

TOWARDS A SOCIO-CULTURAL RESTORATIVE PEACE EDUCATION (SCRPE) MODEL FOR EAST AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FROM FOUR POST-CONFLICT STATES

RUMO A UM MODELO DE EDUCAÇÃO SOCIOCULTURAL RESTAURADORA PARA A PAZ (ESRP) PARA A ÁFRICA ORIENTAL: UMA ANÁLISE COMPARATIVA DE QUATRO ESTADOS PÓS-CONFLITO

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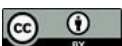
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Abstract

Peace education is crucial for sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict states, yet its implementation often lacks coherence with local socio-cultural realities. In East Africa, while various approaches exist, a comprehensive framework integrating psychological, cultural, and justice-oriented dimensions is absent. This study aims to analyze peace education practices in four East African post-conflict states: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia, proposing an integrated model to address identified systemic gaps. We conducted a comparative qualitative analysis, utilizing a systematic narrative review of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed literature and NGO reports. Data were analyzed thematically, employing a priori codes from three core peacebuilding domains: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice. The analysis reveals distinct yet unbalanced approaches: the DRC focuses on trauma-oriented SEL but lacks cultural elements; Burundi emphasizes Indigenous Reconciliation and community Restorative Justice without formal integration; Rwanda promotes national identity but suppresses grassroots dialogue; Somalia showcases organic integration at the community level, yet struggles with national coordination. Critically, no case demonstrates a balanced integration of all three pillars, creating gaps that limit transformative potential. Based on this analysis, we propose the Socio-Cultural

Resumo

A educação para a paz é crucial para a construção da paz sustentável em estados pós-conflito, mas sua implementação muitas vezes carece de coerência com as realidades socioculturais locais. Na África Oriental, embora existam várias abordagens, não há uma estrutura abrangente que integre as dimensões psicológica, cultural e orientada para a justiça. Este estudo visa analisar as práticas de educação para a paz em quatro estados pós-conflito da África Oriental: República Democrática do Congo (RDC), Burundi, Ruanda e Somália, propondo um modelo integrado para abordar as lacunas sistêmicas identificadas. Realizamos uma análise qualitativa comparativa, utilizando uma revisão narrativa sistemática de fontes secundárias, incluindo literatura revisada por pares e relatórios de ONGs. Os dados foram analisados tematicamente, empregando códigos a priori de três domínios centrais da construção da paz: Aprendizagem Socioemocional (ASE), Reconciliação Indígena e Justiça Restaurativa. A análise revela abordagens distintas, porém desequilibradas: a RDC concentra-se na ASE orientada para o trauma, mas carece de elementos culturais; o Burundi enfatiza a Reconciliação Indígena e a Justiça Restaurativa comunitária sem integração formal; Ruanda promove a identidade nacional, mas suprime o diálogo de base; A Somália demonstra integração orgânica em nível comunitário, mas enfrenta dificuldades com a coordenação



Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) model as a holistic framework that addresses individual healing, cultural legitimacy, and communal justice. For peace education to foster long-term social transformation in East Africa, policymakers must adopt this integrated, systemic approach.

Keywords: Peace Education. Post-Conflict States. East Africa. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Indigenous Reconciliation. Restorative Justice. Scrpe Model.

nacional. De forma crítica, nenhum caso demonstra uma integração equilibrada dos três pilares, criando lacunas que limitam o potencial transformador. Com base nessa análise, propomos o modelo de Educação Sociocultural Restaurativa para a Paz (ESRP) como uma estrutura holística que aborda a cura individual, a legitimidade cultural e a justiça comunitária. Para que a educação para a paz promova a transformação social a longo prazo na África Oriental, os formuladores de políticas devem adotar essa abordagem integrada e sistêmica.

Palavras-chave: Educação para a Paz. Estados Pós-Conflito. África Oriental. Aprendizagem Socioemocional (ASE). Reconciliação Indígena. Justiça Restaurativa. Modelo ESRP.

