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## Shared Education in Peace Agreements

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PA-X PEACE AGREEMENT DATABASE



# Shared Education in Peace Agreements

Laura Wise



This research draws on the PA-X Peace Agreement Database ([www.peaceagreements.org](http://www.peaceagreements.org)), a database of all peace agreements at any stage of the peace process from 1990 to 2016. The database is fully searchable and supports both qualitative and quantitative examination of peace agreements.

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## PA-X Spotlight Series

The PA-X Spotlight Series addresses questions regarding comparative peace processes, asked by those seeking to influence peace and transition processes. Each Spotlight provides brief comparative material regarding a key issue, sometimes with reference to the specific context from which the question originated, and sometimes framed more generally.

This Spotlight asks:

How do peace agreements provide for national belonging and unity through education curricula and unified history textbooks?

# Education in Peace Agreements

Education is referenced in 18% of peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2016. These agreements provide for education in a variety of mechanisms and degrees of detail, including:

- ▶ education as a social and economic right
- ▶ access to education (including for refugees and displaced persons)
- ▶ minority language medium education
- ▶ guarantees for security or reconstruction of schools and other educational sites
- ▶ decentralising education powers to federal or other sub-national levels
- ▶ provision or training of educational workers
- ▶ reform of curricula

The diversity of peace agreement provisions for education shows the distinction between minimalist (assimilationist and exclusive, promotes loyalty to the state) or maximal (promotes inclusive belonging through diverse identities) approaches to citizenship education in deeply divided societies (Fontana, 2016). For example, in the 2013 Kampala Dialogue with the M23, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo agreed 'to provide civic education to promote peaceful coexistence, to achieve a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to strengthen patriotism' (minimalist), whilst in 1995 the Government of Guatemala agreed to 'include in educational syllabuses programmes that strengthen national unity through respect for cultural diversity' (maximal).

Of the peace agreements which refer to education, 23 peace agreements contain provisions to develop or reform education curricula, including through textbooks. The strength of these provisions range from simply stating that there will be a new curriculum in all secondary schools (Afghanistan, Somalia), to details of rationale for and processes to amend curricula (Colombia). Topics and values referenced in peace agreements for reformed curricula include human rights (Afghanistan, Sri Lanka), peace (African Great Lakes), environmental sustainability (Guatemala, Yemen) or counter-extremism (Afghanistan, Yemen).

## Examples of Education Reform in Diverse Societies

The following provisions are comparative examples of peace agreements that provided for education reform in diverse societies.

**Yemen:** The 2014 National Dialogue Conference Outcomes Document contains the most comprehensive provisions for curricula and teaching aid development (particularly religious, civic, and history subjects) in both public and private education, with the explicit aim of promoting a national democratic identity, whilst acknowledging the cultural and geographic identities in Yemen.

Yemen, National Dialogue Conference Outcomes Document, 25 January 2014

Employing cultural and social differences and political diversity in strengthening the national identity that brings everyone together. This will lead to overcoming individual and local identities by spreading a national democratic identity throughout the official and private media and in the educational curriculums. [...] Bringing back the subject of civil education in the curriculums and making it a basic subject that must be studied at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in public schools with the goal of raising a new generation with the principles of citizenship, equality, respect for system, work, production, forgiveness, coexistence, plurality, brotherhood, and the right to have different opinions.

**Northern Ireland:** References in peace agreements to integrated education between different communities in Northern Ireland briefly recognise the importance of facilitating initiatives, or commit to financial support. These commitments continue to be agreed in the post-Good Friday Agreement peace process. Agreements also make comprehensive commitments to providing minority language medium education.

Ireland / United Kingdom / Northern Ireland, Joint Declaration by the British and Irish Governments, 1 April 2003

The two Governments recognise that Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society, with ingrained patterns of division that carry substantial human and financial costs. They recognise the importance of building trust and improving community relations, tackling sectarianism and addressing segregation, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing.



**Philippines and Kosovo:** Agreements in both cases provided for inclusion of minority history, language, and values within curricula and textbooks for local minorities in de-facto autonomous regions (at the time of agreement) in Mindanao and Kosovo, in accordance with international minority rights norms.

Philippines / Mindanao, Final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), 2 September 1996

The same textbooks of the National Government will be used by schools in the Autonomous Region. The formulation, shaping and revision of textbooks are the responsibilities of the Regional Autonomous Government and the National Government and within agreed norms, academic freedom and relevant legal limits, the formulation and revisions shall emphasize Islamic values or orientation, in addition to Filipino values which include Christian values and values of indigenous people, modern sciences and technology as well as the latest educational thrusts.

