s CFS programme nowadays.

One particular example, the introduction of the subject ‘Life Competencies’ to junior secondary education in 1999, is a result of governmental action towards the conceptualisation and implementation of peace education in Sri Lanka. During an interview, it was explained by a former NIE officer that this subject was actually a narrower version of a whole school peace education approach. This new subject replaced the more practical or even technical subject of ‘life skills’ (Balasooriya et all 2004: 400-402). Ten competencies should help students to face the realities of life: self-understanding, empathy, communication skills, interpersonal relations, critical thinking, creative thinking, coping with emotions, coping with stress, problem solving and decision making (Research NIE 2004). It could serve the objective of social cohesion and national integration. The subject ‘life competencies’ should help to develop the total personality of a child; a goal that cannot be achieved through examination oriented subject teaching alone. Thus, this subject is excluded from examination, and there is no textbook available. As a result this led to several challenges at the implementation level, such as motivation of teachers and students. A small-scale survey showed that the potential to bring about social cohesion failed, because the objective was only presented generally, and was never spelled out in clear and practical terms (Balasooriya et all 2004: 400-402).

Since 2000 UNESCO takes the lead in promoting peace education in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the peace education teachers’ guide, written by A.S. Balasooriya and published by UNESCO, is widely used by
governmental and non-governmental peace education actors in Sri Lanka (see textbox below for more details). In chapter 5, most of the different peace education initiatives existing today in Sri Lanka are discussed in detail (including governmental initiatives, donor’s actions and the programmes of four active NGOs in the field of peace education).

**UNESCO’s peace education teachers’ guide (Balasooriya 2001)**

UNESCO distinguishes 10 core themes for peace education. In Balasooriya’s ‘Learning the way of peace’, these themes were adapted to suit the whole south Asia region, including Sri Lanka. These are the 10 core themes that help to create peaceful persons, including some comments from the author.

- **1. Think positively**
- **2. Be compassionate and do not harm**
- **3. Discover inner-peace** – ‘Many people asked: what is this? Inner peace cannot be measured, they said. But I define it as being able to resolve mental conflicts. Here in Sri Lanka, many young people, around 5000 each year, commit suicide. Peace is there, peace is within them, peace should be between man-to-man and peace with nature. But first, we need to have inner peace.’
- **4. Learn to live together** – ‘including active listening (respond in the right ways to things that are said to you) and co-operation (co-operative activities, children should get out of their ego-centeredness, and share, respect others and care).’
- **5. Respect for human dignity**
- **6. Be your true self** – ‘Peace starts with the question: who am I? You have to build self-esteem and self-development. These ideas were very new to education. It is also about assertive behaviour: honest expression of ones likes and dislikes, being able to show your true self, not just please another.’
- **7. Think critically**
- **8. Resolve conflict non-violently** – ‘children should develop skills so they can face within their own (violent) world non-violent ways to resolve conflict.’
- **9. Build peace in the community** – ‘The school should start extending some kind of commitment; the school should help the community. Then children learn by working in the field their responsibilities, but also co-operation. This is learning through practical experience.’
- **10. Care for the planet**

The UNESCO guide provides 150 activities: ‘PE is mostly active learning. It is learning with the heart, not just with the head. If a teacher only focuses on the mind, a lesson is boring. When also integrating the heart, a lesson becomes interesting. Various activities help for this active learning: role play, singing, dancing, story telling, creative problem solving and co-operative activities’

This drawing was made by Balasooriya to explain the whole school peace education approach: ‘In the middle you see peace education. It is like a flower, and each leaf is another subject connected to peace education. The life skills subject relates more directly to peace education [arrow].’

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Chapter 3 in a nutshell

- Ongoing violence and conflict have a major impact on Sri Lanka’s politics, economy, society and education system.
- Sri Lanka is a relatively poor country, with unequal opportunities for its multicultural people.
- Education is a priority for the Sri Lankan government. Yet, the education system suffers from the unstable and violent situation.
- Peace education is implemented through a whole school approach.
- Various governmental and non-governmental peace education initiatives developed since the 90s. Chapter 5 provides more details on current peace education policies and programmes.
Chapter 4  From theory to practice
Operationalization, methodology, research challenges &
ethical considerations
Chapter 4  From theory to practice

Operationalization of major concepts

The main concepts – actors, perceptions, actions and dimensions - presented in the conceptual scheme (see chapter 1) have already been discussed in the theoretical framework. Now I will shortly explain how these concepts are defined in this research.

As stated by Burns & Aspeslagh, when researching policies and practice of peace education, the process of generating knowledge is crucial. It is essential to look at what knowledge is legitimated, and how this knowledge is taught in different educational settings. How knowledge is taught, depends on the pedagogies which are used (1996: 15). Moreover, Blakie argues that a good description, through research based on what-questions, is a vital part of (social) research (2000: 62). These ideas can be related to my own research. My research will on the one hand examine what actors’ perceptions of peace education are (what they perceive as necessary knowledge of peace education). On the other hand, I will investigate how the actors put into practice their perceptions; based on their perceptions, what are the actions of the three main actors?

When looking at ‘perceptions’ on peace education, I wanted to find out what respondents think of: ‘what is peace education’? This research uses the definition of ‘perception’ of the Oxford Dictionary: ‘a perception is the process of perceiving; a way of understanding or interpreting something’. As demonstrated by Dei, voices (personal thoughts, desires and politics) of different groups of participants in a research can reveal a nuanced interpretation of the research topic (2005: 275).

The definition of ‘actions’ (how peace education is implemented) in this research is directly linked to the actions of the three different actors. An underlying assumption of this research is that many actions of the actors are influenced by their perceptions. It also takes into account the limited room for manoeuvring for some of the actors. The main action of policy-makers is developing peace education policies and related support materials. Programme-makers similarly develop peace education programmes and related support materials. And the action of peace educators is to put into practice peace education. Therefore, ‘actions’ can be defined as the development of policies, programmes and related support materials, and the implementation of peace education in practice.

The ‘dimensions’ that are derived from the literature, helped me to analyse the perceptions and actions of the actors. In order to analyze systematically what respondents think of what peace education is, I categorized the (different) perceptions of the three groups of actors into the sixteen ‘what-dimensions’ of peace education. When analyzing the data on the actions of the different actors, I used the how-dimensions to systematically dissect my findings. Some of the actors in Sri Lanka emphasized just one or two dimension. Others touched upon almost all of them. They even came up with new dimensions of peace education, which were not yet discussed in the literature that is used for this theoretical framework. Therefore, some new dimensions of peace education could be added to existing literature.

It is important to note that my research is exploratory in nature, and not an evaluation. These dimensions thus helped me to analyse my data after I had collected it. I will not use the dimensions as indicators that give a certain value. I also did not directly refer to these dimensions in my interviews. Instead, by analysing the data afterwards, I link the primary data found in the field to what is stated in theory.

**Research methodologies and justification of research scope and locations**

The methodology of this research is based upon certain theoretical assumptions. Based on Crotty (1998), subjectivism is the epistemology - the theory of knowledge - behind this research. This philosophical stand focuses on meaning. My research also tries to unravel meaning of perceptions and related actions of the three actors. This epistemology logically leads to interpretivism as the main theoretical assumption underlying this research. What are the interpretations – or perceptions – of the respondents? And how do they act, based upon these perceptions? What is the interpretation of the different actors of what peace education is and how it should be implemented?

Depending on the situation, the interviews were sometimes taped. I always made notes during the interviews and right after them. I transcribed all the interviews as soon as possible after the interview.

In terms of the number of interviews, I was able to do 17 interviews at the policy- and programme-level, including 3 interviews at the University of Colombo and 3 with independent resource persons. I also took part in a policy-level meeting about coordination and further plans for peace education organised by UNESCO. Additionally I had the chance to visit 8 schools in different parts of Sri Lanka. Here I managed to have interviews with 6 school principals and 33 teachers (including some group interviews). I also spoke to 3 ‘zonal education officers’, working in the ‘decentralised offices’ linked to the ministry of education. It used a balanced proportion of male and female respondents, both at the policy, programme and school level.

I deliberately chose not to visit schools only in the Colombo area, because many Sri Lankans told me that 'schools in Colombo are not like other Sri Lankan schools'. Moreover I also tried to cover the wide range of school types present in Sri Lanka; I visited urban and rural schools, governmental, private and semi-governmental (church) schools, girls, boys and mixed schools as well as mixed religion schools and 'separated' (one-medium/one religion) schools. All school provided both primary and secondary education, like most schools in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately I was not able to visit all parts of Sri Lanka, due to time constraints as well as unstable security conditions in the North and East. Luckily I could include the Ampara region in my research, as this is an interesting and very diverse but currently unstable part of the country.

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42 These resource persons are (former) consultants in the field of peace education and peace building.
43 Generally speaking, in the education sector in Sri Lanka both men and women have similar designations. This research will therefore not specifically deal with gender differences.
The map shows the specific research locations. Colombo, Kandy and partly Ampara can be considered as urban regions. Ampara however can also be considered as a more remote area, due to its location and its unstable situation. The villages Madampte and Dankotuwa can both be defined as being rural. Three of the schools which are included in this research are located in Colombo, two in Ampara and one in respectively Kandy, Dankotuwa and Madampte.

Because of the sensitive nature of the topic of peace education, I decided to use qualitative methods in order to gather my data. These methods can contribute to a sense of trust and informality, which in my view are essential in order to gain valuable data on this topic. I used informal and semi-structured interviews, observations and I also included some secondary data (policy-documents, educational material). Respondents were always asked for their consent to cooperate in the research.

In order to cross-check the data and the preliminary analysis in the field I shared my findings with the respondents – as far as it was possible and convenient. I organised a presentation in the capital Colombo, and I invited all the respondents I interviewed at the policy- and programme level. This meeting provided me with relevant feedback, and it gave me the chance to explain my thoughts in person, as well as answering the questions of the audience. Hopefully this presentation also will encourage these actors in Sri Lanka to take some time to read the final thesis outcomes. Due to a lack of time and relatively long distances, I was unfortunately unable to present my preliminary findings to the respondents at the school level. It would have been very interesting to have received feedback from those actors, and I could surely recommend such a cross-check of data for further research.

In short, my methodology and ‘plan of action’ looked as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical framework &amp; preparation for the fieldwork (research proposal)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 2 Sri Lanka</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapid appraisal, first semi-structured/informal interviews at the policy- and programme-making level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptation of interview questions/guide</td>
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<td>Semi-structured interviews at the policy-making and programme-making level</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 3 Sri Lanka</th>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews at the school level (principals and teachers) and school/classroom/programme setting observations.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 4 Sri Lanka</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First analysis of data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of preliminary findings to respondents at policy- and programme making level</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 5 Netherlands</th>
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<tr>
<td>Further analysis of data and thesis writing</td>
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</table>
Units of Analysis

As became clear from the first part of this thesis, this research focuses on 3 main actors, being policy-makers (including major donors), programme-makers (mostly NGOs) and peace educators (among which principals and teachers).

Due to the scope of this research, when looking at policy-makers the focus was on the governmental National Institute of Education (NIE), and the peace education department of the Ministry of Education. The NIE serves to advise the minister on matters of: education, research and development; curriculum design and development; teacher education; and the development of school management. The NIE is as well responsible for curriculum development for the general education sector, and for teacher training throughout the island (Balasooriya 2004: 394). The ‘Peace Education Special Unit’ of the Ministry of Education (in this research referred to as ‘the Ministry’ or MoE), aims at raising peace awareness among schoolchildren through various different programmes. They encourage and support schools in their (co-curricular) efforts to organise intercultural meetings and events. ‘The unit runs educational programmes on peace, non-violence, national integration, and student’s leadership development. […] Furthermore it publishes resource materials for resource persons to use in the provinces’ (Balasooriya et al 2004: 411).

UNICEF, UNESCO and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) have been included in this research as examples of major international donors. GTZ cooperates since 1999 with the Sri Lankan government on improvements within the Basic Education Sector Programme. Pre-service and in-service training programmes for teachers are the main focus point (Balasooriya 2004: 413). Currently GTZ also focuses on the further development of peace education nation wide. At present, UNICEF does not support ‘peace education’ programmes as such. However, I included UNICEF because their large efforts to develop ‘child friendly schools’ in my opinion is strongly related to other peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka. UNESCO presently tries to strengthen peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka. They try to take the lead in terms of the development of more cooperation at the policy-level.

As for the programme-making actors, I included the National Peace Council, Caritas/Cedec, AHIMSA and Subodi. The National Peace Council is included in the research as an important NGO that strives for peace building in general, with a smaller emphasis on peace education in the non-formal sector. Caritas/Cedec, a Christian NGO, started a national peace education programme in 1999, and they have developed and implemented numerous activities since. AHIMSA is an NGO that principally focuses on peace education programmes. Finally Subodi is an ‘institute of integral education’, providing ‘education for life’ programmes for young adolescents. This institute is included, because these programmes in my view in many ways are similar to other peace education programmes.

An independent group included in this research is that of ‘resource persons’. As mentioned above, this includes three interviews with academics at the University of Colombo (faculties of Social Sciences and Political Sciences). Additionally I was also privileged to speak to three (former) consultants, all of them experts in either the field of peace education or peace building.
In the third phase of my fieldwork I concentrated on the perceptions and actions of peace educators. Under ‘peace educators’ I include teachers as well as school principals, because both contribute to the actual implementation of peace education in the school and the classrooms. Moreover, zonal education officers, working at the decentralized offices of the Ministry, are also incorporated in this group. From an earlier research on ‘Educating the Child in a Peaceful and Conflict Free School: good practices in Sri Lankan Schools’, it became clear that ‘the role of the principal [is] an influential factor in deciding good practices. The co-operation of teachers, students and school community are centered on the principal’s role and personality’ (NIE & UNICEF 2004: 1). Luckily the second phase of the fieldwork provided me with contacts to four schools where peace education is practiced, often these were so-called ‘model schools’. However, I also randomly visited four (non-model) schools. The well-known Sri Lankan hospitality was very helpful, as respondents were - almost without exception – very generous and cooperative. I felt welcome at every school I entered.

Research challenges and ethical considerations

When doing research abroad, it is sensible to bear in mind the possible challenges. It is also important to take into consideration certain ethical issues.

What first appeared to be a possible challenge, to find enough respondents in a relatively small time-frame, was not a severe problem at all. Again, I felt that the Sri Lankan welcoming mentality helped me to find my way quite easily to the right persons. Moreover, the help of my local research supervisor in Sri Lanka, Jehan Perera, was crucial for getting so many contacts in a short period. The only unforeseen challenge was a one-month school holiday that started earlier than expected. Still I was able to visit enough schools and interview a fair amount of teachers and principals. Yet, I would definitely recommend more time for subsequent fieldwork, in order to have the data cross-checked by all respondents.

I also had to take into account some language difficulties, as I do not speak Sinhala nor the Tamil language. Fortunately, I was able to conduct almost all my interviews in English, because translations regrettably might have caused a loss of data. At one moment when a translator was needed, a zonal education officer was prepared to help.

As for the security situation in Sri Lanka, I was lucky to conduct my fieldwork in a relatively quiet period. Unfortunately, since the end of my stay in Sri Lanka, the situation has deteriorated. Further peace talks have been postponed, and violence occurs on a daily base. The instability in the Northern and Eastern parts of the island restricted my choice of research locations.

I am aware of myself in the role of researcher, and being a young western woman. After arrival I tried to get insight in the norms and ways of behaviour that are appropriate in the Sri Lankan setting. Although I was warned for travelling on my own, I did not experience any difficulties.

Conducting research on the topic of peace education, in a complex and unstable situation as Sri Lanka, brought some challenges. As demonstrated by the INEE, mentioning topics as ‘peace’ or
‘reconciliation’ during or soon after fighting can be offensive to local communities.44 Talking about peace and peace education touches upon one’s personal feelings, values and ideas. This requires a trustful atmosphere during the interviews. As a researcher I intended to do as best as I can to respect respondents privacy and dignity, and to create this trustful atmosphere. Moreover, as mentioned before, I as well considered the issue of consent. I asked for a verbal consent of all research respondents. They were also informed at the start about their right to withdraw from any specific topic, or the whole interview, at any given time. Naturally I did not use or misuse any quotes without the consent of the respondents.

It is also necessary to take into account the influence of my own perceptions, as a researcher, especially regarding the observations I made and the analysis of the data. As a researcher, own views and interpretations are always intertwined with those of research participants, and should be bore in mind (Dei 2005: 276). Obviously, I tried to stay as objective as possible in order to present a valuable academic product to the reader. An interesting fact is that I had to adapt my preliminary description of Sri Lankan history in the theoretical framework after the fieldwork. Although I tried to give a balanced overview from the start, I only accessed certain resources which provided a biased version of history. I therefore included certain historical facts which were also discussed in the interviews and conversation in Sri Lanka. I am conscious of the summarised (and therefore restricted) nature of the historical overview presented in this research, yet I hope to do justice to the various historiographies existing in Sri Lanka.

Finally, I have already discussed the issue of cross-checking the data with the respondents. This also touches upon the issue of reciprocity. Especially with a Masters research, the time and scope of the research are unfortunately limited. In many cases, the researcher gains much more from the research than participants do. However, with presenting my data at the end of my stay, and asking for feedback of the participants, I hoped to do some justice to this issue. Moreover the design of this thesis aims at a thorough presentation of research findings, as well as a less time-consuming quick overview of the main conclusions at the end of each chapter. Hopefully this will contribute to the readability and accessibility of this thesis for the respondents and other interested readers.

Chapter 5     Perceptions & Actions of Policy and Programme-makers

An analysis of research findings at the policy and programme level in Sri Lanka

‘For research on peace education, Sri Lanka is like a laboratory. […] There are so many different things happening at the same time,[…] but there is no monitoring and evaluation of the effects.’

(Officer from GTZ)
Chapter 5  Perceptions & Actions of Policy and Programme-makers
An analysis of research findings at the policy and programme level in Sri Lanka

Policy-making actors = government & donors
Programme-making actors = NGOs
Resource persons = academics and (former) consultants on peace education/building

5.1  Perceptions: what is peace education?
- What are the perceptions of the government, donors, NGOs and resource persons on peace education?

5.2  Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?
- What policies, programmes and support materials are developed by policy-making and programme-making actors?
- What are the main challenges for peace education according to policy-making and programme-making actors and resource persons?

This chapter elaborates on the perceptions and actions of both policy and programme-makers with regards to peace education in Sri Lanka. It will provide the reader with an overview of the current peace education policy framework. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the main challenges for peace education as acknowledged by policy and programme-makers. The discussion focuses on three main groups of actors: policy-makers (with governmental institutions and (inter)national donors), programme-makers (NGOs) and resource persons (including academics and (former) consultants). The next chapter gives insight into the perceptions and actions in practice at the school level, and also highlights the challenges according to the peace educators. Both chapters include an analysis of the findings, linking back to the theoretical framework of this research and using the what- and how-dimensions. In the concluding chapter 7, the findings and analysis of these two chapters will be compared and the main research question is answered.

As described in the former chapter, I conducted 17 interviews at the policy- and programme-level, including 3 interviews at the University of Colombo and 3 with independent resource persons. I also participated in a policy-level meeting about the co-ordination and further plans for peace education organised by UNESCO.
5.1 Perceptions: what is peace education?