1 INTRODUCTION

Peacebuilding, as a multilateral endeavor, seeks to secure sustainable peace in fragile and post-conflict societies. Traditionally, peacebuilding efforts focused on interstate conflicts, but in recent decades the scope has broadened to address intrastate conflict and civil unrest, which have proven to be more persistent sources of instability (Dursun-Özkanca & Crossley-Frolick, 2012; Marley, 2020). The United Nations has emphasized that for peacebuilding to be effective, it must not only resolve high-level political disputes but also nurture stability and security at the community level, where the effects of conflict are most deeply felt (Dursun-Özkanca & Crossley-Frolick, 2012). This recognition underscores the need for approaches that meaningfully engage with local contexts and community dynamics, rather than relying solely on top-down interventions.

Scholars highlight that peacebuilding is a multidimensional process encompassing security, governance, economic development, and social reconciliation (Dursun-Özkanca & Crossley-Frolick, 2012; Yoosuf & Premaratne, 2017; Ansorg & Gordon, 2018). Security sector reform, for example, cannot succeed without active local participation, which builds political legitimacy and fosters community ownership (Ansorg & Gordon, 2018). Similarly, good governance and inclusive political institutions are central to preventing renewed conflict by ensuring accountability and citizen engagement (Dursun-Özkanca & Crossley-Frolick, 2012). Beyond political and security dimensions, socio-economic development plays a pivotal role in sustaining peace. Studies show that

equitable economic opportunities and interdependence strengthen social stability and help communities recover from cycles of violence (Distler et al., 2018; Tsekpo & Torto, 2023). Successful initiatives embed economic empowerment strategies into peacebuilding frameworks, enabling resilience within societies most affected by conflict.

Despite these advances, one critical gap remains: the integration of peace education as a transformative tool within peacebuilding strategies. Education can bridge security, governance, and socio-economic dimensions by equipping individuals—especially youth—with conflict resolution skills, critical thinking, and values of tolerance and cooperation. However, in many post-conflict contexts, peace education remains fragmented, under-resourced, or disconnected from cultural realities. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive framework that systematically integrates key elements of peace education into national and community systems.

This study aims to evaluate the practice of peace education in four East African post-conflict states—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia—and to identify the gaps that hinder its transformative potential. Building on this analysis, the study develops the Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) model, which integrates three essential pillars: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice. The objective is to demonstrate how these components, when combined, can provide a culturally grounded and educationally adaptable framework for embedding peace education more effectively into both national policy and community practice.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been much attention given to peace education as a tool for social cohesion and the transformation of conflict-ridden environments to instill a framework of peace into the educational systems. When incorporated into curricula, peace education holds far-reaching implications for the student, enhancing such skills as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility. Dieu and Mugiraneza (2024), for example, emphasize the positive impacts of peace education on student competencies in developing essential skills and confronting challenges in the educational sector. Likewise, Rashid et al. (2024) maintain that incorporating peace education into the educational

framework forms the basis of addressing the root causes of extremism while setting the foundation for sustainable development and social harmony.

2.1 The role of peace educators

Peace educationists have a significant role in launching the culture of peace into schools. Saputra et al. (2024) have termed teachers as catalysts for establishing peaceful school settings. This notion is agreed by Jamshaid et al. (2024), who point to instances where teachers involved in peace-building projects usually get transformed in their perspectives by coming to understand and embrace their crucial role in societal change. The early inclusion of peace education into the curriculum will instill peaceful attitudes in children starting at a young age, and preschool to primary school interventions will set the basis for future coexistence. According to Saputra et al. (2024), if inserted properly, besides promoting peace early in life, peace education nurtures the continued process of culture of peace within education systems in several countries.

2.2 Diverse pedagogical perspectives

It is important to look at peace education from different pedagogical perspectives. Savelyeva and Park (2024) understand it as a complex undertaking addressing the root causes of violence and conflict and promote the use of context-sensitive and culturally respective educational models. Such an approach can well develop long-term conflict-resolution skills amongst students for their well-being, contributing to holistic development and community welfare.

