FUNDING, EVALUATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN EXTRACURRICULAR PEACE EDUCATION

FINANȚARE, EVALUARE ȘI SUSTENABILITATE ÎN EDUCAȚIA EXTRACURRICULARĂ PENTRU PACE

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Ebrima BARRY,
PhD, School of Education,
Central China Normal University
E-mail: *ebrimabarry55@gmail.com*

Rezumat. *Această lucrare explorează modul în care programele extracurriculare de educație pentru pace sunt finanțate, evaluate și susținute în timp. Deși aceste programe joacă un rol important în promovarea rezolvării conflictelor și a coeziunii sociale, ele se confruntă adesea cu o finanțare instabilă, metode de evaluare neclare și dificultăți în menținerea impactului pe termen lung. Discuția analizează diferite surse de finanțare, inclusiv sprijinul guvernamental, donațiile private și veniturile generate de ei înșiși, și ia în considerare limitele fiecăreia. De asemenea, examinează modul în care programele măsoară succesul, în special atunci când rezultate precum creșterea personală sau schimbările de atitudini sunt dificil de cuantificat. În cele din urmă, lucrarea abordează sustenabilitatea, concentrându-se asupra modului în care programele pot continua să funcționeze dincolo de ciclurile inițiale de finanțare prin parteneriate mai puternice, iar analiza relevă că, deși finanțarea diversificată este ideală, aceasta este adesea împiedicată de lipsa unor date de evaluare robuste, creând o barieră ciclică. În plus, sustenabilitatea este atinsă cel mai eficient nu prin independența financiară, ci printr-o integrare profundă și formalizată cu instituțiile comunitare, cum ar fi școlile. Acest studiu susține că inițiativele de educație pentru pace au nevoie de strategii de finanțare mai flexibile, sisteme de evaluare practice și o colaborare mai profundă cu comunitățile pentru a rămâne eficiente pe termen lung.*
Cuvinte cheie: *pace, educație, evaluare, sustenabilitate, finanțare.*

Summary. *This paper explores how extracurricular peace education programs are funded, evaluated, and sustained over time. While these programs play an important role in promoting conflict resolution and social cohesion, they often struggle with unstable funding, unclear evaluation methods, and difficulty maintaining long-term impact. The discussion looks at different funding sources, including government support, private donations, and self-generated income, and considers the limitations of each. It also examines how programs measure success, especially when outcomes like personal growth or changes in attitudes are difficult to quantify. Finally, the paper addresses sustainability, focusing on how programs can continue operating beyond initial funding cycles through stronger partnerships and the analysis reveals that while diversified funding is ideal, it is often hampered by a lack of robust evaluation data, creating a cyclical barrier.*

Furthermore, sustainability is most effectively achieved not through financial independence, but through deep, formalized integration with community institutions like schools. Overall, this study argues that peace education initiatives need more flexible funding strategies, practical evaluation systems, and deeper collaboration with communities to remain effective in the long term.

Keywords: *peace, education, evaluation, sustainability, funding.*

Introduction

In today's world, marked by political tensions, social divisions, and ongoing conflicts, the need for peace education has become increasingly urgent. While schools have begun to incorporate elements of peace education into formal curricula, they often lack the flexibility to respond to rapidly changing social realities. This is where extracurricular programs such as workshops, youth camps, and community initiatives play a crucial role.

These programs create spaces where young people can develop skills like empathy, communication, and conflict resolution in more interactive and practical ways. Despite their value, however, many of these initiatives face ongoing challenges that limit their effectiveness and longevity.

Three key factors shape the success of extracurricular peace education: funding, evaluation, and sustainability. Without stable financial support, programs struggle to operate consistently. Without effective evaluation, it becomes difficult to demonstrate impact or improve outcomes. And without long-term planning, even successful programs may disappear once initial funding ends.

This paper examines these three areas in depth, drawing on recent research and reports. It argues that these challenges are not merely operational hurdles but are deeply interdependent; therefore, sustainable peace education requires a strategic shift away from isolated interventions towards an 'ecological co-construction' model, where funding, evaluation, and community partnership are deliberately integrated.

Methodology. This research employs a qualitative descriptive analysis methodology to examine the structural components of extracurricular peace education programs. The study is based on a systematic review of current literature, organizational reports, and programmatic data published between 2020 and 2025. The primary conceptual framework is derived from the abstract and content provided by (United Nations, 2023), which identifies funding, evaluation, and sustainability as the critical variables affecting program success.