This first part of the chapter formulates an answer to the first sub question: What are the perceptions of the government, donors, NGOs and resource persons on peace education? The perceptions of the actors are discussed using the what-dimensions derived from theory.

### What-Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non-violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social justice &amp; equality</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Human security</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Culture of peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(Multi) cultural dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Historical dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Political dimension</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ethnic-religious dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Emotional dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ecological balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Multilevel focus 13+14+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Global/international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>National level: unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Inter-group level: perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Inter-personal level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Government’s perception of peace education

Within the governmental structure of Sri Lanka, two institutions concentrate on the policy and implementation of peace education; both the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education (NIE) have a peace education unit. The following findings are based on interviews with officers and on relevant policy documents (including the General Education Reforms 1997 and training manuals).

#### Peace education unit of the Ministry of Education

Peace education is a relatively new development in Sri Lanka, as it started in the 90s. According to the head of the Peace education unit only started ten years back as an external unit. One year ago the unit was integrated within the Ministry. The unit exists of 7 officers.\(^{45}\)

When discussing the most important elements of peace education it was expressed by the head officer that the Ministry focuses on ‘peace values’, which include: taking care of the (school) environment, co-existence between different communities, non-ethnic biases and peer mediation techniques. ‘Peace values’ are mostly presented in the textbooks, and teachers should learn how to discover and emphasise them in their lessons. Especially the issue of ‘taking care for the environment’ came to light in the conversation with the head of the peace education unit: ‘I don’t want to condemn my country (laughing) but there is dirt everywhere! We did not learn this [cleaning up] as a child. So now we feel the children have to learn about it, and also about their toilet habits. These values deteriorate, so we have to come back to those values; to how our grandmothers loved and cared for nature for example.’\(^{46}\)

Clearly, this perception expressed in an interview at the peace education unit of the Ministry can be related to the what-dimensions 6 (multicultural dimension), 9 (ethnic-religious dimension), 11

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\(^{45}\) Based on observations.

\(^{46}\) This quote together with the other quotes regarding the Ministry all come from the head officer of the peace education unit, and were expressed in a conversation on the 10th of March 2006.
(ecological balance), 15 (inter-group level: perceptions) and especially peer mediation relates to dimension 16 (inter-personal level). This seems to be a somewhat narrowly defined perception, regarding the 16 what-dimensions which are present in the literature.

However, if we include the peace education concept presented in the training manual for National Integration and Peace Education through Sinhala Language and Literature (translated from Sinhala), a broader conception is apparent. The manual functions as a reference book for teachers who have been to the in-service training provided by the Ministry. The manual is developed to help teachers find and highlight ‘human qualities’ (or ‘peace values’), among which: ‘ability to adopt, desire for change, imagination, aesthetic thinking, empathy, respect for other cultures, love for the environment, democratic values, national pride, universal pride, sensitivity, affection to humanity and emotional maturity.’ Within the manual, there is a small emphasis on the creation of ‘love and compassion’, as well as ‘the creation of national unity and pride’. Focusing on the creation of unity, this manual follows mainstream governmental (Sinhala) thinking on unity as the solution for peace, rejecting the federal solution, often advocated by Tamil Sri Lankans. Interestingly, this manual only focuses on the human qualities present in Sinhala language and literature texts. Since this was the only manual that was provided to me (and that was present at the Ministry), it would be easy to conclude that the Tamil language and literature is left behind. However, it was confirmed to me by the head officer that ‘Tamil material’ was available, but I did not have a chance to look at it.

Another short list used for peace education training includes a list of moral values that help to develop the ‘moral qualities of an individual’. This list included values related to six areas: physical development, emotional development, intellectual development, inter-personal development, citizenship development and self-development. When taking into account the above mentioned ‘human qualities’ in the manual, and the ‘moral qualities’ in the short list, the perception of the Ministry becomes broader. Next to the above mentioned dimensions, the what-dimension 1 (non-violence), 2 (social-justice and equality), 3 (human rights) and 10 (emotional dimension) can be included as well. Within the perceptions of the Ministry, there is no attention for human security (dimension 4), a culture of peace (dimension 5), the political and historical dimensions (7&8) or the integration of the global and national level (12, 13 and 14).

**Peace education unit of NIE**

As described in the chapter on the Sri Lankan context, peace education as such was introduced into the formal curriculum in 1991, by the governmental NIE in collaboration with UNICEF. Peace education had to be delivered through cross-curriculum integration, and it was based on the following themes: peace, positive thinking, empathy, inner peace, cooperation, assertiveness, critical thinking and decision-making, conflict resolution, non-violence, community peace building, caring for the planet and intercultural understanding (Balasooriya et al: 2004: 410-411). These themes were drawn up in teacher guides, which were developed and distributed in co-operation with one of the resource persons included in this research, A.S. Balasooriya. The most elaborate and recent teachers’ guide ‘Learning the way of Peace’ was written by
Balasooriya in 2001 and produced in co-operation with UNESCO. Moreover, schools from then on were encouraged to organise co-curricular activities (intercultural events, interschool friendships).

Presently, the peace education unit of the NIE consists of three officers. As explained during a group interview, at the moment they work together with UNESCO (and soon also with GTZ) instead of UNICEF earlier. The current perception of peace education used within this unit of NIE still relates to the UNESCO teachers’ guide, as the head of the unit clarifies: ‘These concepts should be in the hearts and minds of the children: affirmation, empathy, co-operation, assertiveness, democracy/human rights and citizenship, critical thinking, conflict resolution, love for nature/environment, a peaceful society and positive thinking.’

Moreover, it was also stated by same head officer that peace education knows many different names in Sri Lanka and internationally, which was also confirmed by several authors in the literature: ‘There are many different forms of this education, but believe me, they all have the same goal, its just different names. It all belongs under one umbrella: peace. You have moral education, value education (supported by GTZ), citizenship education, human rights education, education for social cohesion (in the United Kingdom) and peace education. Still, everyone wants to create a peaceful human, and change the attitudes. In my mind they all serve the same goal, but everybody takes different paths to get there.’

Since the perception of peace education presented by the officers at the NIE relates to the elaborate UNESCO guide, more dimensions are touched upon compared to the Ministries’ perception. It concerns the following what-dimensions: 3 (human rights), 5 (culture of peace), 6 (multicultural dimension), 9 (ethnic-religious dimension), 10 (emotional dimension), 11 (ecological balance), 15 (inter-group level) and 16 (inter-personal level). Interestingly, peace education is partly perceived in practical terms by the NIE. Therefore some of the how-dimensions also relate to this perception, namely dimensions 9 (reflective dialogue), 10 (peaceful class environment), 14 (learner-centred/interactive education), 17 (conflict resolution skills) and 19 (creating co-operation, tolerance and empathy). Thus, there is less emphasis on social justice and equality, or a multilevel approach to peace education. Besides, the political and historical dimensions of peace education are also left out.

Peace education as it was developed in the 90s at the NIE also emphasised ‘inner-peace’. Interestingly, this theme was highlighted by a number of other actors as well, both at the policy and programme level as well as at the practical level. I would like to argue that creating inner-peace is linked to an intra-personal level of peace education. Although several levels (global, national, inter-group and interpersonal) were discussed in the literature, it seems that this intra-personal level should be added to the discussion. In this sense, the findings of this research help to add to the current (theoretical) debate on peace education.

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47 This quote together with the other quotes regarding the NIE all come from the head officer of the peace education unit, and were expressed in a conversation on the 9th of March 2006.

48 An overview of the how dimensions can be found in the conceptual scheme in chapter 1 or further on in the how-dimensions table.
Donors’ perceptions of peace education

As was explained in chapter 4, this research includes UNESCO, UNICEF and GTZ, three main donors working in the field of peace education. Their perceptions are now explained.

UNESCO

In several conversations with UNESCO’s country director, it was explained that the organisation was founded in 1946, after WW I and II. Its major effort is to bring peace: internationally, intellectually and through solidarity. ‘UNESCO is the leading agency for peace education. Its very catch phrase in its founding constitution formulated in 1946 states that: Wars begins in the minds of men, therefore it is in the minds, that the defences of peace must be created’. Education is a means to this, particularly in a country like Sri Lanka: ‘In a conflict situation, it is very difficult to put peace into the minds of people. Especially for kids who grow up in such a conflict situation, like in Palestine, or in the North of Sri Lanka. The children born in the last two decades are born in a war situation; war is the only thing they know. So, education is a very important tool. All the children in the world are expected to go to school, as a place where they can catch peace.’

The earlier discussed UNESCO teachers’ guide for peace education (see also the textbox in chapter 3): ‘promotes a holistic and integrated method, to teach peace values in the classroom on a daily basis, cutting across all subjects in the curricula, wherever appropriate, without overburdening the existing curriculum.’ According to UNESCO, peace education could also be called ‘education for sustainable development’: ‘This is a holistic approach to peace education. While learning science, you learn the subject matter, but also about peace, respect to human dignity and to the environment. The teachers guide is a help to this holistic approach, into all subjects. It is important to bring back joy in learning. We use the subject matter to explain different dimensions of peace.’ Moreover, the whole school should feel part of this educational approach: the principal, teachers and students.

Because NIE’s perception of peace education is mostly based upon the UNESCO teachers’ guide (2001), NIE’s what-dimensions also count for UNESCO’s perception. Additionally, the perception of UNESCO Sri Lanka directly links to what-dimensions 12, the multilevel approach and the political dimension 8: ‘On the one hand UNESCO addresses the political level: conflicts can and should be settled at the political level. Future leaders who have a certain mindset must think globally and act nationally. Peace and development are strongly interlinked. Global peace affects national peace. On the other hand UNESCO promotes peace education at a lower level, using the 10 core values, in order to create peace building. So, you have to look at it from different levels: global peace, national peace and regional peace.’ It was also mentioned that peace education has been given more importance because of a rise of violence and conflicts worldwide. Moreover, according to the country director, even countries such as the United States and countries in Europe could use peace education to strengthen social cohesion.

49 All quotes regarding UNESCO belong to the country director, expressed in two conversations on the 2nd and 9th of March 2006.
50 These 10 core values for peace education are discussed in the textbox in chapter 3.
UNICEF

As argued in chapter 4, UNICEF does not have any ‘peace education’ programmes as such, but their ‘Child Friendly Schools’ (CFSs) approach is related to other peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka. This is acknowledged by the UNICEF officer: ‘When you go through the criteria of CFSs, you can see they will support peace. CFSs focus on reduced classroom violence and improvement of personal relationships, not only among students, but also between students and teachers, and teachers together, and with the principal. It is a holistic approach to peace building.’

The UNICEF officer had good insights into the General Education Reforms of 1997. According to her, peace education could be implemented within certain subjects. At the primary level the subjects Religion and Environment Related Activities were suitable for this, and at the secondary level peace education could be integrated into the four subjects of Social Studies, Life Competencies, Health and Physical education and Religion. ‘We don’t have a separate subject, but the concepts are there. All necessary skills for peace are taught in the different subjects: coping skills, interpersonal relationships, decision making and life skills.’

In short, the CFS guide (2005) states that a CFS: ‘Finds children happy and healthy, finds teachers motivated and caring, is supported by parents and the community, ensures both girls and boys achieve the best they can, provides welfare services to teachers and students and is non-discriminatory.’ This perception of UNICEF Sri Lanka predominantly touches upon the what-dimensions 1 (non-violence), 2 (social justice and equality), 10 (emotional dimension), 15 (inter-group level) and 16 (inter-personal level). The emotional dimension is covered by the teaching of coping and life skills. Moreover, the emphasis UNICEF puts on interpersonal relationships as well as relationships with parents and the community, relates to the dimensions 15 and 16. The provision of welfare services and the non-discriminatory approach links to what-dimension 2. Additionally, UNICEF in its former Education for Conflict Resolution programme together with NIE in the 90s also emphasised the need for inner-peace, through meditation. This again relates to the new intra-personal what-dimension. Thus, although UNICEF does not implement ‘peace education’ as such, its perception of CFS does integrate a number of the what-dimensions used in this research. Yet, it is not as broad as for instance UNESCO’s perception.

GTZ

Currently GTZ focuses on Education for Social Cohesion, and peace education is part of this (together with psychosocial care, remedial education, disaster management, and second national languages). At GTZ, the responsible officer for peace and value education explained that this form of education is one of the most powerful means of reaching sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka. Moreover, also GTZ agrees that peace education should not be a separate subject, but that it should be integrated in all subjects. GTZ links peace education with value education: ‘We must now think of the values, what we had, what we now have and what values we want. What is peace? How do we define this? This is part of my task.’

51 All statements on UNICEF come from the officer responsible for child friendly schools, in an interview on the 6th of March 2006.
52 See the textbox about educational situation in chapter 3. This reforms is also discussed later on in the actions part.
53 The quotes regarding GTZ are from the officer responsible for peace and value education, and were expressed in an interview on the 2nd of March 2006.
GTZ also acknowledges that peace education should focus on the creation of a culture of peace (what-dimension 5), the environment - including a peaceful school environment - (what-dimension 11) and on inter-group and interpersonal relationships (what-dimensions 15 and 16). This officer highlighted as well that peace education should aim for ‘inner-peace’, either through meditation or relaxation: ‘We should want to create a culture of peace, inner peace, peace in society and peace with the environment. You have to experience the nature, and then you have peace with the nature, and nature will be protective.[…] And for peace in society, you need to take time to understand the neighbour. That will bring peace in society.’

NGOs’ perceptions of peace education

The conversations with the four NGOs revealed some interesting views regarding peace education. Two of the NGOs mentioned that peace education should create a culture of peace (linking to what-dimension 5). One of the NGO workers illustrated why they should aim at a culture of peace, instead of a culture of violence: ‘A few years ago, Sri Lanka had one of the top suicide rates in the world, including school going children or young adults. When young people go into universities they often use violence to sort out problems with authorities or with peers. This of course is a part of the culture of violence and fear created by a twenty year long internal fighting we have had.’

The same two NGOs also spoke of a human rights based approach to peace education (what-dimension 3), with one of these NGOs stating that this was mandated by their donor. One of the NGOs explained that psychosocial healing, especially after the tsunami, was also integrated into their peace education programme (in some ways relating to the emotional dimension - 10). This same NGOs’ perception on peace education is reflected in the following quote of an NGO worker: ‘Peace education should create peace with oneself, with the neighbour, peace with the nature and peace with God. We should teach children and the politicians about non-violence and different cultural and spiritual values. We should create inter-religious harmony. From nature the children should also learn about peace.’ This perception links to the what-dimensions 1 (non-violence), 6 (multicultural dimension), 8 (political dimension), 9 (ethnic-religious dimension), 11 (ecological balance), 15 (inter-group) and 16 (inter-personal level). Moreover, this quote illustrates that at the programme level the creation of inner-peace, the newly found what-dimension, is also highlighted.

According to another NGO worker, making one clear definition of peace education is difficult, because every school should have its own interpretation of peace education relevant for that situation. He gave the following example to illustrate this: ‘When we go to schools, we talk with the children about the bullying, about the violence they see and experience. At one school we discussed with the children about the conflicts they had in the school. The children explained that during the breaks all the children wanted to drink water, but because there was a lack of water taps, they started to fight. So the best way to bring peace to this school was to get extra water taps. So this was also a development related issue, and a special peace education solution for this situation.’

Another NGOs’ perception refers to a wide variety of the what-dimensions. Their programme first of all focuses on interpersonal relations and successful communication (what-dimension 16, the

54 An NGO worker expressed this in an interview on the 28th of March 2006.
55 This was stated by an NGO worker in a conversation on the 1st of March 2006.
56 See footnote 9.
interpersonal level), on social awareness and responsibilities (linking to what-dimension 2, social justice and equality) and on religion (what-dimension 9, the ethnic-religious dimension).

One of the NGO workers explained that some NGOs talk directly about the ethnic conflict within their peace education programmes, while others feel they cannot do this. This also has to do with the fact that NGOs are not allowed to ‘bring politics into the schools’, since NGOs historically were often politically engaged.

**Resource persons’ perceptions of peace education**

Successively, an overview of the perceptions of the resource persons – including academics and (former) consultants - are now reviewed.

The academics mainly highlighted 3 main themes, which fascinatingly were less explicitly mentioned by the policy and programme makers: the historical dimension (what-dimension 7), a multilevel approach (what-dimension 12) and the creation of responsible citizens with knowledge of human rights (what-dimension 3). The historical dimension should help students to understand why violence occurs, and what the (colonial) root causes of (the Sri Lankan) conflicts are. Moreover, a sociologist explained that ‘a critical historical understanding, taught in a comparative way, is essential for just Tamil and Sinhala popular discourses.’

As explained by another academic working at the Political Science department, a multilevel approach should create students with awareness of ‘the world around them. Global processes can have positive outcomes, such as peace and democracy, but also negative ones, like poverty and conflict.’ Finally, one academic clarified that in order to create responsible Sri Lankan citizens, students in grades 6-10 (junior secondary level) should learn about rights, responsibilities and democratic values: ‘We have to start this at the secondary level, otherwise it is too late.’

The fact that academics did emphasise these what-dimensions which were neglected by the other actors, shows the important role resource persons can have when implementing a new educational approach.

As for the consultants, generally it was expressed that the current education system still does not incorporate enough values, as well as a lack of critical historical awareness. One of the resource persons expressed that peace education should also entail reconciliation activities, which is also argued in theory by the INEE and the authors Salomon & Nevo (1999). However, this term does not seem to get more attention by other actors in Sri Lanka. However, it can be argued that intercultural and inter-religious understanding could be part of a reconciliation process. As will become clear further on, both by NGOs as well as at the school level, actors provide opportunities for children of different communities to meet. Often it was said that these meetings helped to overcome prejudices and fears between the students. Moreover, one resource person also argued that peace education should already start with early childhood development. Yet, since early childhood development is not provided for free by the government, and

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57 This sociologist expressed this view in an interview on the 16th of March 2006.

58 This quote was expressed in a conversation on the 21st of March 2006.

59 This scientist working at the Social Science department, expressed his views in an interview on the 19th of April 2006.
also because this early education is not included in the existing peace education policies, it does not seem to be part of a broader consensus.

One resource person, Mr. A.S. Balasooriya, deserves some extra attention here, because of his efforts for the promotion and implementation of peace education in Sri Lanka. It is worth mentioning that the earlier discussed new intra-personal dimension, aiming at the establishment of inner-peace, for a large part is his contribution. In his view: ‘men become peaceful whenever he feels a little bit of peace inside. That is what I want to bring to the children. If we could just lighten this spark of inner peace…that is all I want. Later on in life that glimpse of light will stay with them.’ Moreover, Balasooriya’s perception of peace education is presented in the numerous books and peace education manuals he published, among which: *Management of Conflicts in School* (1993, NIE), *Peace Education Learning activities* (1994, NIE), *Teaching Peace to Children* (1994, NIE), *Learning the Way of Peace* (2001, UNESCO). Balasooriya calls his views on peace education ‘humanistic’. It can be argued that Balasooriya’s perception can be linked to wider international developments, because according to the author Harris, a humanistic view on peace education developed in the 90s (Harris 2002: 20-21). Moreover, in agreement with the author Salomon, Balasooriya explained that mere conflict resolution is not enough when aiming for peaceful students. Finally, one of the main elements within his perception is that peace education is not a subject, but an educational whole school approach, aiming at a culture of peace within the school.