Educators are important facilitators for peace education. According to Ndwandwe (2024), it takes good moral leadership on the part of principals to inspire teachers, as well as students, to implement peace education strategies to a high standard. The kinds of leadership that promote the environment within the institution conducive for peace will go a long way in the integration of peace education, hence overcoming the barriers that are presented by existing violence. On the other hand, Jamshaid et al. (2024) also regard teacher education as having the potential to effect change by equipping teachers with the necessary skills to foster peace.

An integral bridge to sustaining peace is fostering community interaction. Morales (2024) writes that sports education for peace-building insinuates sports pedagogies aimed at a social change in values and behaviors where peace stands among them. Ndwandwe (2024) also writes that peace education is crucial for development and social stability, hence, it should be inserted into university curricula to address systemic violence. Freire's ideas about critical consciousness become fundamental for grasping personal and societal peace (Standish, 2024). The critical approach thus opens up discussions around the socio-political milieu of peace education that place both educators and learners in deliberations around power and histories of violence. Moreover, Anderson and Nesterova (2024) stress the importance of art-based and participatory methods to arouse interest and efficacy in peace education. Peace education leads rebuilding society and prevention of conflicts in countries affected by conflicts (Mohamed, 2024). Thus, peace education is placed in national curricula to unify and cooperate in spirit, reiterating its place as a catalyst in the healing of context marked by historical violence.

2.3 Barriers to implementing peace education

The factors influencing the implementation of peace education pose questions that reveal a diverse set of barriers interferes with its implementation in schools and/or communities around the world. The barriers may be institutional, cultural, resource-based, or pedagogical.

2.4 Institutional challenges

Challenges institutional form a huge obstacle to the incorporation of peace education into curriculum. For example, in South African schools, the principal's leadership is essential for the promotion of peace education. A lack of good moral leadership has been singled out as a major gap affecting its efficacy (Ndwandwe, 2024). Lack of specific training for teachers and rigid curriculum structures make it even more difficult to integrate peace education into LO classes, so that respect and tolerance of diversity are not sufficiently emphasized in education (Ndwandwe, 2024).

2.5 Cultural barriers

Firm cultural barriers abound, particularly in conflict-affected zones- barriers to installing peace education. Research on Rwandan schools reports on the limitations placed by culture norms with big classes and weak supervision on the firm efficacy of peace education (Dieu & Mugiraneza, 2024). Thus, where conflicts prevail, the ways in which there are psychological and emotional barriers that affect the students, such as fear and trauma, become further barriers for creating a peaceful environment for education. However, civil culture can restrict girl-child education in places where traditional roles encourage family duties as opposed to education (Abdikan, 2024).

2.6 Resource-related barriers

Resource-related problems are common in many educational settings. Finance and infrastructure are critical in ensuring the delivery of quality peace education (No, 2024). Without teaching aids and if there are financial constraints, it becomes difficult for a teacher to implement effective peace education. A shortage of resources is further compounded by the fact that teachers are too busy to pursue peace education initiatives (Ndwandwe, 2024).

2.7 Pedagogical challenges

Pedagogical problems in conflicting resolutions and peacebuilding, therefore, emerge from a lack of teaching methods suitable for instruction in these fields. Numerous studies have emphasized that peaceful education demands special pedagogical strategies, given that traditional methods may not meaningfully engage students (Liubana et al., 2024). A qualitative study in Indonesia revealed that inner teacher challenges, such as prevailing attitudes toward conflict and differing understandings of peace, impeded the implementation of peace education initiatives (Widyaningsih et al., 2024). Innovative, well-crafted pedagogical strategies are needed to surmount these challenges so peace education can be tied closely to the students' experiences and wider society.

2.8 Integrating peace education into curriculum frameworks

Incorporating peace education into curriculum frameworks is increasingly seen as important for the furtherance of a culture of peace in educational settings. The teaching of peace can be implemented in a number of ways, including through stand-alone courses and through integrative approaches in which peaceful principles are interspersed throughout the existing curriculum. This duality may cater to peace concepts per se and other broader notions in moral and ethical education.