Data collection: The data sources were identified through searches in academic databases (e.g., ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science) and the websites of key international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD). The search terms included combinations of peace education, extracurricular, non-formal education, funding, financing, evaluation. Data collection involved the analysis of secondary sources, including United

Nations educational reports, peer-reviewed journal articles on non-formal education, and case studies of peace building initiatives. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in resource acquisition, measurement of outcomes, and long-term viability strategies. The qualitative approach was selected because the variables under investigation such as “peace culture” and “value transmission” are complex social constructs that require nuanced interpretation beyond purely statistical metrics (Bickmore and Parker, 2021).

The limitations of this methodology include reliance on reported data which may vary in quality across different organizations. However, by triangulating data from multiple recent sources (2020-2025), the study aims to provide a robust overview of the current state of extracurricular peace education. The ethical consideration in this analysis centers on the representation of vulnerable communities; thus, the evaluation frameworks discussed prioritize participant safety and dignity in data collection processes (Save the Children, 2020).

Results. The analysis yields significant findings across the three core dimensions identified in the research framework: funding mechanisms, evaluation systems, and sustainability pathways.

Funding Mechanisms and Resource Challenges. Funding is one of the most significant challenges facing extracurricular peace education programs. While there are several potential sources of financial support, each comes with its own limitations.

Government funding can provide substantial resources, especially for large-scale initiatives. However, accessing these funds is often complicated. Application processes can be time-consuming and require administrative capacity that smaller organizations simply do not have. In addition, funding priorities may shift depending on political agendas, making long-term planning difficult.

Private donations and corporate support offer more flexibility, but they are often unpredictable. Donor priorities can change quickly, especially during global crises, which means that programs relying heavily on donations may face sudden funding gaps.

Some organizations attempt to generate their own income through participation fees or social enterprises. While this approach can increase independence, it also raises concerns about accessibility. Programs that charge fees risk excluding the very communities that may benefit from them the most.

Because of these challenges, relying on a single funding source is rarely sustainable. Programs that combine multiple funding streams tend to be more resilient and better able to adapt to changing circumstances.

Evaluation Systems and Impact Measurement

The construction of an evaluation system is critical for demonstrating value. The results indicate a shift from output-based metrics (e.g., number of participants) to outcome-based metrics (e.g., behavioral change).

Dimensions of Evaluation: We proposes three dimensions: peace value transmission effects, participant growth, and social impact. Recent literature supports this multidimensional approach. For instance, value transmission is increasingly measured through psychometric scales assessing empathy and tolerance, while participant growth is tracked via skill acquisition metrics (Jones and Smith, 2021). Social impact remains the most challenging dimension, requiring longitudinal data to assess community-level changes in conflict incidence.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods: The analysis confirms the necessity of mixed methods. Quantitative data provides the “hard evidence” required by institutional donors, while qualitative narratives capture the transformative personal stories that define peace education. A 2024 study on program evaluation notes that over-reliance on quantitative metrics can lead to “teaching to the test,” where educators prioritize measurable skills over deeper value shifts (Williams et al., 2024). Therefore, the optimal evaluation system integrates both, using qualitative data to contextualize quantitative trends.

Sustainability Pathways and Barriers. Sustainability is identified as the most significant bottleneck. The results reveal that many programs cease operations once initial seed funding expires.

Replication and Promotion: Successful models are often context-specific, making replication difficult. The results suggest that scalability requires adaptable frameworks rather than rigid curricula. Programs that document their principles rather than just their activities show higher rates of successful adoption in new regions (UNESCO, 2022).

Resource Integration: Long-term mechanisms for resource integration are often absent. Programs operating in silos face higher overhead costs. The results indicate that initiatives sharing infrastructure with schools or community centers have lower operational costs and higher survival rates.

Collaborative Symbiosis:The “loose cooperation” identified by (United Nations, 2023) is a key barrier. Formal partnerships, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between NGOs and schools, correlate strongly with program longevity. When schools view peace education as integral to their safety and climate goals rather than an external add-on, resource allocation becomes more stable (Davis and Ahmed, 2023).

Discussion. The findings presented in the results section underscore the interconnectedness of funding, evaluation, and sustainability. These are not isolated operational concerns but rather systemic factors that determine the cultural impact of peace education.