Conclusively, the views of the policy and programme making actors as well as from the resource persons provide a wide range of perceptions on peace education, each highlighting its own main what-dimensions.

At the governmental level, the Ministry and NIE both revealed a broad but also different perception of peace education. On the one hand the Ministry promotes a set of ‘human qualities’ - with an emphasis on the creation of national unity – for instance present in textbooks for Sinhala language and literature. On the other hand, the NIE has an elaborate perception that is closely related to UNESCO’s peace education guide.

There was also consensus on the importance of some of the what-dimensions. First of all, a majority of the respondents named ‘a culture of peace’, a ‘peaceful school culture’ or comparable statements, which links to what-dimension 5. Secondly, a majority of the informants also argued that ‘the environment’ or ‘nature’ should have a central role within peace education (relating to what-dimension 11). Thirdly, what-dimensions 15 (inter-group level) and 16 (interpersonal level) were said to be important for peace education by a majority of the policy makers, programme makers and resource persons. Fourthly, the Ministry, the NIE, UNESCO, two NGO workers and several resource persons outlines the need to integrate human rights into peace education (what-dimension 3).

A few of the what-dimensions were outlined by a minority of the respondents. One NGO-worker touched upon the political dimension (8). Almost half of the respondents expressed that religion is an

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60 Quote from an interview on the 15th of March 2006.
important element of peace education. And UNICEF and two NGOs argued for emotional guidance and development (what-dimension 10).

Moreover, the findings concerning policy and programme-makers show a general emphasis on skills and attitudes, and less attention for knowledge and insight concerning the root causes of conflict and violence. Therefore it is interesting to see the socio-political contribution of the resource persons, who outlined two ‘knowledge/insight-issues’ that were barely mentioned by other respondents, namely the historical dimension (7) and a multilevel approach to peace education (12). It can be argued that they might dare to express themselves about the socio-political and historical dimensions of peace education, since they are more independent. Bearing in mind this contribution, I would like to state that resource persons can have a valuable role in the process of (further) development of peace education policies and programmes in Sri Lanka.

Finally, the issue of creating inner-peace was brought up by the NIE, UNESCO, UNICEF, GTZ, by two of the NGOs and by a resource person. On the one hand this shows a broad recognition of this new intra-personal dimension of peace education. On the other hand it is also sensible to take into account the influence Mr. Balasooriya might have had on promoting this particular interpretation of peace education, since he has worked at the NIE in the 90s, with two of the included NGOs in the same period and recently with UNESCO and GTZ.

5.2 Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?

This second part of the chapter focuses on the actions of policy and programme-making actors, as it looks at the different forms of implementation of peace education. As set forth in chapter 4, ‘actions’ are the actual implementation of peace education and this can be defined as the development of policies, programmes and related support materials. Consequently, the second sub question will be answered: What policies, programmes and support materials are developed by policy-making and programme-making actors? While discussing these actions, they are simultaneously linked to the theoretical how-dimensions. The table beneath provides a quick overview of which how-dimensions are put into practice by which actors; several of these dimensions will be also highlighted in the text. The final part concentrates on challenges for peace education, and answers the last sub question of this chapter: What are the main challenges for peace education according to policy-making and programme-making actors and resource persons?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW-DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>Actors at the policy and programme level in Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Formal education (integrative approach)</td>
<td>• MoE and NIE focus on the formal education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non-formal education (additive approach)</td>
<td>• No actor solely focused on non-formal education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Both formal and non-formal education</td>
<td>• All NGOs and all donors outline the need for combination of both approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Long-term commitment</td>
<td>• Forms challenge: a project started in the 90s stopped after withdrawal of a major donor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Peace education as a separate subject/programme</td>
<td>• Consensus: no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Spread across the curriculum/ Whole school approach</td>
<td>• Majority consensus: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Community participation</td>
<td>• Emphasised by MoE, NGOs and donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Process of peace building (political and socio-economic transformations to reduce inequality/enhance HR)</td>
<td>• UNESCO &amp; UNICEF, mentioned by 1 NGO and by resource persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reflective and critical dialogue + media (national, community and school level)</td>
<td>• 1 NGO provided critical media workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Critical thinking’: MoE, NIE, UNESCO, resource persons, NGO’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Peaceful and trustful class environment</td>
<td>• Majority consensus: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Student participation &amp; agency</td>
<td>• Emphasis on related extra-curricular activities (for instance peer mediation) by all NGOs, UNESCO and UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Engagement in non-violent activities</td>
<td>• Majority opinion: yes (through extra curricular activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Deal with trauma and emotions</td>
<td>• NGO 2, UNICEF (psycho-social help after tsunami)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Learner-centred and interactive education</td>
<td>• MoE, NIE, all donors, 2 NGOs, resource persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Bilingual education</td>
<td>• GTZ, 2 NGO’s, Academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teacher training</td>
<td>• Majority opinion: important for successful peace education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Teach conflict resolution skills</td>
<td>• MoE, NIE &amp; UNICEF (in the 90s), UNESCO, 3 NGOs, 1 consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Creativity, humour and play</td>
<td>• UNESCO, UNICEF, NGOs, 1 consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Create co-operation, tolerance and empathy</td>
<td>• Majority opinion: should be part of peace education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Through inter-cultural/-ethnic meetings and activities: MoE, GTZ, NGOs, resource persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New activities/how-dimensions in Sri Lanka (not in literature) by policy- and programme level:</td>
<td>• Exercises (meditation and relaxation) for inner-peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bottom-up approach: decision-making power &amp; support for schools' own peace education activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• NIE, UNESCO, UNICEF, GTZ, 2 NGOs, 1 consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MoE (promotion of peace projects at schools via zonal education officers), GTZ, 3 NGOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Government’s actions

Similar to the first part of the chapter, the actions of the Ministry and NIE will now be discussed successively.

Peace education unit of the Ministry of Education

On the one hand the Ministry expressed that earlier this unit co-operated directly with students, providing leadership workshops and organising student parliaments. Due to the decentralisation reforms, the policy has changed and they now work with the provincial departments. They co-operate with the 92 zonal education offices, were accordingly 92 peace education coordinators are employed. However, it was stated that these zonal education co-ordinators felt somewhat alienated, since there is no official exam linked to the school wide approach of peace education. Therefore genuine attention of other zonal education officers and of peace educators was lacking. The head of the unit explained that the Ministry thus stimulates the creation of zonal steering committees: *This includes the zonal director, the director that is in charge of education development, the peace education coordinator, and also some principals. And now we have to train these people also; building up their confidence, on peace education.*

On the other hand the Ministry provides in-service training to peace educators directly (how-dimension 16). During the in-service training, teachers are trained to highlight the peace concepts in existing textbooks. The head of the unit explained: *In such a workshop, we form groups; we give them one textbook and ask them to tell us how to bring about the peace concepts in this lesson. We found that this is a valuable method. Everybody is learning from it, we also do.* Usually the participants of such trainings are principals and teachers, and afterwards they receive a teacher’s manual (for instance the manual on Sinhala Language and Literature discussed earlier), often together with the UNESCO teachers’ guide.

The head officer also said that there is a programme for co-existence, including camps (how-dimension 19): *We intend to bring 100 children together from the North and East, and bring them here, to mix with 100 Sinhala children. And to learn that in their cultures there are some many common things, as well as different things. And that we need to appreciate the other’s culture and religion. And some of the students who were brought to Colombo from the North, they were told that Sinhala people were like monsters. And after coming here they made friends, and they realized that they can be friends. After this programme we hope to take the children from here to the North, we hope it is safe then.* Since the organisation of such camps is quite expensive, GTZ is now asked to provide funds to the Ministry.

Moreover, the Ministry offers stimulation funds for extra-curricular activities at schools. Schools are encouraged to form friendship forums within schools. In turn, several of these friendship forums from different schools can come together to form friendship societies (relating to how-dimension 7): *So then they can conduct peace building activities, in the school or in the community. Sometimes it is maybe just the environment, making the garden beautiful, or about the garbage disposal. These are small things, which we thought would help for peace.*

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61 This and other quotes regarding the views of the Ministry all come from the head officer, and were expressed in a conversation on the 10th of March 2006.
The difficulty at this moment is that zonal peace education coordinators have to hand in a proposal to the Ministry in which they clarify which schools need funds for which extra-curricular activities. The head officer stated: ‘The thing is, mostly we receive not well written plans [...] but we can only give the money if there is a proper plan. Most of the people who have to write it are not competent enough, or they don’t have the time [...] So, now the idea is to get down all these people [92 zonal coordinators for peace education] to the MoE, to train them on how to write a proposal.’

Finally, when discussing the role of NIE, it was explained that they also work on peace education, and that they also provide training. The head officer argued that because peace education is not a subject, NIE’s responsibility is limited, and the Ministry’s peace education unit is thus mandated to establish peace in the schools and in the country through in-service training. On the question if there was any co-operation between the two governmental institutions, the answer was: ‘No, not really. We do our programmes somewhat separately.’

**Peace education unit of NIE**

NIE’s main duty is to develop the national curriculum. NIE does have direct contact with schools, but not with communities: ‘We are not linked to the war, because we involve with the teachers, not with the communities. Many NGOs in Sri Lanka do go into the communities.’62 NIE provides pre-service peace education training to teacher students and, similar to the Ministry, in-service training to principals and teachers (how-dimension 16). In relation to these trainings, the UNESCO teachers guide (Balasooriya 2001) is said to be very useful, and is used within both training programmes. The following quote from a NIE officer corresponds with the non-co-operation statement of the Ministry: ‘The MoE also does in-service training, but this is not their actual duty. But they do it, because some donors go directly to the MoE, and not to NIE.’

A junior officer explains that in Sri Lanka there are two different teachers colleges. Firstly, the National Colleges of Education teach their students the profession of a teacher in three years, followed by an internship at a rural school for one year. Secondly, the Teacher Training Colleges train in-service teachers who ‘just’ entered the teaching profession without a certificate. NIE works with both. However, it was also mentioned that not all Teacher Colleges seem to incorporate pre-service peace education into their regular programme. Moreover it is also not clear how many peace educators received in-service training up to today, either from the NIE or the Ministry. In the discussion on current challenges for peace education further on in this chapter, this issue is also highlighted.

The following material was all distributed to the 10.000 Sri Lankan schools for free. Four books related to peace education (in Sinhala and Tamil), all written by A.S. Balasooriya, were send to the schools. It is however unclear if all these schools indeed receive them, and used them since.

- **Peace Education Learning activities** (1994, NIE, 30.000 copies)
- **Management of Conflicts in School** (1993, NIE, 20.000 copies)

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62 This and other quotes from the NIE all come from the head officer or when mentioned from one of the other two officers working in the peace education unit, and were expressed in a group-conversation on the 9th of March 2006.
Intriguingly, the Ministry and the NIE both did not clearly refer back to the General Education Reforms of 1997. In contrast, UNICEF did highlight these reforms (and provided me with a copy), and the role of peace education within it. Moreover, both governmental institutions expressed their struggle to get enough attention and money from the government for peace education. Regardless of attention to peace education and related issues within the Education Reforms, this seems to indicate a lack of governmental (financial) commitment to peace education: a lack of political will. Additionally, as stated in the theoretical framework, Balasooriya et all emphasise the need for further research on the successes of the implementation of peace education through the national policy (2004: 410-411).

**Donors’ actions**

We will now turn to the implementation of peace education by the donors: what programmes or policies do they develop or support? And what support materials are provided?

**UNESCO**

UNESCO’s country director expressed in clear words about the aim of the peace education teachers’ guide (discussed in the textbox on the teachers’ guide in chapter 3): ‘Every teacher of every subject should be a peace educator. Therefore, teachers have an important role to play and should be inspired to motivate themselves towards this cause. The guide enumerates how to inculcate the 10 core values through teaching methods. It also puts accent on evaluations, before, during and after introduction of the peace education methods in the classrooms. The guide has also been translated to Sinhala and Tamil in Sri Lanka, and it is also being experimented in India.” Moreover, the guide also includes the following issues: child centred teaching methods, extra-curricular activities, staff development and classroom management (by students).

The actual practices of UNESCO, next to the publication of this elaborate peace education guide, consist of development of and support for training programmes for zonal education directors and school staff. Additionally, the country director had some ideas on how peace education in Sri Lanka should be implemented: in a more co-ordinated way with long term commitment. He stated that peace education should be part of a national policy. UNESCO Sri Lanka currently works together with the UNESCO New Delhi office, the Ministry, NIE and GTZ. The country director also argued that: ‘Also with UNICEF, we should actually not compete, but cooperate.’

**UNICEF**

In a conversation with the responsible officer at UNICEF, it became clear that the general education policy of UNICEF is to focus on marginalised groups within Sri Lanka; UNICEF tries to address the gaps

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63 Please see the chapter on Sri Lanka’s context.
64 All quotes on UNESCO belong to the country director, expressed in two conversations on the 2nd and 9th of March 2006.
left by the government system. UNICEF also supports the non-formal education system through local NGOs. The CFS (Child Friendly School) approach is implemented in 1400 schools. The Ministry is the focus point for UNICEF’s co-operation, but the peace education unit is not included in this. The UNICEF officer explains about their implementation: ‘Now we are in the process of developing teacher training and manuals for CFSs. So we include ideas of inclusive education, remedial teaching, child rights and quality of education. Peace education is integrated in these ideas, especially in child rights and inclusiveness.’

Similar to UNESCO, UNICEF does not have direct contact with schools: ‘No, we reach the schools through MoE, NIE or through the provincial level. The most poverty stricken areas we try to reach. In the North-East we mostly work through the provincial departments. For example also in the central part in the Nurelia district, were tea plantations are and were marginalised groups live. But we don’t go to the school and just implement. It stays more at the policy level.’

To help children learn non-violent ways of resolving dispute (12 & 17), the Government of Sri Lanka, together with UNICEF, in the early 90s launched a programme called ‘Education for Conflict Resolution’ (ECR). Although not carrying the peace education label, ECR shows various similarities to the how-dimensions of peace education (which are indicated between brackets). A group of resource persons were trained at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in some of the different forms of conflict resolution being used in other countries. Methods adapted to the Sri Lankan context were created. This resulted in ten different training manuals aimed at principals, teacher trainers, teachers and pupils (16). In 1992-1994, the ECR project trained 3,500 principals, 500 master teachers, 3,000 teachers and 7,500 student leaders, who in turn have reached approximately 420,000 of Sri Lanka’s 4.5 million schoolchildren. It is interesting to note that the theoretical how-dimension 16 on ‘teacher training’ in Sri Lanka is extended into training for the whole school management. ECR is not limited to particular lessons on conflict resolution: it is integrated into the entire curriculum (6). Nor is ECR confined to the formal school system (3). In 1995, ECR began a media campaign to extend these ideas to parents and to the community as a whole (7). In addition, both Hinduism and Buddhism make extensive use of meditation. ECR therefore has incorporated meditation (though not for religious purposes) into its methods. Meditation can help to calm and concentrate the mind to create a sense of inner-peace (extra how-dimension) (UNICEF 1996).

GTZ

GTZ’s main activities regarding peace education is providing resources, advice and stimulating co-operation. GTZ, together with UNESCO and UNICEF, restrain from approaching schools directly; they work through the formal systems of the Ministry or NIE. The interviewed GTZ officer explained about the many different peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka: ‘For research on peace education, Sri Lanka is like a laboratory. GTZ and UNESCO provide finance and support to the MoE and the NIE. UNICEF also worked on peace education initiatives.’

65 All quotes regarding UNICEF come from the officer responsible for child friendly schools, in an interview on the 6th of March 2006.
66 This ECR programme is also discussed in chapter 3.
education from an early stage in the 90s. Save the Children is also involved in peace education, and they also provide resources to support. And more local NGOs also have projects.67 This same officer also just prepared a paper on ‘developing education for peace within the education system of Sri Lanka’. The headlines of this paper – the need for co-operation, a national plan and evaluation - were also discussed in the joint meeting of UNESCO, NIE, MoE and GTZ and a peace education NGO. The objectives for peace education outlined in GTZ’s paper are to:

- Develop a national plan for peace education.
- Explore opportunities and methodologies promoting peace and value education in a more effective manner.
- Reach better understanding on how support of UNESCO and GTZ could be used in meaningful ways by MoE and NIE.
- Identify opportunities to get MoE and NIE to work together with other national and international organisations for peace education.
- Clarify and clearly outline each other roles and responsibilities for all policy actors involved (donors, MoE, NIE and others).
- Minimize overlapping work and wastage of resources.
- Develop common documentary/resource centre.
- Evaluation and monitoring throughout the process.

Reaching these objectives is part of GTZ’s four year plan for the stimulation of peace education: ‘Once we have given awareness in the first year, in the second year we will give training (16). […] At the same time we will work together with NIE and MoE closely, on how we can integrate peace education in the different subjects. […] We will develop more materials. We are trying to bring both Sinhala and Tamil schools together, with drama festivals for instance. Moreover drama texts will be published, just like poems and everything else on peace, coming from the schools (19). People should be motivated, it is their peace. It should not only be the school, it should involve also the parents and the whole community (7). In the third year we will allow the schools to come up with their own programmes for peace education. And the fourth year will be a year for us of celebrating, you know? We will empower the schools so they can continue. And people have to tell for themselves how we can support them.’

This last remark about decision making power for schools about their own peace education (extra curricular) activities is interesting. On the one hand it is similar to the Ministries approach where zonal education officers in co-operation with schools can ask the Ministry for funds. On the other hand this approach relates to the perception of the NGO worker who argued that every school should have its own interpretation of peace education. It is worth noting here that in the literature there was little attention for such a bottom-up approach to peace education, with a fair amount of decision making power for schools. Therefore these Sri Lankan examples of a bottom-up approach to peace education can be added to the theoretical how-dimensions (visible at the bottom of the table).

67 The quotes of GTZ are expressed by the officer responsible for peace and value education, and were expressed in an interview on the 2nd of March 2006.
NGOs’ actions

Peace education in Sri Lanka is implemented both within the formal and the non-formal system. As shown in the how-dimensions table, all donors and all NGOs emphasise the need for a combination of both approaches (dimension 3). NGOs are the ones working in the non-formal system. However, it became clear that if NGOs would want to work within the formal education system, they almost always have to do this through the Ministry. Otherwise, it was stated that a good relationship with a school principal could also create a co-operation between an NGO and a school. Thus, the space in which NGOs currently can operate to implement peace education programmes is limited.

Two of the NGOs focused more on youth and adolescents, providing non-formal reflective/critical media training (how-dimension 9) and a one week ‘life education’ programme, which prepares adolescents for their future life after school. Another initiative especially for youth was mentioned by one of the NGO workers. The relevant how-dimensions are shown within the quote: ‘The National Youth Services Council, a governmental body, gets funded by donors. They give vocational training in camps. Around 10.000 youngsters (aged 15-30) are involved. It is all sorts of activities, conflict resolution (17), sports, crafts, arts (18) and peace building tools. Sinhalese and Tamils are together, around 200 participants for three days. Sometimes they also work with the community, cleaning up and rebuilding it (7 &8).’