Evidence from Malaysia highlights that early-stage integration of peace education into a national curriculum fosters a culture of peace from the preschool level onward (Saputra et al., 2024). Thus, while the emphasis is on the development of moral values through education, it spells out the importance of those basic teachings in achieving sustainable peace. Likewise, Rwanda has recently revised its primary and secondary school curricula to integrate peace and ethical education, thus underscoring the significance of peace education as a cross-cutting issue with resonance in socio-historical contexts (Buhigiro et al., 2024). These cases illustrate a concerted effort to teach the tenets of peace, respect, and tolerance as intrinsic components of the educational journey.

There are other crucial themes that peace education should nurture, such as the origins of violence, alternatives to violent action, and the very acceptance of conflict as an omnipresent occurrence in human interactions. Peace education must be comprehensive, with due consideration to contextual sensitivity, acknowledging cultural diversities and worldviews while fine-tuning these educational approaches to the primary sociocultural landscape into which they will be introduced (Savelyeva & Park, 2024). Alongside these efforts, specific training programs for teachers become indispensable so that they may feel comfortably able to distribute peace-related pedagogy in their classrooms (Ndwandwe, 2024).

Another inspired way could see the introduction of innovative pedagogies, including such methods as the Socratic dialogue and experiential learning. Such approaches engage learners in critical thinking and reflection, thus fostering their empowerment as stakeholders in the branching out of peace. Furthermore, interactive approaches develop students' negotiation skills and shape the culture that fosters peaceful coexistence (Budiman et al., 2024). Furthermore, the integration of arts-based education and sports pedagogy within peace education underscores the transformative potential

these disciplines hold in cultivating inclusive communities that prioritize respect and empathy (Morales, 2024).

Finally, it is necessary that peace education does not become an isolated one-off endeavor but instead an integrated part of educational policy and practice. In this regard, programs like the "Learners and Schools as Zones of Peace" policy framework reflect a comprehensive approach that recognizes and attempts to lessen the effects of direct and structural violence in educational environments (Tumamin et al., 2024). This particular framework seeks to develop environments for resilient education within which peace education is embedded systematically across curricula. Peace education can, then, through such holistic frameworks and methods, work to build a more peaceful society.

2.9 Theoretical framework

Peace education functions as a complex educational domain which integrates multiple methods for developing peaceful environments and conflict resolution techniques within schools. The educational methods include three main components which combine Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with Indigenous Reconciliation and Restorative Justice and Transformative Pedagogy. The three elements function as essential components of peace education while they support peacebuilding initiatives throughout various social environments.

2.10 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) serves as a critical base for peace education because it teaches emotional intelligence and self-control together with interpersonal understanding. SEL teaches both personal and group wellness through the development of empathy and resilience alongside communication abilities which form the basis for peaceful relationships. The integration of SEL into peace education allows students to learn conflict resolution skills and develop positive social responses which lead to expanded options during interpersonal conflicts (Nelson, 2021; Vestal & Jones, 2004). A structured SEL curriculum functions as an effective tool to implement peacebuilding methods that connect with students' everyday life situations (Cuga et al., 2020).

2.11 Indigenous reconciliation

Indigenous reconciliation is thus, in essence, entirely conjoined with peace education, in particular contexts where historical grievances and cultural displacements were experienced. This approach emphasizes acknowledging and addressing the injustices that affected Indigenous peoples and communities and therefore accounts for the reconciliation process and mutual understanding. In this sense, peace education makes its contribution if the education pursues an Indigenous view through its content, working on the social cohesion and respect of cultural diversity that is a precondition for sustainable peace (Setiadi et al., 2017; Hernández, 2022). Educational activities conducive to Indigenous reconciliation most likely involve the teaching of Indigenous knowledge systems and related cultural practices within a school curriculum. Doing so affirms the identities of Indigenous students and simultaneously provides education to non-Indigenous students with respect to some of the historical and present circumstances affecting these communities (Irawan et al., 2023; Turpin, 2008). Such an approach enhances empathy and cultural awareness, laying a foundation for cooperative relationships and conflict resolution in multicultural settings (Hengky, 2014).