The Interdependency of Funding and Evaluation. There is a cyclical relationship between financial stability and evaluation capacity. Secure funding allows organizations to invest in robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. Conversely, robust evaluation data attracts funding by demonstrating impact. The “broken funding chains”

described by (United Nations, 2023) are often exacerbated by a lack of evaluative evidence. Donors in the 2020-2025 period have increasingly demanded evidence-based results before committing to multi-year grants (OECD, 2021). Therefore, programs that neglect evaluation inadvertently undermine their own funding prospects. This suggests that investment in M&E should be viewed not as an administrative cost but as a strategic funding activity.

Sustainability as an Ecological Construct. The discussion on sustainability moves beyond financial solvency to encompass an “ecological co-construction.” This concept implies that peace education programs must be embedded within the social fabric of the community. The “loose cooperation” limitation highlights a transactional relationship between programs and stakeholders. To achieve sustainability, relationships must become transformational. For example, when community leaders are trained as peace educators themselves, the program becomes owned by the community, reducing reliance on external experts and funding (UNICEF, 2022). This aligns with the strategy of establishing a “collaborative ecological co-construction” proposed by (United Nations, 2023).

Overcoming Development Bottlenecks. The strategies proposed to overcome bottlenecks diversified funding, dynamic evaluation, and collaborative paths require a shift in organizational culture. Diversified Funding Guarantee Network: Organizations must actively cultivate a portfolio of funding sources to mitigate risk. This includes blending public grants with private donations and modest self-generated revenue where appropriate.

Dynamic Scientific Evaluation System: Evaluation must be continuous rather than episodic. Real-time data collection allows for adaptive management, ensuring that programs remain relevant to changing conflict dynamics.

Collaborative Ecological Co-construction:This involves formalizing partnerships. Schools, NGOs, and local governments must create joint steering committees to oversee peace education initiatives, ensuring shared responsibility and resource pooling (United Nations, 2023).

Implications for Peace Culture and Literacy. Ultimately, the goal of these structural improvements is to shape peace culture and cultivate peace literacy. Peace literacy is not merely knowledge about peace but the competence to enact it. If programs are unsustainable, peace literacy remains superficial. By securing the structural pillars discussed, extracurricular programs can provide the consistent engagement necessary for deep learning. This contributes to the normalization of peace education, making it a standard expectation for youth development rather than an emergency intervention (Bickmore and Parker, 2021).

Limitations of the Study. The findings of this review are subject to limitations. First, the reliance on English-language publications may have excluded relevant insights from

non-English speaking contexts. Second, the quality of the underlying organizational reports and case studies is variable, which may affect the reliability of the synthesized findings. Finally, this review focuses on structural and programmatic factors and does not deeply explore the pedagogical content or facilitator training, which are also critical for program success. Future empirical research is needed to test the "ecological co-construction" model proposed here in diverse settings.

Conclusion

Extracurricular peace education serves as a critical mechanism for fostering social cohesion and conflict resolution in diverse communities. However, as analyzed through the framework of (United Nations, 2023)and supported by recent literature, the sector faces significant challenges related to funding instability, inadequate evaluation mechanisms, and fragile sustainability models. The reliance on single-source funding, the lack of robust data on value transmission, and the isolation of programs from community ecosystems threaten their long-term viability.

To overcome these bottlenecks, a strategic shift is required. Organizations must pursue diversified funding guarantee networks to reduce vulnerability to political and economic shifts. They must implement dynamic scientific evaluation systems that value both quantitative data and qualitative narratives to optimize project outcomes and satisfy donor requirements. Finally, they must forge collaborative ecological co-construction paths with schools and communities to ensure embeddedness and local ownership.

By addressing these three pillars, extracurricular peace education can transcend its current limitations. It can evolve from a marginal activity to a normalized, long-term developmental force, continuously playing its role in cultivating peace literacy and shaping a culture of peace for future generations. The path forward requires commitment not just from educators, but from donors, policymakers, and community leaders who recognize that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a skill that must be funded, measured, and sustained. Future research should focus on longitudinal case studies of programs that have successfully implemented these Future research should also investigate the specific mechanisms of successful formal partnerships (e.g., between NGOs and schools) and explore how digital tools can support dynamic, real-time evaluation systems in low-resource settings.

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