Moreover all NGOs agreed that peace education should provide inter-ethnic meetings, possibly for more than one or two days or even regularly (19). Referring back to Salomon (2003), the building of close relationships of trust and cooperation between children of the two ethnic groups, could indeed contribute positively to building a peaceful society. One NGO takes large efforts to implement all different kinds of peace education activities: drama competitions, poster competitions, student peace groups (resolve conflict non-violently at schools), slogans, quiz-competitions.

One of the NGOs provided a manual, again written by Balasooriya, which is used by one of the other NGOs as well. According to the author, this ‘sow peace, reap peace’ guide is for workshops with adolescents, with more political aspects. It also elaborates on the issue of inner-peace. Since this new dimension of peace education is not yet clearly discussed within the literature, it will be given some extra attention in this research. It is also possible to make a connection between this intra-personal what-dimension and some of the newly found how-dimensions/practices in Sri Lanka, such as meditation and relaxation practices.

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68 This was expressed in an interview on the 28th of February 2006.
69 This is shown at the bottom of the how-dimensions table earlier in this chapter.
The majority of the NGOs and several resource persons highlighted that peace education cannot just be taught, because it has to be experienced; child centred and interactive teaching methods are indispensable. As an example, it was stated by one resource person that teachers’ attitudes and behaviour transmits silent messages – the hidden curriculum - to the students. Therefore teachers need to be stimulated to promote a peaceful school culture which is caring and tolerant to differences.

As discussed earlier, the environment or nature is an important element for peace education according to the majority of the actors. One NGO worker told how she thought nature can teach about peace: ‘One boy had been listening to nature. There was a huge tree with insects and bushes and grass. So the tree spoke to him. And he wrote a beautiful poem, which was published. It said that at this tree, all the grass and insects just live together, sharing, without making any noise. But why you humans always are bombing and killing, instead of living happily?’

Another example on how to reach participation from the community (how-dimension 7) was expressed by this same NGO worker: ‘When there was a silent March for peace in the country, and as soon as these children started marching it was Saturday, and everyone closed their shops, also the Muslims. And they all joined the silent march. Finally we asked everyone to join the children.’ She also tells about two other actions that show how cooperation, tolerance and empathy (how-dimension 19) can be stimulated. When the library was burned in Jaffna (in the North), Sinhalese children in the South gathered Tamil books and these were send to Jaffna for the new library. Finally, with the ‘blood donation campaign’ this NGO wanted to create empathy amongst youth from different communities, but also make a peace statement: ‘our people are spilling their blood for war and now the time is apt to share their blood to bring peace’.

In accordance with the aim of GTZ, two NGOs expressed their wish to create a peace education library. Finally, three of the NGOs also praised the bottom-up approach (the new how-dimension), so that schools could get support for their peace educating activities. One NGO worker explained that ‘peace has to be built from the bottom-up. It is important to get the people from different racial backgrounds together. Change their fears and biases. We need to organise this at the local level, […] face to face.’

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**Discovering Inner-Peace**

- A person, who is unable to live with himself in peace, naturally becomes unable to live with others in peace.
- Researches show that meditation develops mental sanity, releases stress and improves creativity and insight.
- Meditation is not attached to a particular belief; it is an open spiritual exercise.
- Inner-peace and intended behaviour:
  - **Discipline in mind** (control of emotion and inner conflict; tolerance)
  - **Discipline in physical behaviour** (correct body posture and calm manners)
  - **Discipline in speech** (no meaningless speech; increased listening capacity)
  - **Increased awareness in action** (mindful behaviour; realistic orientation)
  - **Contented living** (joyfulness; contentment; simplicity; enjoying a sense of being)

- **Exercise example 1: controlling your anger** (upper primary section and upward grades):
  Learn the following verse by heart and repeat it when you find you are angry, until it goes away.

  *Breathing in, I know the anger makes me ugly.*
  *Breathing out, I do not want to be contorted by anger.*
  *Breathing in, I know I must take care of myself.*
  *Breathing out, I know loving kindness is the only answer.*


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70 This was stated by an NGO worker in a conversation on the 1st of March 2006.
It can be concluded that the actions of the policy and programme-making actors provide us with many different peace education initiatives, incorporating a range how dimensions. Generally, the actors emphasise teacher training as an important tool for the implementation of peace education. Additionally, both the policy and programme level revealed two new Sri Lankan how-dimensions – meditation for inner-peace and a bottom-up approach – rarely discussed in the peace education literature and therefore a contribution to current theory.

In sum, the Ministry works at the decentralised level with zonal peace education co-ordinators, providing in-service training and funds for extra-curricular activities. The NIE provides pre- and in-service training. However, both governmental institutions do not co-operate in their efforts.

UNESCO’s peace education guide for teachers is elaborate and widely used at the policy level. UNESCO’s country director tries to stimulate more co-operations between the different actors at the policy and programme level. UNICEF’s Education for Conflict Resolution was implemented in the early 90s and shows many similarities with current peace education initiatives. These similar elements still exist in the CFS approach and within the Ministry’s and NIE’s peace education policies. GTZ argues for a national plan for peace education, in order to stimulate more co-operation and co-ordination, a common resource centre and more effective evaluation and monitoring. GTZ, together with the Ministry and three NGOs, all argue for a bottom-up approach regarding peace education, in which schools have the freedom and support to develop their own peace education activities (new how-dimension).

Finally the NGOs actions concentrate on the organisation of inter-group meetings (how-dimension 19), the exercise of inner-peace through meditation and relaxation (new how-dimension), care and respect for the environment and the participation of the community in peace education initiatives (dimension 7).

Challenges
This final part of chapter 5 will address the sub question: What are the main challenges for peace education according to policy-making and programme-making actors and resource persons? The challenges table below shows an overview of the main challenges. It also shows which actors referred to what challenges. Although in this table the views of the actors are generalised according to their own ‘group’, it still provides the reader with an insight into the different views on present challenges for peace education in Sri Lanka. In the text, some of the explicit personal views are highlighted to overcome the generalisations that could arise from the table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>SHORTCOMINGS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Lack of resources (material</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>and person wise)</td>
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<td>2. Lack of co-operation &amp;</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>co-ordination</td>
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<td>3. Lack of a national plan</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>4. Lack of sustainability</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>4a) long term commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b) follow-up after training</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>4c) promotion at all levels</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Lack of evaluation</td>
<td>X</td>
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PEACE EDUCATION CAN’T SUCCEED ON ITS OWN

A) STRUCTURAL

6. Country situation/media        | X        |

B) EDUCATION SYSTEM

7. Multilevel approach (peace    | X        |

building)

8. Segregated & unequal schooling | X        |

9. Language barrier               | X        |

10. Cultural exclusive textbooks  | X        |

11. A-historical education        | X        |

12. Exam-oriented system          | X        |

Taking into account all the challenges that were discussed at the policy and programme level, it is possible to divide them into two groups: the first group of challenges relates to certain shortcomings, whereas the second list of challenges is based on the idea that peace education cannot succeed on its own.

The first challenge is the lack of resources, both material wise and person wise. On the one hand there is a general lack of resources within the education system, a lack of peace education material in all languages (English, Tamil and Sinhala) and the need for a common resource centre with background information and available educational material on peace education. As mentioned before, two NGOs have plans to create such a resource centre. On the other hand, it was also stated by the Ministry, NIE, all donors and two NGOs that there is a lack of resource persons and staff in the field of peace education. People working at the policy level of peace education sometimes miss the expertise. Yet, it is worth mentioning that there is a relatively new ‘Post-Graduate Diploma in Conflict Resolution and Peace Preparedness’ developed by the Social Scientists’ Association, which is validated by the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom.71 The inclusion of resource persons (again: academics and consultants) in this research also shows that there are experts on peace education, but that they are not ‘used’. Therefore, it can be argued that resources are wasted.

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Another challenge also relates to the wastage of resources and overlapping work, since there is a general lack of co-operation and co-ordination in the field of peace education. Many different peace education initiatives exist, yet almost none of the actors discuss their roles, responsibilities or opportunities for combined efforts. UNESCO for instance argued that: ‘There should be co-ordination; regular meetings, better understanding, and a commitment to work together are important.’ Adding to this, GTZ stated that: ‘Outside organisations that support the MoE and NIE may find duplication of work and responsibilities. Thus, clarification of the roles of MoE and NIE is needed.’ However, co-ordination and co-operation is not only lacking at the policy level. An NGO-worker explained: ‘I would like to state that this co-operation needs to be done between the NGOs also. One of the problems of peace building generally is that we don’t have a peace movement. We have organisations, we have programmes, but we don’t have a movement. You can’t build a movement if particular organisations and charismatic individuals are not working together. Money is wasted now. [...] If you attempt to do some co-ordinated work with other NGOs, there is a limit to that, and you won’t be able to go beyond.”

Some NGOs also expressed criticism at the role of donors. On the one hand donors would not put enough pressure to create effective co-ordination between the different actors. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that donor funding choices influence the successes and sustainability of peace education initiatives, both at the policy and the programme level.

Considering the lack of co-operation and co-ordination, it is useful to discuss the unclear division of responsibilities for pre-service and in-service training. Whereas NIE does have the exclusive responsibility for pre-service training, both governmental institutions put their efforts in in-service training. As became clear from the quotes presented earlier, both institutions think it is their (exclusive) duty and responsibility to provide in-service training. Taking into account the fact that both institutions do provide in-service training, I would like to argue that some form of co-ordination and co-operation is needed to avoid double work and to fill present gaps left in in-service training.

The third challenge derives from the second: because of a shortage of co-operation and co-ordination, and the presence of so many peace education initiatives, a national plan is needed. Such a national plan should not only be created and implemented by the main governmental institutions and the donors. NGOs – together with other civil society organisations which are not further included in this research - and resource persons, should also be incorporated in national efforts for peace education. However, in order to overcome many of the challenges, the governmental peace education institutions together with the Minister of Education need to show some form of leadership and recognition of the importance of peace education. Another argument why these governmental institutions should take the lead in a co-ordinated development of peace education is the fact that most peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka take place within the formal education system. These institutions should take up their ownership in the field of peace education, to make sure that a lack of political will does not stand in the way of further development of peace education. Interestingly, one of the resource persons in 2001 wrote a

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72 All quotes regarding UNESCO come from the country director, expressed in two conversations on the 2nd and 9th of March 2006.
73 All quotes relating to GTZ come from the officer responsible for peace and value education, and were expressed in an interview on the 2nd of March 2006.
74 Interview with an NGO worker on the 28th of March 2006.
proposal for a national plan for peace education, with a special co-ordinating unit and a supportive steering committee with representatives of all actors in the field (with a leading role for NIE and the inclusion of resource persons). Unfortunately, this proposal was turned down at that time.\footnote{For further details on the content and author of this proposal, please contact the author of this research.}

It was expressed by several NGO workers that their current opportunities to implement peace education programmes at the school level are \textbf{limited}, due to the formal system in which they have to operate. Moreover, one NGO worker reflected that the workshops provided by NGOs are often ad-hoc, and lack a long term influence and quality control mechanisms. A resource person added to this that: ‘activities like bringing children together and making them all hug each other… this is nice, but not really effective. There is no follow up. Real co-existence needs to be experienced in the longer term.’\footnote{Expressed in an interview on the 19th of April 2006.} Therefore, co-operation between the non-formal programme and formal policy level, and inclusion of NGOs in a national plan for peace education, in my view is indispensable.

Fourth is the challenge of a \textbf{lack of sustainability}, including the need for a \textbf{long term commitment}, \textbf{follow-up after training} and \textbf{promotion} of peace education implementation at all levels (the policy, programme, zonal, school and community levels). The need for a long term commitment to peace education programmes was mentioned by donors, NGOs and resource persons. One resource person explained about a lack of long term planning and commitment: ‘We did not think of the sustainability with the ECR programme. The money came, we trained and send them [the teachers to the schools], and when the money stopped everything came to a standstill. There were also some shortcomings in these trainings, because we did not do any follow-up. We could not do the follow up because it was a country wide programme, and we have 10,000 schools is Sri Lanka. We did it at the national level. But we understood later that the provincial levels were not very much concerned. They had their own models; therefore teachers doing these kinds of activities were not really appreciated. That was one reason why we failed.’\footnote{This quote is from an interview on the 15th of March 2006.} This quote shows the need for follow-up after training, together with the need to promote peace education at the zonal and school level as well. The following statement of GTZ supports this argument: ‘The target group (pre-service young teachers) is good on the one hand, but on the other hand it implies a real long term process. When this new junior teachers comes to a school with all these new ideas on peace education, the seniors will not always listen. It is hard to make a change! Only some young teachers will be able to do this. Therefore we need to include the whole school staff.’

Moreover, the head officer at the Ministry explained that peace education also needs to be promoted at the policy level as well: ‘Even when donors are ready, still the Ministry [excluding the peace education unit] is trying to cut down the expenses.’\footnote{This quote together with the other quotes concerning the Ministry are from the head officer of the peace education unit, and were expressed in an interview on the 10th of March 2006.} This leads to think of a current lack of political will within the Ministry, which needs to be overcome. The GTZ officer added to this the need for motivation and promotion of officers at ‘the top level’ as well: ‘We ourselves also have to be motivated and trained’. Finally, it was
also expressed by different actors that the attitude of schools principals is crucial for the success chances of peace education.

The fifth challenge for peace education in Sri Lanka is the general lack of evaluation and monitoring, and was mentioned by the majority of the respondents. Especially the donor UNESCO emphasises the need for evaluation throughout the whole process; evaluation forms are included in the peace education teachers’ guide. The GTZ officer reflected that: ‘With peace education there are no lessons learned. We need creative thinking and reflection of programmes in the past. Every year the same plan is taken to a donor, and there is no evaluation or impact checked. NGOs are not monitored as well. It is true, Sri Lanka as a third world country is depending on funds. It is easier to keep things the way they are. But, change and progression is needed!’

The second group of challenges all support the statement that ‘peace education cannot succeed on its own’. Fascinatingly, these challenges were not mentioned by the governmental institutions. On the one hand there are two structural challenges, which were both mentioned only by resource persons. First there is the country situation, including the biased media (related to how-dimension 9 on critical and reflective dialogue and media). The current instability within Sri Lanka influences schools either indirectly or directly. As argued by one of the resource persons, the side effect of war is that violence becomes a way of life, creating a culture of violence. Even corporal punishment in schools is not uncommon. Moreover, the political turbulence disrupts peoples’ trust, triggering extremist and violent views. Clearly, such a country situation makes its harder to successfully implement peace education. One respondent explained that both printed and electronic media highly affects young people in Sri Lanka and world-wide. She further stated that it would be wise to pro-actively create a dialogue with Sri Lankan media organisations to stimulate the promotion of acceptable values and attitudes.

Second, as stated by the majority of the resource persons and in accordance with theory, it forms a challenge to follow a multilevel approach to peace education, in which peace education is part of a wider process of peace building (how-dimension 8). A resource person stated: ‘Peace building is the practice of peace education, or the practical component of peace education. With working in the field, children learn how to do campaigns; how to work with people from the community to build peace.’

The fact that only resource persons came up with these important and structural challenges, indicates the important role resource persons can have in implementation processes of peace education, since they are often able to provide specific insights based on their expertise. As discussed above, in the case of Sri Lanka resource persons are not yet, but definitely should be integrated in a national plan for peace education.

The last five challenges are related to the current education system in Sri Lanka. Challenge number 8 is to overcome the segregated school system, and to overcome the region-wise inequalities within schooling. One resource person explained this by stating that: ‘The school system is compartmentalised along ethnic lines. The only exceptions are elite schools in Colombo and Kandy. However, the masses are taught in compartmentalised schools, and they are not exposed to other communities, languages and cultures at all. This has not

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79 This was said in an interview on the 15th of March 2006.
contributed to interethnic understanding." This challenge clearly stands in the way of creating inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding, important elements of peace education in Sri Lanka. Both UNESCO and UNICEF highlighted that rural areas and areas affected by conflict often have a lower standards in education. There is ‘no equality in quality’, in the words of UNESCO’s country director. As stated by Bush and Saltarelli in the theoretical framework, it can be argued that peace education initiatives have more success chances in educational settings were quality education is provided. Moreover, these authors also stated that political or ideological forces often have a large influence on education, which makes necessary changes of intolerant and unequal education systems extremely difficult (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v).

Ninth, the language barrier challenge deserves attention. Only a minority of the donors, NGO workers and resource persons touched upon the issue of languages, whereas the majority of peace educators do so, as described in the next chapter. A resource person argued: ‘From the early childhood children should learn the two languages of Sinhala and Tamil. This also happens in India, were children are learning Hindi and their local language. English is also taught in Sri Lanka, but not very successful. There are not enough qualified teachers. So in fact all three languages should be taught, but then more resources are needed.’

Tenth, the majority of resource persons and one NGO pointed out the fact that certain monocultural textbooks have to be reviewed. These respondents argued that the system in a way is anti-minority, because the Sinhala nationalist ideology is persistent in some textbooks, for instance in Social Sciences books. An NGO worker reflected on this as follows: ‘The major problem in Sri Lanka is the majority-minority division. Some of what is taught might foster the Sinhalese majority rule. The Sinhalese majority can decide, they form most of the authority. There is always a majority sentiment in it, because Sinhalese develop the policy and materials. So you may find out that this peace education is not quite radical in nature. In the government system peace education is more standardised. It is also less direct. It will not directly deal with the ethnic conflict.’ One of the academics in this line of thought stated that the education system is making religion and ethnicity exclusive, instead of comparative. According to his ideas, Sri Lankan education is not creating responsible citizens; instead it creates religious and ethnic aware citizens who are allowed to think in exclusive terms. Moreover, the textbooks are not racist, but they are exclusive (especially the subject of social studies, and in Sinhala, Tamil and English language). Finally, he argued that it is problematic that all ethnic groups just talk about their own realities, not of the realities of other groups in society.

Eleventh, it was also brought forward by several resource persons that education in Sri Lanka tends to be somewhat a-historical. In this regard, an academic stated that: ‘It would be better to teach about religion and the history of religions in a comparative way. Also the history of conflict and co-existence should be taught in a comparative way.’