2.12 Restorative justice (RJ)

Considered the mainstream model of peace education, restorative justice (RJ) seeks to promote reconciliation, healing, and community consensus in various domains: from school-related matters to the larger societal scope. The central tenet considers the harm being done to be repaired rather than punishing the offender because it will create an understanding between the affected parties. In contrast, in an education setting, RJ practices can greatly change school climates because it aids with healing and empowering the student; where Gilbert argued that RJ promotes healing and justice at the individual, community, and societal levels and decreases conflicts (Gilbert, 2014). Integrating RJ into a community-wide approach reduces disciplinary incidents and dampens the toxic atmospheres in schools (Sandwick et al., 2019). Effective practice will thus have to involve the community and foster collaborative efforts from families, educators, and other stakeholders: with Ishwara et al. (2024) stressing such a collective effort is imperative particularly within vulnerable contexts. Moreover, this RJ can transform teacher training

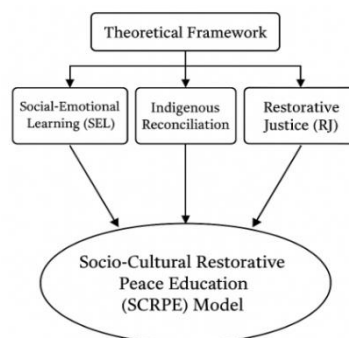
by forging a culture of understanding and cooperation that is at the heart of conflict resolution (Brown, 2014). Winn illustrates that RJ circles can also serve as spaces for civic engagement through which students are empowered in conflict resolution (Winn, 2023). RJ mechanisms are essential to societal reconciliation, especially in regions emerging from past atrocities, thus supporting Ekpo and Asananyi's thrust that RJ is crucial for community reconciliation (Ekpo & Asananyi, 2023). Generally, RJ is thus a systemic approach to building peace in various societal spheres.

2.13 Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) model

The Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) Model is a comprehensive framework designed to address peace education through the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL), indigenous reconciliation practices, and restorative justice (RJ) principles. This model emphasizes the importance of understanding and valuing diverse cultural perspectives while fostering emotional intelligence and resilience in learners. By incorporating elements of reconciliation and justice, the SCRPE Model aims to create inclusive educational environments that promote healing, dialogue, and critical thinking, ultimately fostering peaceful coexistence and community engagement in post-conflict settings (Fig.1).

Figure 1

Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) Model



2.14 Peace education in East African post-conflict states

Democratic Republic of the Congo: contemporary peace education emphasizes understanding the multifaceted nature of violence and the need for responses that promote

alternatives to it. Savelyva and Park (2024) argued that peace education should cover the roots of violence and contextually sensitive approaches to peace, foregrounding the omnipresence of conflict. Morales (2024) mentioned sports pedagogy in the culture of peace; meanwhile, Anderson and Nesterova (2024) emphasize arts-based approaches to engage youth and develop democratic values. In such a manner, peace educators become the ambience for a school environment that fosters empathy and constructive engagement (Saputra et al., 2024). International frameworks such as UNICEF Peace Education Program support local projects tailored to the peculiar cultural needs of the DRC (Rasari, 2024). Community mobilization must ensure that localized projects empower women and children trapped in conflict, culminating in the success of peace education efforts (Yasmin, 2024).

Burundi: one fundamental perspective on peace education in Burundi peace education focuses on integrating traditional values with modern educational frameworks to foster ethically committed leaders who can guide the nation toward a peaceful future. Nizigama urges this integration to fight against modern anti-values of ethnocentrism and greed, an undesirable landscape important to curb ethnic divisions. Local peace committees, such as the Kibimba Peace Committee, have emerged as central players operating at the community level to resolve conflicts and train for reconciliation, leadership, and restorative justice (Yorlay, 2024). Experimental and arts-based approaches are also tending to gain support, accepting participatory methods to engage youth in peacebuilding (Anderson & Nesterova, 2024). The comprehensive curricula supported by the UN and NGOs emphasize human rights and democratic citizenship, adaptable to local contexts but primarily striving to meet international standards (Ndwandwe, 2024).