Kosovo / Serbia / Yugoslavia (former), Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo (Rambouillet Accord), 23 February 1999

The additional rights of the national communities, acting through their democratically elected institutions, are to:...a. preserve and protect their national, cultural, religious, and linguistic identities, including by:...iii. providing for education and establishing educational institutions, in particular for schooling in their own language and alphabet and in national culture and history, for which relevant authorities will provide financial assistance; curricula shall reflect a spirit of tolerance between national communities and respect for the rights of members of all national communities in accordance with international standards;

**Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico:** Several agreements with indigenous armed movements in the 1990s by the governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico, provide to reform educational curricula and syllabuses to recognise and promote cultural diversity and indigenous identities, including through ethno-history and textbooks.

Guatemala, Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples,  
31 March 1995

To this end, the Government undertakes to promote the following reforms in the educational system:...

- (b) Give communities and families, which are a source of education, an active role in determining curricula and the school calendar and the authority to recommend the appointment or removal of teachers in order better to serve the educational and cultural interests of communities;
- (c) Incorporate the educational concepts of the Maya and other indigenous peoples, particularly in the philosophical, scientific, artistic, pedagogical, historical, linguistic and socio-political areas, as part of the overall reform of the educational system;...

## Trajectory of Commitments and Implementation

With the exception of Guatemala and Northern Ireland, the above provisions only appeared in one peace agreement, and were not re-confirmed to the same extent later in the peace process. Ten years after the Good Friday Agreement, the Kroc Institute's Peace Accord Matrix (2017) measured the provisions regarding Irish medium education as fully implemented in 2007, due to the number of students attending Irish language schools, and in 2014/15, 7% of pupils in Northern Ireland attended integrated schools. In Guatemala, education reform implementation had reached intermediate by 2006 (PAM, 2017), although disparities remain between schooling and literacy rates of indigenous and non-indigenous citizens (Hallman et. al, 2007).

The ongoing conflict in Yemen means that whilst the principles and commitments made at the National Dialogue Conference remain a mobilising agenda for activists, there is currently no education reform to speak of where implementation can be assessed. Despite a comprehensive constitutional framework for minority education in Kosovo, the Serbian government continues to operate a parallel education system for the Serbian community, using Serbian language textbooks which teach a different history to those used in the official Kosovo education system (Gashi, 2016).

Later agreements in the Mindanao peace process do contain provisions for education, but none of these were as extensive or comprehensive as the education reform agreed in 1996. However, in 2018 the President of the Philippines signed the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which includes several sections on integrated education, and provides for the Bangsamoro Government to 'develop an educational framework relevant and responsive to the needs, ideals and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people.' Whether and how this law is fully implemented will be important for the trajectory of education reform in the Philippines.

## Conclusion

Provisions for national unity through education and curricula reform are relatively uncommon in peace agreements between 1990 and 2016, with very few cases providing for history textbook development, which suggests that these issues are more commonly dealt with outside of formalised peace agreements. The data does show, however, that there are comparable examples of using education reform to enhance or develop national unity in divided societies, and that successful implementation of such provisions has a mixed record, even in cases where armed conflict has, for the most-part, ceased.

## Appendix: Peace Agreements Mentioned

Afghanistan, Compact Building on Success (London Conference), 1 February 2006.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/1061/>

Afghanistan, Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, 2 November 2011. <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/849/>

African Great Lakes, Dar-Es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, 20 November 2004.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/349/>

Colombia, Acuerdo Final entre el Gobierno Nacional y el Movimiento Armado Quintin Lame, Campamento de Pueblo Nuevo Caldono-Cauca, 27 May 1991.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/151>

Democratic Republic of Congo, Outcome Documents from the Conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M23, 12 December 2013. <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/793/>

Guatemala, Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 31 March 1995.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/283/>

Guatemala, Agreement on the Social and Economic Aspects and Agrarian Situation, 6 May 1996. <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/291/>

Ireland / United Kingdom / Northern Ireland, The Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations (Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement), 10 April 1998.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/556/>

Ireland / United Kingdom / Northern Ireland, Joint Declaration by the British and Irish Governments, 1 April 2003. <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/132/>

Mexico, Actions and Measures for Chiapas Joint Commitments and Proposals from the State and Federal Governments, and the EZLN, 16 February 1996.  
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/214/>

Philippines / Mindanao, Final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), 2 September 1996.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/479/>

Somalia, Provisional Constitution of The Federal Republic of Somalia, 1 August 2012.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/1360/>

Kosovo / Serbia / Yugoslavia (former), Interim Agreement for Peace and Self-Government in Kosovo (Rambouillet Accord), 23 February 1999.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/405/>

Sri Lanka, Human Rights issues relating to the peace process, 8 February 2003.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/1280/>

Yemen, National Dialogue Conference Outcomes Document, 25 January.

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/1400/>

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Gashi, S. (2016). The History of Kosovo in the history textbooks of Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Prishtina. Alter Habitus.

Government of the Philippines, Official Gazette

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/>

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Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame (2017) Peace Accords Matrix

<https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/provision/education-reform-northern-ireland-good-friday-agreement>

<https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/provision/education-reform-accord-firm-and-lasting-peace>

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[www.peaceagreements.org](http://www.peaceagreements.org)

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The programme is addressing three broad research questions relating to political settlements:

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