80 From an interview on the 16th of March 2006.
81 Ibid.
82 This quote is from a conversation with an NGO worker on the 28th of February 2006.
83 From an interview on the 19th of April 2006.
84 Ibid.
And last but certainly not least, it was also mentioned by a donor, one NGO and a resource person that the present exam oriented education system does not leave enough space for the integration of peace education in the curriculum. UNESCO’s country director expressed that: ‘Many teachers complain that they are already overburdened. We should try not to overburden the national curriculum, not to be too much exam oriented and people need to be less stressed out.’ An NGO worker added that the current structure is also supporting this exam oriented spirit. Since there are only 5 hours of school per day, everyone wants to finish their work in these 5 hours, and there is no time to play or to learn about peace.85

Moreover, as stated by GTZ, it is still unclear to what extend the whole school approach to peace education has been implemented (successfully) at schools in Sri Lanka. From the ECR programme in the 90s some important lessons could have been learned: there was a deficit of sustainability of the whole programme, and a lack of support for teachers who did try to implement ECR. The earlier mentioned challenge of a lack of evaluation and research thus needs to be addressed soon. Only one ‘good practices’ research on ‘Peaceful and Conflict Free Schools’ has been completed in Sri Lanka. This indeed provides some useful insights. However, bearing in mind Samoff’s (2005:3-5) statement that there is no such thing as ‘best-practice’ that should form a blueprint for other situations, I would like to argue for more in-depth research on peace education in Sri Lanka.86

Concluding words on chapter 5

After the literature study, I distinguished two sets of theoretical dimensions. As for the what-dimensions derived from the theory, some adaptations can be made when taking into account the views of policy and programme makers in Sri Lanka. The first part of this chapter looked at the what-dimensions and answers the sub question: What are the perceptions of the government, donors, NGOs and resource persons on peace education? Generally, the views from the respondents provided us with diverse perceptions on peace education. In the literature there is only little attention paid to religion within peace education programmes. As became clear from my findings, religion plays a more prominent role in Sri Lankan peace education, both at the policy and the programme level. Therefore, it can be argued that in the case of Sri Lanka what-dimension 9 should be split up into two dimensions: an ethnic dimension and a religious dimension. Moreover, as discussed before, one new dimension can be added: the intra-personal level aiming for inner-peace. This new dimension was revealed by the NIE, UNESCO, UNICEF, GTZ, by two of the NGOs and by an influential resource person, Mr. A.S. Balasooriya.

The second part of this chapter reviewed the how-dimensions that are put into practice in Sri Lanka, and it helps to answer the second sub question: What policies, programmes and support materials are developed by policy-making and programme-making actors based upon their perceptions? As for the different actions and related how-dimension, the findings of the policy and programme level also show some interesting insights. At the policy and programme level many different peace education initiatives take place, putting

85 From an interview on the 28th of March 2006.
86 More detailed recommendation for further research can be found in chapter 7.
into practice a wide array of how-dimensions. The how-dimensions table provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of current peace education practices by the different actors in the field. In general it can be concluded that the actors emphasise teacher training as an important tool for the implementation of peace education. Two new how-dimensions can be distinguished, namely exercises for inner-peace and a bottom-up approach to peace education, in which schools have the opportunity and support to create their own peace education (extra curricular) activities. It is interesting to note that these issues are hardly ever discussed in the peace education literature. Therefore I would like to argue that they contribute to the current debate on peace education and its implementation.

The final part of the chapter presented the reader with an answer to the sub question: *What are the main challenges for peace education according to policy-making and programme-making actors and resource persons?* The challenges table shows five main challenges that relate to present ‘shortcomings’ that hinder successful implementation of peace education in Sri Lanka, as well as seven ‘structural and educational challenges’ that support the argument that ‘peace education cannot succeed on its own’. Interestingly, these latter structural and educational challenges were only mentioned by the non-governmental respondents. A central challenge is the lack of co-ordination and co-operation between all actors involved in peace education.

Another conclusion arising from the findings of this research is that resource persons can provide valuable additions to the perceptions (what-dimensions) and actions (how-dimensions and challenges) regarding peace education. A majority of the respondents complained about a lack of resource persons and expertise in the field of peace education. Part of a solution to this could be the inclusion of existing resource persons in the development and implementation of peace education policies, which are there and are included in this research as such. Another solution, brought forward by GTZ, is to train and specialise present leading figures at the policy level. The mentioned post-graduate programme could partly be used for this aim. Moreover, it can also be argued that resource persons could function as facilitators in a national co-ordinating body. Since many challenges relate to the need for leadership and co-ordination in the field of peace education, it can be argued that the governmental institutions should take up a leading role within such a co-ordinating body. Moreover, a co-ordinating body should include representatives from the donors and NGOs (and other civil society organisations) as well.
Chapter 5 in a nutshell

5.1 Perceptions: what is peace education?

- **Government's perception:**
  - The Ministry promotes the available ‘human qualities and peace values’ – with an emphasis on the creation of national unity – present in textbooks.
  - The NIE uses an elaborate perception that is closely related to UNESCO’s peace education teachers’ guide.

- **Donors’ perception:**
  - UNESCO presents 10 core peace values, also included in the peace education teachers’ guide.
  - UNICEF earlier employed a rather specific perception called Education for Conflict Resolution, and views Child Friendly Schools as a way to promote peace and quality education.
  - In their broader programme of Education for Social Cohesion, GTZ promotes peace and value education, with an emphasis on the (school and community) environment and inner-peace.

- **NGOs’ perception:** logically the 4 included NGOs had various interpretations of peace education. Generally, there was a focus on inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding (meetings), the creation of a culture of peace, the integration of human rights and the stimulation of inner-peace.

- **Resource persons’ perception:**
  - The academics highlighted 3 main themes: the historical dimension (what-dimension 7), a multilevel approach (what-dimension 12) and the creation of responsible citizens with knowledge of human rights (what-dimension 3).
  - The consultants generally expressed that the current education system lacks values, as well as critical historical awareness.
  - The new intra-personal dimension, aiming at inner-peace, for a large part is the contribution of Mr. Balasooriya. He also promotes a whole school approach, aiming at a culture of peace within the school.

5.2 Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?

- **How-dimensions**
  - The how-dimensions table gives an overview of peace education actions at the policy and programme level in Sri Lanka.
  - Two new how-dimensions were revealed by the findings at the policy and programme level, and add to the current theoretical debate: meditation for inner-peace (which relates to the new intra-personal what-dimension) and a bottom-up approach, in which schools are allowed ad get support for the creation of peace education activities.

- **Challenges for peace education**
  - Peace education has to overcome several shortcomings, including a lack of co-ordination.
  - Peace education cannot succeed on its own
  - A complete overview of the challenges for peace education according to the policy, programme makers and resource persons is shows in the challenges table.
Chapter 6 Perceptions & Actions of Peace Educators

An analysis of research findings at the school level in Sri Lanka

A teacher’s interpretation of peace education: singing together before the mid-day meal

*Children’s song*

*We never quarrel with each other*

*We all get together*

*Little friends*

*We all have our meal together*

*Little friends*

*Little friends*
Chapter 6  Perceptions & Actions of Peace Educators
An analysis of research findings at the school level in Sri Lanka

Peace educators = school principals, teachers and zonal education officers

6.1 Perceptions: what is peace education?
- What are the perceptions of peace educators on peace education?

6.2 Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?
- Do peace educators implement the policies, programmes and support material offered by the policy-making and programme-making level?
- Do peace educators develop their own strategies to implement forms of peace education?
- What are the main challenges for peace education according to peace educators and zonal education officers?

This chapter focuses on the perceptions and actions of peace educators. An important group of actors, because peace educators (try to) implement peace education initiatives. It can also be argued that especially peace educators can provide a good insight into current obstacles and challenges to peace education, because they are directly confronted with them. This research therefore incorporates the views of teachers, principals and several zonal education officers, in order to give them a voice in the discussion on peace education in Sri Lanka.

As explained before, 8 schools were included in this research, located in the Colombo region (capital), and in the districts of Chilaw (West), Kandy (Central) and Ampara (East). This research tries to represent the wide range of school types present in Sri Lanka; it includes urban and rural schools, governmental, private and semi-governmental (church) schools, girls, boys and mixed schools as well as mixed religion schools and ‘separated’ (one-medium/one religion) schools. At these schools 6 principals and 33 teachers were interviewed. Moreover, this research also includes in 3 interviews with ‘zonal education officers’, working in the decentralised offices linked to the ministry of education. Although this research is about ‘the state of peace education in Sri Lanka’, it does not have the pretension and the scope to cover the whole Island.

It is worth drawing some attention to the issue of model schools here. In Sri Lanka, a model school usually functions as an example for other schools in the same area. Often (not always) a principal receives funds and guidance from the government, either directly from the ministry or from a zonal education office. Four of these model schools were incorporated in this research, because peace education initiatives were actively put into practice here. However, this research earlier referred to Samoff’s statement that there is no such thing as ‘best-practices’ that should form a blueprint for other situations. Therefore this research also included four ‘non-model schools’, which were picked at random.
This chapter is divided into two parts, the first discussing perceptions (including paragraph 1 and 2) and the latter discussing actions (paragraph 3, 4 and 5). Semi-structured interviews were held with both principals and teachers. In these interviews predominantly five topics were discussed, which will be discussed successively in the following paragraphs:

§ 1. Can schools help to bring peace?
§ 2. Most important elements of peace education
§ 3. Teacher training and peace education materials
§ 4. How is peace education put into practice?
§ 5. Challenges

6.1 Perceptions: what is peace education?
The following two paragraphs will help to answer the first sub question: What are the perceptions of peace educators on peace education?

1. Can schools help to bring peace?
To open the conversation, most interviews started with the question if schools could help to bring peace in Sri Lanka. Generally speaking every respondent answered to this question positively. Different interpretations on how schools could contribute to peace were however expressed.

Principals often referred to their school environment when discussing if schools could help to bring peace. On the one hand ‘an environment to live in peace and harmony’, in which children of different backgrounds live and learn together, was mentioned by the majority of the principals. On the other hand half of the principals also commented on the need for a co-operative atmosphere between the staff members of the school: ‘Here the staff is cooperative. A lot of the students are Buddhists, some are Christian, some Muslim Tamils and some Hindu Tamils. They all study together in one class, there are no problems. The atmosphere is friendly. They all live in peace; they share ideas and other things with others.’ (Principal of an urban Sinhala medium model school)

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the relationships in schools - either among the staff or between teachers and students - can play an important role when aiming for a ‘peaceful school environment’. The Sri Lankan peace educators clearly expressed this relation during the interviews.

Moreover, half of the interviewed principals also showed their concern for the country situation. The following quote shows a principal’s dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs: ‘If we want to stop the war, we need to think of the other, understand each other, and of non-discrimination. Here they learn the different cultures and religions. This type of school should be spread over all the country. We should use the countries money for the schools, not for the war. Last years all development money […] was spent on the war. But with this money we should develop the country.’ (Principal of an urban mixed religion/medium model school)

87 The interviews with the zonal education officers were somewhat more open interviews.
The interviewed teachers also agreed that school could indeed contribute to peace in Sri Lanka. Many teachers mentioned the fact that schools should start to educate children from a young age about ‘the concepts and values of peace’. ‘The most important and best time of a human being is its childhood. If you can not make him correct in childhood, then we can not change this person later in society. It is like a plant. When it is small you can easily bent it, but when it gets larger, you will have to cut it.’ (Teacher in a rural Sinhala medium school)

The following quote is a very personal interpretation of a middle-aged female teacher in a rural school: ‘I think the best place to learn students about peace is the school. Especially the children love the female teachers, because they remind them of their mother. In 1953 I was also here in grade 1. Now I am 56 yrs old. When I met my teacher for the first time, I felt really close. Even up till today we still meet. One day she did not show up, and I cried all the time. We all want love. And love is peace. So the best place to grow peace is the school.’ (Teacher in a rural Sinhala medium school)

Another primary level teacher from a rural Sinhala medium school states that ‘schools can help to build peace, yes. We as teachers can change the minds of the younger generation.’ This quote summarises more expressions mentioned by the majority of the teachers, such as ‘changing the hearts and the minds of the children’, and ‘changing the way they [the students] think’. All these statements can be related to Salomon & Nevo’s concept which was described in chapter 2: ‘We can see peace education, in its best form, attempting to change peoples’ mind-sets about the ‘other’ (1999). So not only in theory, but also in practice there is emphasis on the need to change the minds of people in order to create peace.

Similar to some of the principals, a majority of the teachers also worried about the unstable situation in Sri Lanka, and the need for schools to help build peace: ‘Schools need to bring peace especially in a country like Sri Lanka, a multicultural society. The different racial communities must understand each other. Now there are misunderstandings. That is why we have to introduce peace programmes. Students only read the school texts. Not about the outside world. You have to bring the outside world to the children in school, for their understanding. So, it is very important to introduce a peace programme at the school level.’ (Teacher from an urban Tamil medium school)

Interestingly, two teachers also articulated their critical remarks on the role of schools in creating a peaceful society.88 A teacher from an urban English medium school stated: ‘Yes, I think school could do something. But only in the long term, with short term measures schools cannot do anything. In the long term schools can educate the students to think, and understand how others behave and how to accommodate the other. Then peace will automatically come.’ A Tamil language teacher from an urban English medium school added to this: ‘Definitely education can [make a] change, if they use the right curricula. Now, there is no integration, and no attention to all cultural festivals, for instance.’ Only one (maths) teacher stated that ‘there was no need at all for peace education at this [private] school, because everyone here is peaceful already’. (Urban English medium school)

Finally the zonal education officers also supported the idea that schools can help to build peace. One of the informants expressed the need for more cultural and sportive activities that would integrate children of different communities. Another respondent mentioned that ‘schools are the best place for peace education, and it should start at the primary level.’ (Zonal education officer in an urban region)

88 A complete overview of the challenges for peace education mentioned by the peace educators is discussed later on in this chapter.
In conclusion it can be argued that there is consensus among the actors at the school level and that schools can indeed help to build peace in Sri Lanka. Thus, generally there seems to be a positive attitude towards peace education, with a focus on the need to ‘learn to live together’. Now this is clear, the next step is to look at what peace educators in Sri Lanka perceive as the most important elements of peace education.

2. Most important elements of peace education

Respondents expressed various interpretations of ‘the most important elements of peace education’, or ‘parts of peace education that should never be left out’. This issue was brought up in the interviews in order to get an insight into first associations of the informants regarding peace education. Generally, most of the important elements were mentioned by both the principals and the teachers, although I also discuss some issues mentioned by the teachers only. In this paragraph the findings are directly related to theory, using the what-dimensions from the theoretical framework.

First of all, there was a general consensus on the fact that peace education should aim for co-existence and the need to have intercultural meetings. Roughly one quarter of the respondents (both principals and teachers) emphasised the need for children to mix and meet. Only then intercultural and inter-religious understanding can be achieved. Moreover, a majority of the peace educators argued that because of the multicultural composition of the Sri Lankan society, there is a need for co-existence; children have to learn how to live together. In the words of a principal of a rural Sinhala medium school: ‘The first thing is that Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese, we all should learn to live together.’ In a group interview with teachers at a rural Tamil medium school it was expressed that: 'They [schools] need to bring children from all ethnic groups together, and show how to respect each others religions and cultures.' (Group interview with teachers at a rural Tamil medium school)

The need for co-existence and for intercultural and inter-religious understanding can directly be linked to two of the what-dimensions that occur in theory, namely the (multi)cultural dimension (6) and the ethnic-religious dimension (9). Similar to the policy and programme level, there is more emphasis on religious issues by Sri Lankan peace educators than in the literature. The findings at the school level therefore support my argument made in the former chapter, that what-dimension 9 should be split up into two dimensions: an ethnic and a religious what-dimension.
Secondly, a small minority of the interviewed peace educators showed their concern for equal treatment and opportunities for all children: ‘The most important thing is to treat everyone equally. Most of these children are from very poor families. But in the school there are no differences. Most of the children are called ‘son’ or ‘daughter’ by the teachers, no differences.’ (Principal of a rural Sinhala medium, mixed religion model school)

This relates to the second what-dimension of ‘social justice and equality’. Although this issue was mentioned in the answers of some of the respondents as the most important element for peace education, later on in the discussion on ‘obstacles and challenges’ it will become clear that ‘social justice and equality’ are not always created by the education system.

Human rights were another important element pointed out by the peace educators. Around a quarter of the respondents referred to either equal ‘rights’, ‘human rights’ or ‘child rights’, as being an important element of peace education. What-dimension 3 also refers to human rights, because also in theory several authors emphasised the need to incorporate human rights. Although it was not mentioned as such by the informants, the last two issues both can be related to the creation of a culture of peace (dimension 5).

The following ‘important element’ which was pointed out by almost half of the peace educators, is the creation of inner-peace. According to the respondents, this can either be formed through religious or through non-religious experiences. A Catholic principal from a rural Sinhala medium, mixed religion model school stated this as follows: ‘I believe that peace should come from within. Through religion you can have this experience.’ According to a Buddhist teacher from an urban English medium school: ‘The most important thing is that children learn to reach within themselves, reaching inner-peace.’

Interestingly, as already discussed in the former chapter, inner-peace is not yet highlighted in the theoretical debate on peace education. So, both the findings from the policy level and the school level help to make a case for the addition of a new what-dimension to present theory: the intrapersonal level.

Fifthly, some principals and teachers underlined the importance of ‘love for others’ and ‘love for nature’, which can be linked to what-dimensions 11 (ecological balance) and 16 (the inter-personal level). Some also linked this to their religious conviction: ‘As a Christian we also teach about love in the Sunday schools. Peace is helping others, thinking of others. And peace is love for the nature, animals and the environment. The environment is very important. We should never spoil it. If I do this (love nature), then peace will come to my heart.’ (Teacher at a rural school)

The next two ‘most important elements of peace education’ were exclusively mentioned by teachers. First of all, several teachers claimed that knowledge of and discussion on the country situation should never be left out of peace education. However, because of the variety of backgrounds of the teachers there were different opinions on the country situation, and on the possible solutions to it. Some teachers thought that children should learn how to create national unity, others emphasised the need to teach about the political situation and different points of views of the warring parties. Del’s contribution to the theoretical discussion about the twin discourses of ‘unity in difference’ and ‘unity in sameness’ deserves some attention here (2005: 282). On the one hand a minority of teachers seemed to emphasise the different opinions present in Sri Lanka, with enough attention to the different communities (unity in
difference). As argued in the theoretical framework, this approach is preferable. On the other hand, another minority of teachers also tended to overemphasise their own (groups’) opinions (unity in sameness). The following two quotes show two different perceptions on how to deal with the country situation in the classroom, both following a ‘unity in sameness’ approach. As expressed by a teacher at an urban Tamil medium school: ‘If we want to bring peace, we need to introduce the federal system. We must teach the students this. Talking about peace is not good enough. The Sinhala majority, they don’t talk about solutions, they talk about “peace.”’ A quote from a principal at a rural Sinhala medium school illustrates that: ‘Children must learn about unity. The important thing is NOT the separation, but unity. Otherwise we waste the time and money. Like East and West Germany, they came together in the end again. So, should we build a wall here? No. The peace concept should be the first thing, but not for a separated country. In a separated country there can be no peace.’

Furthermore, several dimensions are relevant to this part of the findings discussion, namely the political dimension (8), the national level/unity dimension (14) and the inter-group/perceptions level (15). The difference between the perceptions on the country situation, the conflict and possible solutions present in Sri Lanka, on the one hand lead to the political challenge of finding a common set of peace education objectives. On the other hand the issue of national unity was mentioned by more than half of the teachers, mostly coming from the urban and Sinhala dominated areas. The fact that some teachers did not think ‘national unity’ should be part of peace education, reveals a challenge not only for a common approach to peace education, but also for the national peace process. However, as pointed out in the theoretical framework, peace education programmes ideally should be comparative. Students should become aware of the existing different points of view. This again relates to the ‘unity in difference’ approach, which might need more emphasis in the Sri Lankan context.