Rwanda: Peace education has thus become a means of addressing historical traumas relating to violence and building a culture of peace around it. The students in essence would come to understand violence and its attributes, with the view to alternatives: in any case, conflict is everywhere in society (Savelyeva & Park, 2024). This being the case, it is in line with critical pedagogy which brings forth social justice and equality as the basic principles on which reconciliation can take place (Standish, 2024). Peace education is taught in Rwandan schools via compulsory subjects such as peace, ethics, and religious education, the intention being to build moral character (Nyangaresi et al., 2024). Government policy presently emphasizes peacebuilding education as an

element of national recovery and incorporates the active engagement of students in the values of tolerance and co-existence (Buhigiro et al., 2024). Arts-based approaches offer innovative methods to maximize democratic participation and self-reflexivity for youth, while educators sustain a learner-friendly environment for peace (Anderson & Nesterova, 2024; Saputra et al., 2024).

Somalia: the transformative role of peace education as a vital mechanism for conflict resolution and societal rebuilding, particularly in post-conflict Somalia. In the aftermath of conflict in Somalia, peace education becomes a very critical institution for conflict resolution and societal rebuilding because it addresses issues of restoration of unity and communities (Mohamed, 2024). Addressing youth through peace initiatives is vital in reclaiming space for dialogue and addressing economic empowerment needs (Ahmed, 2024). Integrating mental health and psychosocial support into peacebuilding provides a comprehensive approach to the emotional and educational needs of those affected (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Community engagement can guarantee that initiatives align with Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16 for peaceful societies (Adem et al., 2024). The lasting effects of civil wars have, however, disrupted education systems, thereby complicating implementation of peace education due to a lack of resources (Mohamed, 2024; Moyi, 2012). Said systemic factors need to be addressed; these are teacher training and resources (Mohamed, 2023; Sheikh, 2023). Ultimately, establishing peace education initiatives is crucial for rebuilding the Somali state and is a fundamental right for children (Hashi & Barasa, 2023; Omar, 2021; Mohamed, 2017).

Despite increasing recognition of peace education's importance for social cohesion and conflict transformation, significant gaps in effective implementation persist. While literature emphasizes the benefits of peace education for enhancing critical thinking and social responsibility, barriers such as weak institutional leadership, cultural norms, and resource constraints hinder its integration into curricula. These challenges are particularly evident in conflict-affected regions, where psychological barriers impede the creation of peaceful educational environments. The study seeks to address the general objective of developing an integrated framework for peace education that encompasses Social-Emotional Learning, Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice. The main question driving this research is: How can peace education be effectively integrated into educational systems to overcome existing barriers and foster a culture of peace? By

addressing these issues, the proposed framework aims to equip educators with the necessary tools to nurture a more peaceful educational experience.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study design

This study utilizes a qualitative comparative case study design informed by a systematic narrative review methodology. The primary aim is theory-building—to develop a conceptual framework (the SCRPE model) through an in-depth, structured analysis of existing practices and documented outcomes in four purposefully selected cases.

3.2 Case selection

The four East African post-conflict states—the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia—were selected to provide maximum variation in conflict histories, governance structures (from strong centralized to fragmented), and documented approaches to peace education. This variety allows for a robust exploration of how different contexts engage (or disengage) with the core pillars of our analytical framework.

3.3 Data collection and sources

Data was collected exclusively from secondary sources. A systematic search protocol was followed to enhance rigor: Electronic databases (e.g., Scopus, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Elicit.etc) were searched using keyword combinations related to "peace education," "post-conflict," and each country name. Sources included: (1) peer-reviewed academic articles; (2) national education policy and curriculum documents; (3) reports from major international organizations; and (4) evaluations from reputable. Sources were included based on their direct relevance to describing or analyzing peace education initiatives.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two phases. First, a deductive thematic analysis was applied using the three a priori themes (codes) of SEL, Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice. All sourced material was coded for evidence of these themes in policy, curriculum, or reported practice. Second, a cross-case comparative analysis was performed to identify patterns of convergence and divergence. This involved constructing structured profiles for each country (summarized in Table 1) to highlight the predominant emphasis, institutional location, and identified gaps relative to the integrated framework. The SCRPE model was synthesized inductively from these comparative findings, specifically to address the consistent gaps observed across cases.