Secondly, half of the teachers argued that children should learn about relationships with other children; children should learn how to co-operate, problem solving and how to share. A small minority of teachers also highlighted the need to guide children in their development of their talents and self-esteem. These issues touch upon the dimensions 16 (the inter-personal level) and 10 (the emotional dimension). The theoretical inter-personal dimension also includes interpersonal (non-violent) relationships. The development of talents and self-esteem can be linked to the emotional dimension, as well as to the newly found intra-personal dimension, which was not explicitly found in the literature.

To conclude it can be argued that various interpretations of the most important elements of peace education were expressed by the peace educators. Interestingly, the issue of non-violence rarely came to light in the conversations, whereas this issue in the literature was mentioned very often. However, the fact that non-violence was not included in the main perceptions does not have to imply that peace educators in Sri Lanka do not strive for non-violence. Moreover, dimensions 4 (human security), 7 (historical dimensions), 12 (multilevel) and 13 (international/global level) were not mentioned as being one of the
most important elements of peace education. Similar to the policy and programme level, the human security dimension was not mentioned either. The historical and multilevel or global level did get some attention, yet these dimensions were mostly highlighted by resource persons.

As could be expected after reading the theoretical framework and the findings at the policy and programme level, there is not one clear perception of what peace education is according to the peace educators. There is a broad consensus on the positive role schools can play in the process of peace building. As stated by a majority of peace educators, schools are the best place to put into practice peace education. Prior conditions are a peaceful school environment and a co-operating staff (as mentioned by the principals), and peace education should start from a young age, with a long term commitment, using the right curricula and with attention for the country situation (as put forward by teachers). The main focus points of the perceptions of peace education expressed by the peace educators are listed in the table above. As appears from the findings, also at the school level one new what-dimension could be added to the theoretical debate on peace education: the intra-personal level in which a person could reach ‘inner-peace’.

### 6.2 Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?

The next three paragraphs focus on how peace education is implemented, and will help to answer the last three sub questions of this chapter.

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89 An illustration of an indirect link between peace education in Sri Lanka and the international/global level, was expressed by a teacher: ‘I use a very good song from the English textbook of the A-level students about peace and understanding, it is called ‘Heal the world’, by someone called Michael Jackson.’

90 These sub questions can be found at the beginning of this chapter.
3. Teacher training and peace education materials

As became clear from the former chapter, the Ministry and NIE provide peace education training to school-staff in Sri Lanka. Principals and teachers were asked if they received this training. From all the 33 interviewed teachers, only 2 mentioned that they received peace education training while they were still in Teacher College, and 3 stated that they received in-service peace education training. Yet, half of the interviewed principals had such training, but they all belonged to a ‘model school’.

Furthermore, almost all teachers reacted positively to the question whether they would like to receive (more) training on peace education. The teachers who had been to one of the training sessions often expressed that they would prefer more training days. And, maybe even more importantly, several teachers and principals expressed that they would prefer more guidance afterwards. They missed a longer term learning process: The NIE gave the peace education books, but it was limited just for that day. They just selected some people. The NIE develops the curriculum for the schools. Now, they can not just develop lessons on peace. They have to come here and give us the chance to learn, live, eat and sleep together. Then peace will come. But we need more guidance.’

(Principal from a rural Sinhala medium school)

Regardless of their answers on trainings, the issue of peace education material was also taken up, because, as mentioned before, almost all schools received at least one manual on peace education. Sadly, most teachers were unfamiliar with the peace education material that has been provided by NIE. I was often pointed to the librarian of the school ‘who might know about it’.

Interviewer: ‘Did your school receive training on peace education?’

Principal: ‘NIE gave the training on peace education and they have given us books also. ‘Learning the way of peace’, by Balasooriya. But in our system these trainings don’t change the people. That’s the problem. It is just training for 2 to 3 days. This should come from within the staff, not just meeting once. This can’t be injected.’

Interviewer: ‘Have you used these books on peace education?’

Principal: ‘We have not used it to a satisfactory level. We can’t find time, no.’

(Principal from a rural Sinhala medium, mixed religion school)

These quotes also show that this principal argues for a bottom-up approach – discussed as a new how-dimension in the former chapter- in which ideas and initiatives ‘should come from within the staff’.

Finally, some teachers had comments on the way peace education training is offered. One teacher from an urban Tamil medium school told that: ‘Also the lectures from the Ministry are in Sinhala; Tamil and Muslim teachers get a stepmothers treatment. If they demand to conduct it in English, this will not be met. They have to struggle to get training in their own language.’ In a group interview with teachers from a rural Sinhala medium school it became clear that training was wished for also in the more remote areas: ‘No, no training. People just take the decisions from Colombo, but they don’t come here. We would like to receive such training. Such a seminar on peace education would be useful. But the problem is that they do not come here. And for us as teachers it is too far and too much time to go to the seminars.’
In conclusion it can thus be stated that policy and programme efforts regarding peace education training did not have had the intended effects. According to the peace educators, this is due to a lack of (further) guidance after training or after the school received peace education material. Furthermore it was made clear that peace educators who live farther away from Colombo, felt excluded from peace education training and guidance. Lastly, when taking into account the number of teachers who received any pre-service or in-service training on peace education, it can be concluded that not all teachers received such training yet.

4. How is peace education put into practice?
To get insight into this issue, principals and teachers were stimulated to answer (a few of) the following questions: How do children learn about peace? How is peace taught? Can you give examples of what you do with peace education in the classroom? Can you give examples of peace education activities? Through what subjects is peace (education) taught? Moreover, in the next paragraph school and classroom observations are also included in the analysis.

Generally the findings showed a clear consensus: peace education is not a separate subject at Sri Lankan schools. Still, there were a range of interpretations of ‘how peace education should be implemented’ as well as a variety of actual practices. First these interpretations are reviewed, followed by an overview and discussion on the actual practices, and how these relate to the theoretical dimensions.

Interestingly, there was a clear resemblance between the widespread interpretation of peace educators about ‘integration of peace concepts in all/several subjects’ and the similar governmental policy (especially from the Ministry). A majority of the principals and teachers spoke of ‘integrating peace concepts into our regular lessons’. Several teachers also explained how they used lessons in the textbooks to educate about peace: ‘Yes, especially in the primary classes. I will show you. It is in the grade four books, ‘Let’s learn English’. In the books the illustrations show 4 children all the time. All come from different communities. Also in a maths book, also in every lesson 4 children are shown: a Christian girl (UK), a Muslim boy, a Sinhala boy and a Tamil girl. In every subject there are some lessons on unity, different communities, so it is also included in the school curriculum.’ (English teacher at a urban Sinhala medium model school)

Secondly, it was made clear by roughly half of the respondents that ‘talking about peace is not enough’. This relates to an emphasis in the literature on the practical side of peace education, given by Staub, Bar-Tal, Bretherton, Perkins and Harris. The following quotes from Sri Lankan respondents show that peace undeniably should be experienced. In the words of a zonal education officer in an urban area responsible for the primary education section: ‘Peace education activities should learn the children proper peace. Not only verbal peace, but also in practice. We have to develop the concepts by doing peace education activities.’ Moreover, a teacher in an urban English medium school added that: ‘Without using the term ‘peace’, we could certainly reach peace. We should not try to reach just a concept, but we should make them to behave in certain ways.’

Likewise, another respondent emphasised the need to teach children from a young age how to behave in peaceful manners: ‘Small things are important. Sometime small children fall, and they start to cry. The
Thirdly both principals and teachers expressed the importance of extra-curricular activities that support peace education objectives. Examples that were given and shown were for instance peace dramas, paintings for peace, sports meetings and camps. In some of the cases the peace educators argued that these activities should directly be aimed at intercultural and inter-religious meetings for children of different schools and communities. Moreover, it was also expressed by a minority of the respondents that it is preferable if the school would co-operate with the community: ‘[…] schools should also have extra activities, like school boards, extra-curricular activities, awards on peace. The governmental authorities could then help the [government] schools to have these activities. The schools should be more interactive with society and the community.’ (Principal in a rural Sinhala medium school)

Fourthly, different peace educators stated that peace ought to be presented naturally to the students, by using friendly and respectful teaching methods: ‘The children learn how to be friendly and respectful. This way they learn peace, although they do not know it is peace.’ (Young teacher at an urban mixed-religion school)

Fifthly, in 6 of the 8 schools there were visible and mentioned efforts to create a ‘peaceful school environment’. As discussed earlier, a majority of the informants revealed that the school surroundings, the classroom atmosphere and the relations among the staff and between students and the staff are important elements that should be included in peace education. Students are expected to behave in obedient and disciplined manners, and in many cases this also counts for the relationship between teachers and the principal.

Additionally, especially teachers mentioned the issue of languages; peace education should also include a holistic approach in terms of the three languages (Sinhala, Tamil and English). An English language teacher explained that: ‘it is very important to learn all the languages. Only then we can communicate with other races, nations.’ Understanding and communication between the different communities need such a multilanguage control. Finally, in many interviews respondents advocated for education that pays attention to all cultures (in the broadest sense: religion, language, arts, traditions, festivals and customs).

All these interpretation of how peace education should be implemented in Sri Lanka sound quite promising. In order to get an insight into the situation in reality, we will now turn to a number of examples of peace education practices at 8 schools.

Actual practices at the school level

An overview of the wide variety of examples of what actually happens at the school level to put peace education into practice is presented in the table below. The table simultaneously shows the similarities and differences regarding the theoretical how-dimensions.

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91 A picture of one of these paintings can be found at the beginning of the chapter.
92 See the discussion on ‘actual practices’ for an impression of ‘peaceful school environments’ in Sri Lankan schools.
**HOW-DIMENSIONS | Actual peace education practices at the school level in Sri Lanka**

1. **Formal education (integrative approach)**
   - Include ‘peace concepts’ in regular lessons; using textbooks

2. **Non-formal education (additive approach)**
   - Little co-operation with NGOs

3. **Both formal and non-formal education**
   - Mostly through formal education

4. **Long-term commitment**
   - Begin at very young age with teaching about peace
   - Teachers plead for longer term guidance (after training)

5. **Peace education as a separate subject/programme**
   - Consensus: no.

6. **Spread across the curriculum/ Whole school approach**
   - General consensus: yes.
   - Created through daily ‘message’ during morning assemblies
   - Integration of ‘peace concepts’ in all subjects
   - School environment

7. **Community participation**
   - Few examples, sometimes participation of parents

8. **Process of peace building** (political and socio-economic transformations to reduce inequality/enhance HR)
   - Same treatment to all students (at mixed schools)
   - Integration of disabled children (one school only)

9. **Reflective and critical dialogue + media** (national, community and school level)
   - Some examples of debates in the classroom
   - Few examples of discussion on news and political situation

10. **Peaceful and trustful class environment**
    - Creating peaceful school environments (including a nice garden, classrooms, friendly relationships)

11. **Student participation & agency**
    - Helping to develop talents and self-esteem
    - Team-work (in classroom, sports meets, drama competitions)

12. **Engagement in non-violent activities**
    - Drama’s, sports

13. **Deal with trauma and emotions**
    - Care for (family) problems of the children by teachers (mentioned at one school)

14. **Learner-centred and interactive education**
    - Not only tell about but experience peace (only few examples in practice)

15. **Bilingual education**
    - Few examples in reality, despite pleads for inclusion of all three languages

16. **Teacher training**
    - Small amount of teachers and principals received training, lack of guidance

17. **Teach conflict resolution skills**
    - Not mentioned (while this was a UNICEF pilot project in the 90s)

18. **Creativity, humour and play**
    - Arts (drama, paintings)
    - Songs
    - Sports

19. **Create co-operation, tolerance and empathy**
    - Providing opportunities to meet other children
    - Teaching behavioural skills (how to react to each other, how to co-operate, solve problems, share)

**Other peace education activities in Sri Lanka, relating to 2 new how-dimensions:**

- **Exercises for inner-peace**
  - Meditation/relaxation/prayers
  - Developing discipline

- **Bottom-up approach: schools have decision power for own activities and receive support**
  - Celebrating religious festivals
  - School motto’s/songs for school unity
  - Providing meals at school
  - Environmental projects
Some of the mentioned ‘actual practices’ will now be highlighted and illustrated. First of all, we look at some examples of how teachers try to include ‘peace concepts’ in their regular lessons, using the textbooks. English textbooks were more often mentioned by teachers when explaining about ‘lessons on peace’ in textbooks. A secondary level English teacher from a rural Sinhala medium school described how she tries to use the school texts to teach the children ‘about peace’. She showed me the book she uses in her class (Let’s learn English, grade 7). She pointed out the different topics in this book, and how some of them can be related to the creation of ‘peace and understanding’ (the bold chapters in the table of content).

The Table of content of ‘Let’s learn English’ textbook, grade 7:93

Chapter 1  Multicultural understanding

Chapter 2  Environment
  Chapter 3  Health and Nutrition
  Chapter 4  Travel and transport
  Chapter 5  Shopping

Chapter 6  Animals around us

Chapter 7  Personal adventure

Then she demonstrated a story in the textbook which – in her opinion – was a story that could help to explain about the different cultures in Sri Lanka.94 The story tells about a mountain which is a holy place for different pilgrims: ‘Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians alike revere this mountain as a holy place. It has a different meaning to all religions.’95 Although this short tale indeed refers to the different ethnic communities and how all pilgrims were ‘tolerant and understanding’, in my view it is still questionable if this particular story would help to build peace in itself. In my view, such a story would need extra explanations from a teacher in order to make such a lesson more meaningful. As stated by another teacher from the same school: ‘The peace concepts are there [in the textbooks], but we need to emphasise them in the classroom’. When I asked the first teacher how she would use this story in her lesson, she explained that she normally reads the story with the students, and afterwards she tells the children about the different communities in the country and how they should live together. Thus, because this teacher relates this story to current Sri Lankan society, indeed she gives meaning to the story.

Yet, a ‘peace education approach’ in my view would also require active participation of the students. This example shows that in this case the students are not asked to actively and critically think about these issues themselves. After several observations, it can be argued that teachers often just tell the children about peace and understanding, and children do not learn how to ‘act peacefully’. This practical example of the ‘mountain story’ does not correspond to the earlier discussed arguments coming from peace educators, stating that peace should not only be taught, but also experienced. It also does not match

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93 Used by all interviewed schools except for the private school.
94 The story indeed was included in the ‘Multicultural understanding’ chapter
95 Simplified story from Jungle Tide, by John Still (1930)
child-centred teaching methods, or interactive forms of education, which is emphasised in the literature (how-dimension 14).

Alternatively, the following practical example does show a more child-centred teaching method, in which children actively participate. However, different other observations in classrooms made clear that not all teaching practices in the visited schools are very child-centred yet.

The principal of a rural Sinhala medium, mixed religion school (who is also teaching) asked the students about their fears, to write them down and then to have a discussion on it. He translated their fears for me. ‘It is easier for them to write it, than to say it out loud.’ He explains that sometimes their own fears might create racial problems that are present in the society. These small personal problems can cause a barrier to peace, and also barriers to the interrelations with other children. ‘This exercise can show if the personal problems of the children form barriers to peace.’

The students wrote down:
- afraid of parents and teachers (1 girl)
- of the exams (5 girls, 2 boys)\(^\text{96}\)
- someone will beat me (1 boy)
- walking on the road (1 boy)
- darkness (1 boy)
- someone will catch me on the road (1 boy)
- sea (1 girl)
- floods/tsunami (1 girl)
- future (1 girl)
- reading in lessons (1 girl)

Then the principal opened a discussion on these issues. After a few minutes the students started to give their opinions too. The general conclusion of the exercise was that the fears of the children did not create any racial problems. Although one girl mentioned the caste differences, that people will not marry someone from a lower or higher caste, in general students’ personal problems did not relate directly to the ‘racial conflict’.

However, it can be argued that some of these fears do affect the children’s sense of safety (being beaten, dangerous traffic and other disasters). Moreover, their fear for exams, teachers and ‘reading in lessons’ shows there is a lack of self esteem among students, together with a fear for authorities (in this case meaning teachers, principals and parents). One the one hand a lack of self esteem can lead to fear for authorities. This seems to indicate an authoritarian school system, in which high marks and good behaviour are directly linked to a child’s personality. ‘Failure’ to pass exams, or to read out loud perfectly in the classroom, then is an incentive for less self esteem. A high pressure to succeed felt by students can contribute to an uncomfortable and frustrated atmosphere. And even the current unstable situation in the

\(^{96}\) The issue of an exam oriented school system will be further discussed in the following paragraph on ‘obstacles and challenges’
country, together with the frustration on the failing peace talks, can also create a lack of trust and even fear for higher authorities.

Peace education, including respectful and trustful relationships between students and their teachers and principal, could help to overcome such a stressed situation for students in which they only feel the need to pass exams. As mentioned by UNESCO Sri Lanka: ‘with a holistic approach to peace education […] we have to bring back joy into learning.’ Moreover, the CFS approach of UNICEF also touches upon this area of peace education, emphasising the need for peaceful and child friendly school environments, including the parents and the community. The argument to also include parents and the wider society into peace education, in order to create a peaceful living environment for students (compared to a gap between the atmosphere and attitudes at school and at home), is also supported by several authors (Hart (2002), Carson & Lange (in Simpson 2004), Simpson (2004), Davies (2005), Bretherton (2003)). On the other hand, outstanding students can be restricted in their performance, due to the restrictive school environment. Creative and reflective thinking, which should be part of peace education, do not get stimulated. Referring back to the how-dimensions table, this exercise touches upon three of the dimensions, namely student participation & agency (dimension 11), dealing with trauma and emotions (13) and learner-centred and interactive education (14).

Moreover, some examples of how-dimension 9 (reflective and critical dialogue) activities were found. During the fieldwork I encountered a small number of examples of debates in classroom settings. In one situation the class was seated in a fictional court room. Six children acted out the roles of representatives of either the municipality/neighbourhood leaders or the government. The public (the rest of the students) had to give their comments on the discussion afterwards. The principal who tour guided me through the school explained that they used these methods to build critical thinking and dialogue among the students. He also mentioned it was sometimes a hard exercise for the students. And that not too many schools in Sri Lanka used these kinds of activities. A number of teachers at other schools also stated that they discussed the news and political situation of the country. However, due to a lack of time this could not be confirmed through observation.

Additionally, the following passage from my field diary and some pictures provide the reader with an impression of the efforts taken to create peaceful school environments (dimension 10) at a few Sri Lankan schools: [School number 1] ‘The school yard is well kept, there are paintings on the walls and even signboards bowing ‘let’s love the environment’ and ‘let’s make peace’ [see pictures below].

School number 3 has nice and well maintained buildings; there is even a bridge for the students to cross the road safely. Flowers have signs with their names on it. In front of the school there are two big sings with the school statement on it [see picture below]. School number 4 has a typical old fashioned grain storage depot on the school premises. The classrooms are the nicest I’ve seen until now. Paintings and students works are displayed everywhere, and it looks really colourful and friendly [see pictures below]. The open classrooms also appear very nice because of the view from onto the fields, where cows and birds can be seen. There are also religious sites on the school premises; next to the playing ground there is a Buddhist temple. A bit further on there is also a worship place for the Catholic/Christian students. As in many schools I have visited, also here the ‘school dogs’ are present.
[School number 6] The principal’s office is spacious, and there is a computer. The classrooms are not big, tables and chairs are quite old. But there are drawings displayed everywhere. A difference with other schools is the fact that there is a school kitchen which supplies meals. Another thing is that the school children here run around, are active, and have fun in the breaks (to me this seems quite healthy). This is different compared to the girls schools I have visited, were students are praised for their obedience.