3.5 Limitations and reflexivity

The study is limited by its reliance on secondary data, the proposed SCRPE model is a conceptual framework generated from this comparative analysis; its empirical validation requires future field-based research. The researchers' positions as scholars within the region inform a commitment to context-sensitive, actionable knowledge.

4 FINDINGS

Table 1

Comparative Analysis of SCRPE Model Integration by Country and Identified Gaps

Country	Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	Indigenous Reconciliation	Restorative Justice	Primary Gap
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	The use of arts-based methods and sports pedagogy is a direct application of SEL. These activities are designed to help traumatized youth develop self-awareness, empathy, and relationship skills in a non-	The framework is heavily influenced by international models (e.g., UNICEF). While community projects may be locally run, there is no strong emphasis on integrating indigenous worldviews, values, or traditional conflict resolution	The focus on teaching "alternatives to violence" implies restorative principles. However, it lacks a structured, explicit framework for using restorative justice circles or practices to address harms and rebuild relationships within schools and communities.	The model is strong on healing individual trauma (SEL) but weak on repairing the social and cultural fabric (Indigenous Reconciliation and Restorative Justice).

	threatening environment.	mechanisms into the educational core.		
Burundi	Participatory methods engage youth, which supports SEL competencies indirectly. However, the focus is less on individual emotional skills and more on communal ethics and values.	This is the core strength of Burundi's model. The explicit goal to "harmonize local traditional values with modern methods" to combat "anti-values" like ethnocentrism makes indigenous reconciliation the central pillar of its approach.	Local Peace Committees provide explicit training in restorative justice. This moves beyond theory to offer a practical, community-based structure for repairing harm and facilitating dialogue, making it a formal component of the peacebuilding process.	The community-based model is potent but may lack reach and integration into the formal national education system, limiting its scale.
Rwanda	The defined role of the educator as a peace facilitator who must "embody empathy" and create a "positive school climate" is a direct application of SEL principles at the institutional level.	The state-led, centralized curriculum prioritizes building a new unified national identity over the revival or integration of specific indigenous reconciliation rituals or worldviews. The approach is forward-looking rather than rooted in traditional practices.	The curriculum teaches "reconciliation" and "cohabitation," which are goals of restorative justice. However, the top-down, highly structured nature of the education system may not allow for the open, dialogic, and community-led processes that are hallmarks of restorative justice.	The model is strong on building a unified national identity (a form of SEL) but can be critiqued for suppressing the dialogue and cultural processes (Indigenous Reconciliation & Restorative Justice) necessary for deeper reconciliation.
Somalia	The direct integration of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into peacebuilding is one of the most advanced applications of SEL. It directly addresses the trauma that is a barrier to learning and peaceful coexistence.	The community-oriented approach is inherently reliant on indigenous structures, such as clan-based mediation and traditional <i>Xeer</i> law, to be legitimate and effective. Reconciliation is impossible without engaging these existing systems.	Community-driven "dialogue and cooperation" initiatives are the essence of restorative justice. The focus is on rebuilding broken relationships and social trust at the grassroots level through conversation and agreed-upon outcomes.	The model is strong on community-level application but is fragmented and lacks a centralized strategy to integrate these powerful components into a cohesive, national educational framework.

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of how the SCRPE model is integrated in four East African post-conflict states. It highlights the presence of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice in each country's peace education practices, as well as the main gaps. The findings show that the DRC focuses strongly on trauma through SEL but neglects cultural and restorative elements.

Burundi emphasizes Indigenous values and community-based restorative justice but struggles with national integration. Rwanda promotes SEL through a unified national identity but limits grassroots dialogue for reconciliation. Somalia combines SEL, traditional reconciliation, and restorative practices at the community level but lacks centralized coordination. Overall, the table demonstrates that while each country incorporates aspects of the SCRPE model, none fully integrate all three pillars in a balanced way.