The last part of my visit outside of Colombo revealed a somewhat less promising, but probably more representative example. Mr. U. (Zonal Education Officer) showed me something ‘very special, which is very interesting for your research’. The school premise of the biggest school in town - a Sinhala medium school - is separated by a large fence from the neighbouring Tamil medium school; A large sports ground and well kept buildings on one side of the fence, and a small and simple school building on the other side. ‘This is how separated the children live here.’

In short, it can be concluded that a peaceful school environment often included efforts to maintain the school premises (school garden, playground, classrooms and sanitary facilities), and in some schools it also included care for child friendly and colourful classrooms. Interestingly, in the literature there is an emphasis on peaceful classroom environments. Sri Lankan peace educators seem to value a somewhat broader perception of a peaceful school environment more focused on the school surroundings and a school garden. This can be related to the earlier discussed weight given to ‘love for the environment’ as an important element of peace education in Sri Lanka (both at the policy level as well as at the school level). This relates to the views of the authors Selby and Jardine, who view that ecological balance should be the main concern of peace education programmes (Simpson 2004: 5). In three of the schools the peace
educators also explained that a peaceful working environment for teachers and the principal was also a must. A majority of the teachers argued that teachers should be a role model, treating their students correctly. Only one principal and one teacher mentioned the fact that a few teachers were a bad example, using caning or other physical punishment in their classrooms.

Furthermore, several peace educators took efforts to help their students to develop talents and self-esteem. It can be argued that this, together with an emphasis on team-work (in the classroom, sports meets, drama competitions), can help to stimulate student participation and agency (dimension 11). The following quote of a first grade teacher in an urban Sinhala medium school provides a practical example:

‘By displaying the works of the students (drawings etc), the children know the teacher is evaluating and appreciating their work. They then feel happy and satisfied about it. The parents also come and see the students’ works. This way they build up their self confidence, to see their work displayed. And there is also a bit of competition.’ Another teacher at an urban mixed-religion and mixed-medium school gives another example: ‘In the classes, we make mixed working groups, so all nationalities work together. I teach them about respect and how to tolerate other cultures. You should not laugh at them; everyone has the freedom of their own cultures and religions.’

In addition, it was interesting to observe that almost none of the peace educators referred to ‘conflict resolution’ as a way of implementing peace education. Only one teacher explained he tried to teach the students ‘problem solving’. This is quite remarkable, taking into account the huge efforts of the Government and UNICEF in the 90s to implement ‘Education for Conflict Resolution’ on a large scale in Sri Lankan schools.97

Quite a few principals also tried to provide opportunities for their students to meet ‘other children’. I observed a sports meeting were children from different schools were brought together. I was as well told about a variety of other such activities (language camps, more sports meetings, drama competitions) that gave the opportunity for children of different schools (and communities) to meet and mix. These activities can be linked to various how-dimensions: student participation & agency (11), engagement in non-violent activities (12) creativity, humour and play (18) and create co-operation, tolerance and empathy (19).

As mentioned before, both principals and teachers argued that these extra-curricular activities should form an important part of peace education. The majority of the peace educators also stated that one of the most important elements of peace education is to generate possibilities for children to meet and mix. In rhetoric there is thus a consensus on the need for such activities. The divergence between this consensus at the perceptions level and the actual practices is due to a lack of resources to organise such activities. A number of peace educators, as well as a zonal education officer, therefore argued for more funds from the government in order to finance extra curricular activities. It is fascinating to see a clear communication-gap between policy and practice here. On the one hand the Ministry tries to give zonal education officers opportunities to come up with proposals for extra curricular activities for peace for schools in their zone. As expressed in chapter 5, few proposals are however submitted, and the quality of

97 For more details see chapter 5, ‘actions of donors’.

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these is often low. On the other hand there is a need for such funds by the peace educators at the schools, but they can’t find the right path to apply for funds. The Ministry expressed their plans for training the zonal education officers, in order to improve those proposals (only then funds can be provided). In my view, it is then also needed to create a better co-operation and communication between the schools and the zonal education offices. Only then the extra-curricular peace education initiatives of the schools can be stimulated and realised.

In a few cases parents participated in such activities, whereas the majority of teachers complained about a lack of parental participation at their school. As a result, how-dimension 7 (community participation) in most of the schools included in this research seemed to be a challenge rather than an accomplishment.

Another example of actual peace education practices is related to the theoretical how-dimension 8 regarding the process of peace building (including the reduction of inequalities and enhancement of human rights). During the fieldwork, I encountered several schools were the staff tried to create unity among the student, and where teachers and principals highlighted the importance of equal treatment of all students. One teacher from an urban mixed religion, mixed medium model school explained how they try to create unity among the children from different communities at the school: ‘during the morning assembly the children practice their own prayers. But, after the prayers, all children start to sing the school song together. They all feel the same then.’ Only one teacher from an urban English medium school touched upon the issue of human rights enhancement: ‘Everyone has a right to free existence. Everyone should enjoy human rights. All children should be educated to become peaceful citizens.’

At another urban Sinhala medium model school, the special education children were integrated in the regular classes as much as possible. One of the teachers explained that: ‘It is better this way for these children if they go into society. These extra-teachers also work very very hard to help them’. The children with hearing aids and other handicaps are seated in the back of the classroom, with their own teacher to help them. The teacher further made clear that the staff thought it was good for all students to integrate; therefore also the disabled children should be included: ‘we give equal treatment to all students here’.

Moreover, at different schools there were some practices that aimed at teaching behavioural skills (how to react to each other, how to co-operate, how to solve problems and how to share). These efforts clearly link to the theoretical how-dimension 19 (co-operation, tolerance and empathy for ‘the other’). The following observation of a first grade lesson at a rural Sinhala medium school illustrates this: The children have to come one by one to the blackboard, to draw a figure. At the end they have all collaborated to make a drawing. She explains, ‘now the lesson becomes meaningful because they now made it together’. Moreover, a teacher at an urban English medium school explained: ‘In the class I am trying to get the students not to discriminate anyone. You can be a weak or an intelligent student, still we are all alike. The main thing is sharing, understanding each others problems.’

Finally, I will now present some examples of practices which not directly relate to the how-dimensions that are derived from theory (they can be found at the bottom of the how-dimensions table). Still, these activities were said to be part of Sri Lankan peace education. These activities can be divided according to the two new how-dimensions that were revealed in the former chapter: the first one being
‘meditation and relaxation for inner-peace’ and secondly the ‘bottom-up approach’ in which schools have decision-making power over and receive support for their own peace education initiatives. In this sense, these examples of implementation of peace education could also be added to present literature on peace education. A few of these examples are now shortly discussed.

First of all, a minority of the Sri Lankan peace educators explained that developing discipline and obedience among the students also was part of peace education. It was argued that through discipline and obedience, children learn how to control themselves, and behave in respectful and peaceful manners. This could then contribute to the creation of inner-peace and control. One example comes from an urban mixed girls-boys school (Sinhala medium). At the school premises there were stairs everywhere, because the school is situated on a hill. A teacher explains that ‘discipline and regulations here make sure the boys and girls take different stairways, because sometimes they can do mysterious things, no?’ This teacher clarified that it was very important for the girls and boys to have this discipline, because otherwise ‘difficult situations’ (probably meaning love affairs) could occur. In her view this would not contribute to a peaceful and respectful atmosphere. Another first grade teacher at the same school showed me another example of learning discipline. She described that she taught that discipline should be taught to young children, so that they learn ‘how to behave in a social way’: ‘Look, the children all go outside and wash their hands and their plate. They might not learn this at home, but here they are trained to wash their plate.’ (Primary school teacher, after the midday meal)

It is worth mentioning here that the authors Bush & Saltarelli would certainly not agree with these ideas: ‘Lessons […] where rules must be obeyed without question undercut children’s confidence and inhibit their participation as active members of their society’ (2000: 21, 33).

Before we discuss the main obstacles and challenges according to Sri Lankan peace educators, a few other examples of Sri Lankan peace education practices relating to the ‘bottom-up approach’ deserve to be mentioned here. Peace educators explained and showed a wide variety of peace education activities at their schools, including environmental projects, joined celebration of religious festivals (at mixed religion schools as well as different single medium schools together), the provision of school meals and all sorts of camps and competitions. However, as discussed before, often these initiatives could not happen due to a lack of funds.

5. Challenges

Although this research is not an evaluation of peace education practices in Sri Lanka, as stated in chapter 4, it is however still possible to give some insights into current challenges at the school level. Surprisingly, many peace educators included in this research came up with interesting insights into present challenges regarding peace education. Even some structural challenges that were not mentioned at the policy level
came to light in the conversations with peace educators.\textsuperscript{98} Thus, this research confirms the argument that perceptions and actions at the grassroots level can be of great value for development related research.

With the intention of a concise presentation of the findings, the main challenges are presented in the challenges-table below. The table also shows by whom these challenges were mentioned.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{CHALLENGES} & \textbf{ACTORS} \\
& Teachers & Principals & Z-E-O \\
\hline
PEACE EDUCATION CAN'T SUCCEED ON ITS OWN & & & \\
\hline
A) STRUCTURAL & & & \\
1. Country situation & X & X & X \\
2. Poverty (development) & X & X & \\
3. Lack of open dialogue & X & & \\
B) EDUCATION SYSTEM & & & \\
4. Separated school system & X & X & X \\
5. Exam oriented system & X & & \\
6. Cultural exclusive textbooks & X & & \\
7. Lack of teachers & resources & X & X & X \\
8. Resistance of parents & X & & \\
9. Teaching three languages & X & X & X \\
TRAINEING AND SUPPORT FOR ALL & & & \\
10. Long term guidance & X & X & X \\
11. Materials not used & X & & \\
12. Training in remote areas & X & X & X \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

From all the discussions I had, I would like to conclude two main thoughts (which can also be found in the challenges table). The first one is that \textbf{peace education cannot succeed on its own}, and the second is that \textbf{peace education training and support} should be available for all peace educators.

According to the majority of peace educators in Sri Lanka, peace education cannot succeed on its own, since there are nine main challenges that have to be addressed. The first three are all structural challenges. First, almost half of the respondents spoke about the need for peace at the national level. With absence of peace in society, these teachers expressed their doubts on the effectiveness of peace education. A zonal education officer from an urban area explained: ‘[…] unless we develop economically, spiritually we can’t build peace. War and violence break down normal life. The tension in people creates diseases. Then there is also no use to teach about peace.’ In the literature it is also argued by Bush & Saltarelli (among others) that peace education needs a multilevel approach. Demilitarisation is needed internationally, nationally and locally (2000: 30). This relates to the majority opinion of teachers that \textit{first} there needs to be a genuine commitment at the national level to peace, in order for peace education at the school level to be successful.

\textsuperscript{98}The concluding chapter \textsuperscript{7} will give a comparison of the challenges mentioned at the policy and programme level and in practice.
Second, particularly teachers mentioned the issue of poverty, being an obstacle for peace education at school. ‘How can we teach our children about peaceful behaviour, if their parents have so many problems and fights at home?', a teacher at an urban mixed religion school mentioned. This challenge is also mentioned by the author Shapiro, who states that in order to create a culture of peace, peace education should address issues such as poverty and the growing polarisation of income and wealth (Shapiro-II: 3).

Third, a minority of teachers and principals outlined another society-wide challenge, namely a lack of or even fear for open dialogue. In the words of a Tamil language teacher at an urban school: ‘We don’t really talk about politics. Peace is also a sensitive issue. We can’t talk! That is why this society is so polarised, even this staff is polarised. Peace and politics, you just can’t separate. People can’t open their mouths. The freedom of speech is seriously under threat.’

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, Reardon emphasizes the importance of peace education programmes to start at the primary level, because this learning stage is often bypassed when looking at sensitive and controversial issues (both authors in Simpson 2004: 2, 6). This indeed was true for one of the visited schools: ‘We don’t like to go deep into the peace topic. When speaking with the children about what they experienced, we are scared we might find out who did something wrong. We just talk of it without taking sides. Only in the last grades we discuss more peace topics with the students.’ (Group interview with teachers at an urban Tamil medium school)

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, peace education frequently needs to cope with a context of animosity, fear and belligerence. According to the author Bar-Tal, this would require the support of the whole education system, politicians, the media and members of the involved community, which is hard to get during or right after active conflict (in Salomon 2003: 7, 10). Indeed this seems to be hard to get in present day Sri Lankan society.

The following challenges all relate to the current education system in Sri Lanka. So, fourth, the separated school system was another interesting structural challenge that was mentioned by principals, teachers and zonal education officers. It is argued in the literature that interaction between members of opposing groups can indeed lead to a reduction in prejudice and hostility’ (in: Tal-Or, Boninger, Gleichner 2002: 90; Kadushin and Livert 2002: 120). In Sri Lanka, children with the same backgrounds often go to the same schools, also because their language is the main medium of instruction there. Consequently, children of different communities do not get many chances to meet each other: ‘First we have to change the school system; we have to live together. Like a husband and wife live together. One day they wake up and they know how to live peacefully and lovingly together.’ (Principal of a rural Sinhala medium school)

Due to the majority population of Buddhist Sinhalese, most schools use the Sinhalese medium of instruction. The schools that do offer their lessons in Tamil or English medium are mostly exceptions to the rule: ‘If there has to be peace in schools there has to be more integration, in the sense that children are treated equally everywhere. There are some schools that both have Tamil and Sinhala languages. But most schools will only show you one side of the coin.’ (Teacher at an urban English medium school, former teacher at a Sinhala medium government school)
According to the authors Bush & Saltarelli, quality education - including more equitable and democratic school systems – is a must for effective peace education. In their view, school systems therefore need to change, to facilitate genuine possibilities for effective peace education programmes. With the current system in which children are mostly segregated, ‘social justice and equality’ – needed in peace building processes (how-dimension 8) - are not always created. These authors thus as well advocate the ‘de-segregation of the minds of formerly segregated’ (2000: 16).

Fifth, both teachers and principals complained that the exam oriented system does not leave enough room for the integration of peace education into the regular subjects. A principal at a rural Sinhala medium, mixed religion school used the words: ‘The parents also just want their children to pass the exams. The system is like that, parents are very much exam oriented. The teachers have to go with the demands of the parents, and also with those of the department [Ministry of Education]. They evaluate the schools on the outcomes of the tests. Not on anything else. The teachers tend to go with this. Just to make the students pass the test. The author Simpson agrees that the pressure teachers face while meeting curriculum standards forms a challenge for the implementation of peace education (2004: 7).

Sixth, a few teachers criticised some of the textbooks (mostly the Social Studies books) of being cultural exclusive. As discussed in the former chapter, this opinion was also expressed by several academics. According to these teachers, there was not enough attention for minority language, history and culture. Interestingly, the majority of teachers expressed their approval of most textbooks, because they included ‘lessons on peace and understanding’.

Seventh, there was consensus on the fact that a lack of resources and teachers form a general challenge for the education system, and thus also for effective peace education. However, two of the visited model schools expressed they had enough educational material, often provided by NGOs.

Eight, a minority of the teachers and two principals spoke of a negative attitude from parents towards mixed cultural or religious festivities. Some parents did not like the fact that their child would participate in festivities related to other than their own religion. This corresponds with the arguments put forward in theory, that children can become confused if taught conflicting moral frameworks in school and home.99 In 2 schools, parents also rejected to participate themselves in such activities, when they were invited by the schools. The authors Hart (2002), Baxter & Ikobwa (2005), Davies (2005) and the INEE (2006) stress the importance of parental en community participation in peace education programmes (how-dimension 7). Moreover, a few teachers also explained that a lot of the parents are uneducated, and do not stimulate their children enough to learn.

Finally, the language issue discussed before forms a very interesting structural challenge, which was brought up by more than half of the respondents at the school level. Since learning all three languages is perceived as an important way to successfully implement peace education, this challenge deserves more

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attention from the policy level.\textsuperscript{100} Interestingly, there is still little attention for bilingual education in relation to peace education in theory.

Additionally, based on the conversations with peace educators, I would like to argue that peace education training and support should be available for all peace educators in Sri Lanka. Although several serious attempts from the policy level have taken place to provide pre- and in-service trainings, a large amount of teachers and principals (especially in remote areas) have not received any training or guidance on peace education yet. Moreover, it was expressed by almost half of the teachers that they not only would like to receive training, but as well longer term guidance. Two principals as well explained that training for one or a few days cannot change teachers’ behaviour and skills enough. Founded on the interviews and observations, it can also be argued that the available peace education material was not or very rarely used in all the schools included in this research. Thus, in order to stimulate the effective implementation of peace education in Sri Lanka, the challenges of training and support for all, and effective use of available materials need to be addressed. This argument corresponds with arguments used in the literature. In the theoretical framework it was shown that Bar-Tal articulates that the success chances of peace education are teacher dependent, and therefore training programmes for peace educators are a necessity (2002: 33), and Bretherton states that unless teachers - next to the material support - receive a detailed but clear training on how to use it, they are unlikely to put peace education into practice (2003: 16-17).

Earlier in the theoretical chapter, it was already argued that peace education cannot succeed on its own, and for this reason has to be integrated into a wider process of peace building. It is fascinating to see that Sri Lankan peace educators revealed a similar challenge for peace education as the authors Shapiro and Bush & Saltarelli showed: structural inequalities and power relations need to be addressed. According to the respondents of this research, inequalities are caused by the segregated school system, language barriers, poverty and biased school texts. Additionally there still lies a challenge in providing long term training and support to all potential peace educators in Sri Lanka.

Concluding words on chapter 6

Paragraph 1 and 2 answer the first sub question: What are the perceptions of peace educators on peace education? Although there is consensus among peace educators that schools can help to bring peace in Sri Lanka, there are various perceptions on the most important elements that should be included in peace education.\textsuperscript{101} Similar to the findings of the policy/programme level, one new what-dimension could be added to the theoretical debate on peace education: the intra-personal level in which a person could reach ‘inner-peace’.

Paragraph 3 on teacher training and peace education materials reflects on the second sub question: Do peace educators implement the policies, programmes and support material offered by the policy-making and

\textsuperscript{100}See the recommendations part in chapter 7 for a further discussion.

\textsuperscript{101}An overview of these most important elements is given in the table in paragraph 2.
programme-making level? Based on the interviews with peace educators, two factors lead to the conclusion that the efforts at the policy and programme level regarding peace education training did not have had the intended effects: first there is a failure to reach all potential peace educators, and second is the lack of (further) post-training guidance for peace educators who did receive training. Thus, the majority of the peace educators did not receive peace education training, and are also unfamiliar with the available peace education material. However, there are some clear similarities between the perceptions and actions of policy and programme makers and peace educators. This could indicate that a minority of the peace educators, probably the ones that did receive training, are informed about current policies and programmes.

Paragraph 4 explains how peace education is put into practice, and helps to answer sub question 3: Do peace educators develop their own strategies to implement forms of peace education? Although there is a lack of training and guidance, interviews and observation show not only the intention to implement peace education but also a range of actual practices coming from principals and teachers. Interestingly, the Sri Lankan peace education practices at schools provide us with some new ideas on how to put peace education into practice, leading to the two new how-dimensions which were also uncovered at the policy/programme level. The new dimensions ‘exercises for inner peace’ and ‘a bottom-up approach’ could form a basis for further discussion on context specific ways to implement peace education successfully.

Finally the fifth paragraph answers sub question 5: What are the main challenges for peace education according to peace educators and zonal education officers? Two main thoughts summarise the mentioned challenges\(^\text{102}\): the first one is that peace education cannot succeed on its own, and the second is that peace education training and support should be available for all peace educators.

According to the authors Bush & Saltarelli who argue for peace building education, school systems that create inequality need changes such as: ‘curriculum adaptation, bilingual teaching, after school or weekend classes, improvements in teacher training, and recruitment and training of teachers from all identity groups’ (2000: 31). The reader may notice that these issues were all discussed in this chapter on the perceptions and actions of peace educators in Sri Lanka. This leads to the conclusion that a majority of the interviewed peace educators seem to argue for peace building education instead of a more narrowly defined conceptualisation peace education.

\(^{102}\) A synopsis of these challenges is given in the challenges table.
Chapter 6 in a nutshell

6.1 Perceptions: what is peace education?
- § 1 Consensus: schools can help to build peace in Sri Lanka.
- § 2 Most important elements of peace education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important elements (P=principals, T=teachers)</th>
<th>What-dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Intercultural/inter-religious understanding; need to mix &amp; meet</td>
<td>6 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Co-existence: learning to live together</td>
<td>6 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Equal treatment and opportunities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Equal (human) rights</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Creating inner-peace (through religious and non-religious ways)</td>
<td>new dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&amp;T Peace is love for others and nature</td>
<td>11 &amp; 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Teaching about country situation</td>
<td>8, 14 &amp; 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Inter-personal relationships: co-operation and sharing</td>
<td>10 &amp; 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Majority opinion: schools are the best place to put into practice peace education. Pre-conditions are:
  - a peaceful school environment and a co-operating staff (mentioned by the principals)
  - starting peace education from a young age
  - a long term commitment
  - using the right curricula (a teachers’ argument)
  - with attention for the country situation (as put forward by teachers).
- **One new what-dimension** could be added to the theoretical debate on peace education: the intra-personal level in which a person could reach ‘inner-peace’.

6.2 Actions: how is peace education implemented or should it be implemented?
- § 3 Training efforts at the policy and programme level did not have had the intended good effects:
  - failure to reach all potential peace educators,
  - a lack of (further) post-training guidance for peace educators who did receive training
  - no usage of available peace education materials

- § 4 Often without any training, peace educators in Sri Lanka do have the intention to implement peace education. New ways to implement peace education lead to **two new how-dimensions** (also revealed by the policy and programme-making actors):
  - **Exercises for inner-peace**: Meditation/relaxation/prayers
    - Developing discipline
  - **Bottom-up approach** with decision-making power and support for schools’ own peace activities
    - Celebrating religious festivals
    - School motto’s/songs for school unity
    - Providing food at school
    - Environmental projects

- § 5 answers sub question 5: *What are the main challenges for peace education according to peace educators and zonal education officers?*
  - Peace education cannot succeed on its own
  - Peace education training and support should be available for all peace educators
  - The **challenges table** provides an overview of the challenges mentioned by the peace educators.
Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

'We should end this meeting with a positive note: we are all people with peaceful hearts here. We need to keep the faith and hang on. Peace is a struggle, just like justice and freedom.'

(UNESCO’s country director at the end of the first joint meeting on peace education 28th of March 2006)
Chapter 7  Conclusions and Recommendations

Research question:

What are peace educators’, programme-makers’ and national/international policy-makers’ perceptions of peace education in Sri Lanka, and what are their related actions?

- Policy-making actors = government (NIE + Ministry of Education) & donors
- Programme-making actors = NGOs
- Resource persons = academics and (former) consultants on peace education/building
- Peace educators = school principals, teachers and zonal education officers

The final chapter of this research answers the main research question presented above. Although the answers to all sub questions together help to form the answer to the main question, this chapter will not merely repeat the answers to these sub questions, which were already presented in conclusions of the former chapters. Additionally, the textboxes at the end of every chapter provides the reader with a quick overview of the content.

This chapter first presents a comparison of the main findings of the policy/programme level, and the school level. The most important links to theory are made explicit here as well. The focus in this discussion lays on the challenges mentioned in chapters 5 and 6, since these help to think about and clarify further steps in the development of peace education in Sri Lanka. The second part of the chapter will highlight the most outstanding findings and conclusions of this research. Finally, some attention is given to recommendations for further research in the field of peace education.

7.1  Policy and practice: similarities and differences

What is peace education according to the actors at the policy/programme level and at the school level?

The views of the respondents which were expressed in the interviews demonstrate a wide variety of perceptions, each highlighting one or a few of the what-dimensions which were derived from theory. Since there was a common emphasis on the role of religion in peace education initiatives at both levels, the ethnic-religious what-dimension should be divided into two dimensions: a religious dimension and a ethnic dimension. Moreover, interviews at both levels confirm my argument that perceptions of Sri Lankan peace education add a new what-dimension to present theory: the intra-personal level, which intends to create inner-peace. A new list of what-dimensions looks as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What-Dimensions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Non-violence</td>
<td>10. Religious dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social justice &amp; equality</td>
<td>11. Emotional dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Culture of peace</td>
<td>14. Global/international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (Multi) cultural dimension</td>
<td>15. National level: unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Historical dimension</td>
<td>16. Inter-group level: perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Political dimension</td>
<td>17. Inter-personal level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is interesting to note that the perceptions of the policy/programme actors in many ways were similar to those of the peace educators. Sri Lankan actors in the field of peace education generally argued for peace education focusing on a culture of peace (within the school, dimension 5), the multicultural dimension (6), the religious dimension (10), (love for) the environment (what-dimension 12), the national level (15), on inter-group relations (dimension 16), inter-personal relations (17) and on the intra-personal level (18). Compared to theory, the environment related what-dimension 11 is emphasised far more in the Sri Lankan case than by authors of present day literature. Moreover, the following what-dimensions were mentioned at both levels, but not by the majority of the respondents: 1 (non-violence), 2 (social-justice and equality), 3 (human rights), the political level (8), on the ethnic dimension (9), and the emotional dimension (11). Interestingly, whereas the multicultural dimension is generally emphasised at both levels, the related ethnic dimension was not highlighted as strong, probably because ‘ethnicity’ is a more difficult issue to address, for instance by NGOs. Additionally, although the multicultural what-dimension (6) is perceived as an important element for peace education, in practice there is still a need for a ‘unity in difference’ approach instead of the often used ‘unity in sameness’ approach by peace educators.

Some interesting differences between the perceptions at the policy/programme and school level can also be highlighted. As for the national level (dimension 15), it is worth noting here that the (Sinhala majority) policy level focused on the creation of national unity, together with a group of (mostly) Sinhalese peace educators. Others (several NGO workers, resource persons, and a number of peace educators) emphasised the need for teaching about the country situation and national politics in a more comparative way, not only relating to the national level (15) but also to the political dimension (8) and the inter-group level (16). Taking into account the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic composition of the Sri Lankan society, and its implications for the current unstable situation, I would like to argue that such a comparative approach should also be promoted at the policy level.

Some of the theoretical what-dimensions received little attention from the respondents, and in my view need to become focal points for Sri Lankan peace education too: the historical dimension 7 (only brought up by resource persons and only a few peace educators) and the multilevel approach including the global/international level (only mentioned by resource persons and UNESCO).

As stated in the theoretical framework, the author Ardizzone argues that the relevancy of peace education not just derives from its perspective on outbreaks of war, violence and terrorism, but on its attempts to address structural threats to human security (2001: 2). Human security according to the UNDP (1994) is: ‘safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life’ (in Zambelli, date unknown). Yet, the term human security (what-dimension 4) was not mentioned as such in any of the interviews conducted for this research. On the one hand this can be clarified by the fact that the term is part of an international jargon.

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103 This part of the discussion refers to the new list of what dimensions.
104 See chapter 5 for more details on why NGOs cannot always speak ‘directly’ of the ethnic problems. In the same chapter it was also argued by an NGO worker that peace education promoted by the government also not directly deals with the issue of ethnicity.
105 These dimensions are highlighted in yellow in the textbox.
rarely used in practice. On the other hand, it can be argued that resource persons and peace educators indirectly did mention the issue of human security, when discussing the structural challenges within society that form barriers to successful peace education: poverty, family problems, a lack of open dialogue and the need for peace at the national level. Moreover, UNICEF’s CFSs should provide welfare services to their staff and students, which indirectly also addresses human security issues.

**How is peace education – or how should it be – implemented?** As with the perceptions, a broad mixture of actions and related how-dimensions of Sri Lankan peace education actors are revealed in this research. Some similarities and differences between both levels are now discussed. Peace education in Sri Lanka is implemented mostly through the formal system, since most children and youth are in school, and due to a limited space for NGOs to operate in. Both the policy and practical level showed consensus on the need for a whole school approach (6), in which peace education is implemented in all subjects, as well as in the ‘school culture and environment’. Moreover, half of the policy and programme-making actors accentuated how-dimensions 7 (community participation) and dimension 8 (a peace building process), and a small majority argued for the integration of how-dimension 9, on ‘reflective and critical dialogue/media’. In contrast, the school level only showed a few examples of these three dimensions. Similar to the little attention given in the literature, only a minority of the respondents at both levels highlighted how-dimension 13 (dealing with trauma and emotions). Furthermore, there is a link between the focus of the perceptions at the policy and programme level on national unity (what-dimension 14) and especially the Ministries actions (policy and material) on this issue. Only little attention was paid to the issue of different languages in the policies at the national level. And although a majority of peace educators perceptions argued for ‘the teaching of three languages’ as an important element for successful peace education, in reality only a few examples exist. The majority of actors at the policy/programme level emphasised the need for school-staff training for successful implementation of peace education (relating to how-dimension 16 on teacher training). On the contrary, in practice it became clear that only a small minority of peace educators received such training. How-dimension 17 on conflict resolution skills is a focus point for the majority of policy/programme-makers; on the contrary this was rarely mentioned by peace educators. How-dimension 19 (creation of co-operation, tolerance and empathy) is an important element for peace education actions both at the policy/programme level and the school level. Finally, the table below shows that both the findings of the policy/programme level and from the school level revealed two new how-dimensions, which can be added to current debate as examples of ways to implement peace education.

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106 This is also shown in the challenges table below.
107 The language issue is further discussed in the challenges part.
Both from theory and in practice it became clear that peace education is not only conceptually a complex phenomenon; it is also a complexity in itself to put successful and effective peace education into practice. Therefore, I plead for an interdisciplinary approach to peace education, especially in the complex reality of Sri Lanka. This is supported by Bush & Saltarelli, who argue that: ‘complex and multidimensional problems must be matched with multifaceted responses’ (2000: 33). In line with both theory and the challenges revealed in practice by Sri Lankan actors, it can be stated that peace education cannot succeed on its own.

Bearing in mind the research findings, many Sri Lankans in the peace education field define, try to act upon and wish for peace education in a broad sense. Therefore, Sri Lankan approaches to peace education can be related to what Bush & Saltarelli called ‘peace building education’, focusing on education in its broadest sense, including ‘formal and non-formal education, content and teaching methods, arts and sciences and [learner]-centred education’. Moreover, peace building education needs a holistic approach, as part of a broader process of peace building: ‘[it] cannot be restricted to the classroom, it needs community projects involving children and adolescents from across ethnic borderlines, and even inter-ethnic economic development projects (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: v, 23, 27). Similar approaches were promoted by approximately half of the respondents of the policy/programme level. Unfortunately, although the perceptions of peace educators also support ‘peace building education’, in reality peace education practices are not part of a wider process of peace building in Sri Lanka yet. A national co-ordinated plan, with room for decision-making power of schools, could help to establish a holistic peace building education approach in Sri Lanka.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New activities/how-dimensions in Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Promoted by Policy/Programme actors:</th>
<th>Examples in practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercises for inner-peace</td>
<td>NIE, UNESCO, UNICEF, GTZ, 2 NGOs, 1 consultant</td>
<td>Meditation/relaxation/prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom-up approach: decision-making power &amp; support for schools' own peace education activities</td>
<td>MoE (via zonal education officers), GTZ, 3 NGOs</td>
<td>Developing discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Celebrating religious festivals</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>School motto’s/songs for school unity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing meals at school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 Challenges and steps forward

When presenting recommendations on a topic as sensitive and challenging as peace education, humility is required. Therefore the ‘steps forward’, originating from the challenges, might be rather viewed as suggestions from my side, based upon the views of peace education actors in Sri Lanka. The challenges table below combines the views of policy/programme actors and peace educators, and gives a comprehensive overview of present challenges for peace education in Sri Lanka.
First of all, the table shows that the majority of all respondents view ‘shortcomings’ as major challenges for peace education in Sri Lanka. Three of the shortcomings were mentioned relatively often, including a lack of resources – both material and person wise – and a lack of sustainability, focused on the need for long term commitment and follow-up and guidance after training. As shown in the how-dimensions table in chapter 2, the argument for long term commitment is supported by many authors. Moreover, both structural challenges and challenges related to the current education system in Sri Lanka were mentioned. It can be argued that these challenges all support the statement that ‘peace education cannot succeed on its own’. Three challenges, all with reference to the education system, received special attention: the segregated and unequal system, the language barrier and the exam-oriented system. It is interesting to note that these challenges were mentioned by (a combination) of all actors, except for the governmental institutions.

This leads to the conclusion that especially actors the policy level should try to address structural and educational challenges. Implementation of peace education thus can only be successful when taking into account the underlying challenges that create the framework in which peace education has to grow. In addition, steps forward could be taken when the mentioned shortcomings are addressed. This would mean
joint efforts to overcome the current lacks of resources. The government, together with donors and NGOs could co-operate to provide required material. Besides, this would also mean the integration of available resource persons, together with training for present persons in charge. Added to this, a general and long term commitment to peace education at all levels, including training and guidance for all peace educators, could help to create sustainability of peace education initiatives. And finally, as argued by several of the respondents at the policy and programme level, co-operation and co-ordination through a national plan for peace education is needed. It has to be taken into account that such a process would incorporate large efforts from all actors at the policy and programme level, and that it takes time to create such a ‘coalition for peace education’. Within a co-ordinating body, the governmental institutions should have a leading role and take up their ownership in the field of peace education. Moreover, I would like to argue that at the local level co-operation and communication between the schools and the zonal education offices is needed. Only than the earlier discussed ‘bottom-up approach’ can be successful, since zonal education officers in the current system have to apply for governmental funds for extra-curricular peace education initiatives of the schools in their region.

7.3 Peace education in Sri Lanka: in peace or in pieces?

Obviously, peace education’s main aim is to create peace, and not ‘pieces’, which represents the opposite. Based on the findings of this research, generally all perceptions and actions regarding peace education in Sri Lanka indeed aim for the creation of peace. However, many of the current challenges undermine this goal, leaving large parts of the students and the country ‘in pieces’.

Recalling the argument that the conclusions and textboxes in chapters 5 and 6 provide the reader with an elaborate answer to the main research question, this last chapter will restrain from a mere summary of the findings. Hence, in this conclusion I would like to highlight three of the most outstanding findings and conclusions of this research.

First of all, this research shows a wide variety of peace education initiatives in Sri Lanka. Yet, especially at the policy and programme level, there is almost no co-operation and co-ordination between the different actors involved in the peace education field. A national plan, including a joint co-ordinating body with a leading role for governmental institutions, could be a step forward in the development and implementation of peace education in Sri Lanka.

Secondly, based on the findings it can be concluded that the perceptions and actions of peace educators at the school level form a valuable contribution to research on peace education. Especially when taking into account that most structural challenges to peace education were brought forward by peace educators, and rarely by the respondents at the policy and programme level. Thus, peace educators in Sri Lanka in a way can be viewed as experts on peace education, because they are especially aware of present barriers to successful peace education in practice. In addition, I would like to argue that peace educators should be involved in a bottom-up approach for peace education, which was revealed as a new how-dimension for this research. During the fieldwork, it became clear to me that almost every Sri Lankan citizen, either working at the policy level or at the local levels, is conscious of its identity, of the
conflict and of related power relations within Sri Lankan society. This helps to clarify why Sri Lankan educators identified structural challenges (the unstable country situation, poverty and lack of open dialogue), which in a way all relate to the current reality in which they live. Additionally, the value of resource persons’ views has to be mentioned here, since they exclusively revealed a number of important structural and educational challenges.

Finally, the findings of this research uncovered a new intra-personal what-dimension, combined with a new how-dimension – exercises for inner-peace. Since these new dimensions are not or rarely discussed in current literature on peace education included in the theoretical framework of this research, they can be added to existing theory on peace education, especially when discussing the case of Sri Lanka. Interestingly, the issue of inner-peace might seem somewhat non-academic to some. Based on the findings of this research, I would like to argue that peace education – including the intra-personal dimension - is not only suitable for the Sri Lankan context. Especially the contemporary highly individualised and often multicultural societies in richer countries, such as the United States or European countries like the Netherlands, show more and more violence and conflicts within schools and societies.108 Such violent acts seem to originate from personal frustration, powerlessness and a lack of self control of individuals, exactly those aspects addressed by the intra-personal level of peace education which develops inner-peace. Since inner-peace is not only created with the help of teachers of primary and secondary education, it is important to include early childhood development and also the wider community and parents in peace education approaches (how-dimension 7).109 Moreover, violence and protest are also the result of structural societal problems, including unequal opportunities, discrimination and racist ideas. In this case, peace education - although it might use a different label - could be of great importance to reduce social tensions and to enhance understanding and harmony within multicultural societies (such as the Dutch). Besides, since peace education cannot succeed on its own, it needs to be integrated into a wider process of peace building, including socio-economic and political approaches for peace and social justice. Thus, the value of peace education - including the newly found intra-personal dimension – not only applies to the Sri Lankan society, but crosses borders.

108 A rise of violence at schools is for instance discussed by the author Harber (2002 & 2004).
109 Early childhood development was only mentioned by one resource person in Sri Lanka and several peace educators, thus it can be argued that this deserves more attention especially at the policy and programme level.
7.4 Recommendations for further research

As discussed in the introductions and the theoretical framework: **peace education is an active field in need for research.** As argued above, research should not only focus on the policy and programme level. Peace educators working at the school level should be also incorporated, since their views and actions are essential for a complete overview of the situation and give insight into present challenges that need to be addressed. The former officer responsible for peace education at NIE, an author of various peace education publications – S.A. Balasooriya – also argues for more research on peace education in Sri Lanka, stimulating ‘the capability and commitment of school personnel to analyse their own practices’ (Balasooriya 2004: 408). Besides, since the views of children and youth on peace education can also reveal valuable insights, these should also be incorporated in further researches. Moreover, each challenge for peace education in Sri Lanka presented above could form a motive for further research on the state of peace education at that point, uncovering steps to be taken ahead.
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