4.1 Discussion of findings

The comparative analysis of Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) implementation across four East African post-conflict states reveals distinct national approaches, each with unique strengths and a consistent pattern of critical gaps. The integration of the three core components—Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Indigenous Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice—varies significantly, influenced by each country's specific conflict history, governance structure, and peacebuilding philosophy.

Finding 1: The existing DRC model concentrates on individual trauma and SEL and is at odds with broader cultural and restorative repair. This model in the Democratic Republic of the Congo exists around interventions by international NGOs, primarily addressing individual trauma through programs in social-emotional learning. However, it does not allow for the deeper cultural and restorative repair found in traditional methods. For lasting healing and recovery at the communal level, the interface with local customs and reconciliation processes is paramount. The importance of local agency in pathways to governance and development is often disregarded in the established, externally-driven approach.

Finding 2: The model stands unique because of the emphasis on Indigenous Reconciliation and the practical application of Restorative Justice frameworks in Burundi. However, this uniqueness is constrained by its limited infusion into the formal education system. Burundi's approach is specified by the emphasis it places on Indigenous reconciliation and the application of restoration justice systems. This approach envisages the involvement of local customs for healing and rebuilding communities. But, because of their limited infusion into the formal education system,

practically full operation of those systems gets restricted with respect to scalability and, consequently, effectiveness.

Finding 3: Rwanda's state-led model promotes a unified national identity as a form of macro-level SEL but stunts bottom-up dialogue that is crucial for deep Indigenous Reconciliation and Restorative Justice. Rwanda presents a state-led model for possible cultivation of a unified national identity through SEL initiatives intended to promote social cohesion. While promulgating a collective spirit, this side-steps bottom-up dialogues crucial to authentic Indigenous reconciliation and restorative justice. State-mediated accounts overlook community needs and the perspectives essential to community life in actual terms.

Finding 4: Somali grassroots is different from other countries in that its system tends to integrate mental health (SEL) with indigenous and restorative practices but lacks centralized coordination, thus national scaling would possibly be an issue. In Somalia, a grassroots model combines SEL with Indigenous practices and mental health support. This community-driven approach resonates with few local needs. However, the lack of central coordination has proved to be a hindrance to scaling these initiatives across the country. This fragmentation hinders the possibility of coming up with a single strategy that would give opportunities for restorative practices to be at the disposal of different communities.

5 CONCLUSION

This study has moved beyond a generic critique of peace education implementation by using a consistent analytical framework (SEL, Indigenous Reconciliation, RJ) to diagnose specific imbalances in four East African contexts. The primary contribution is the proposition of the Socio-Cultural Restorative Peace Education (SCRPE) model as a heuristic tool. SCRPE provides policymakers, curriculum developers, and practitioners with a conceptual map to audit existing programs and design interventions that simultaneously address the psychological, cultural, and justice dimensions of conflict recovery. It argues that sustainable peace education must be systemically integrated (touching policy, teacher training, and curriculum) and contextually hybrid (respectfully weaving international best practices with indigenous knowledge).

5.1 Recommendations

To move from concept to practice, we recommend:

5.1.1 *For governments and policymakers*

Pilot the SCRPE Framework: Rather than wholesale reform, ministries of education should initiate pilot programs in select districts or teacher colleges to adapt and test the SCRPE integration. For example, Rwanda could pilot a module within its existing peace curriculum that uses restorative circle methodologies to facilitate student dialogues on the history and value of indigenous conflict resolution systems like Ubushingantahe (Burundi) or Xeer (Somalia), thereby carefully introducing pluralistic dialogue.

5.1.2 *For curriculum developers and teacher training institutions*

Develop Integrated Training Modules: Pre- and in-service teacher training must move beyond siloed workshops. Create modules that, for instance, train educators on how to use a local folklore narrative (Indigenous Reconciliation) as the basis for a role-play activity (SEL) that culminates in a restorative circle (RJ) to address a simulated classroom conflict.

5.1.3 *For future research*

Empirical Validation: The immediate next step is participatory action research (PAR) to co-implement and refine the SCRPE model in specific community or school settings in one of the studied countries. Research should develop and test context-specific indicators for measuring the holistic impact of integrated programs.

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All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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