



Transformative peace education in a plural society through the Gus Dur School for Peace

Ema Kartika^{1*}, Wasino¹, Muzakki Bashori¹

¹ Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author. Email: emakartika@students.unnes.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received;
April 29, 2026
Revised;
June 10, 2026
Accepted;
July 3, 2026

Keywords

Peace education;
Gus Dur's values;
pluralism;
transformative peace;
social action.

ABSTRACT

Peace education is a pedagogical effort to realize peace. Peace education in a pluralistic society requires a transformative approach. The Gus Dur Peace School (GDSP), a non-formal youth cadre program under the Wahid Foundation, offers one such model, grounded in the thinking of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). Gus Dur's humanist pluralism, this study argues, is not merely a local ethical tradition but a practical instantiation of Galtung's positive peace one that addresses structural and cultural violence through values education rather than conflict resolution alone. This study examines how the GDSP conceptualizes peace, implements its educational stages, and produces observable transformations in participants. Using a qualitative case study approach with interpretive analysis, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving senior Wahid Foundation staff, GDSP facilitators, participants, and alumni. Findings indicate that the GDSP operates through nine core values derived from Gus Dur's thinking, including humanity, justice, equality, and liberation, which are realized through a structured series of selection, training, social project implementation, evaluation, and co-living activities. Alumni reported concrete changes: one alumnus described a shift from passive awareness to actively building a tolerant youth community in his hometown; Others noted that the GDSP's gender equality material fundamentally changed their understanding of women's roles in public life. These outcomes align with a three-dimensional typology of peace education cognitive, affective, and active operating as an integrated cycle rather than separate stages. GDSP demonstrates that locally grounded, values-based peace education can function as a vehicle for genuine social transformation a finding that speaks not only to this program but to ongoing debates about whether non-formal, culturally embedded peace education models can offer alternatives to the Western-centric frameworks that dominate the field.

This is an open access article under the **CC-BY-SA** license.



INTRODUCTION

Peace is a fundamental need for every human being and nation. The idea of peace is a universal ideal that humans continue to pursue amid a world marked by conflict, intolerance, and social inequality. Humans inherently desire a peaceful life, free from violence, and filled with respect for human dignity. Peace is not only the absence of war, but also a harmonious condition that

guarantees human freedom from direct and structural violence and advances social justice (Bar-Tal, 2002; Fanani, 2022; Galtung, 1969; Pratama et al., 2025). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects this understanding the United Nations places peace as foundational to Goal 16, affirming that sustainable development is inseparable from just institutions and peaceful societies (Howe, 2019; Linner et al., 2023; Singh & Singh, 2024; United Nations, 2021). In this framework, education is not merely a transmission mechanism but a strategic force for cultivating the values, attitudes, and behaviors that sustain a culture of peace (Davies, 2021; Gleditsch et al., 2021). Recent scholarship further emphasizes that contemporary peace education should move beyond the transmission of peaceful values toward transformative learning that develops critical consciousness, social responsibility, and learners' capacity to address structural causes of violence through participatory action and reflective practice (de Souza & Velez de Castro, 2025; Saleh et al., 2025).

Indonesia has a highly diverse population. Ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity are hallmarks of the Indonesian nation. Further analysis of this diversity presents a double-edged sword. On the one hand, diversity serves as social capital; on the other, if poorly managed, it can trigger identity-based conflicts. Recent conflicts in Maluku, Poso, Aceh, and Sambas clearly show identity-based conflict. These conflicts have caused lasting social trauma, and their roots run deeper than religious difference alone. Research consistently shows that identity-based violence in Indonesia emerges from the intersection of economic marginalization, political manipulation of ethnic and religious identity, and the absence of inclusive civic spaces where difference can be negotiated rather than suppressed (Asiah et al., 2024; Nurlaili et al., 2024; Nurman et al., 2022; Rozi et al., 2021; Saihu, 2020; Uksan, 2024). Recent studies on pluralism education in Indonesia similarly argue that educational approaches emphasizing democratic citizenship, intercultural dialogue, and social justice are more effective than approaches that focus solely on religious tolerance (Asiah et al., 2024; Mu'ti, 2023; Nurman et al., 2022).

Formal education, as currently structured, was not designed to address these layered causes. Pluralistic values that fail to be internalized in society will give rise to conflicts based on differences. Positive peace, as Galtung argued, cannot be achieved solely by dissolving or punishing the parties involved. Religious education tends to frame pluralism primarily as a matter of interfaith tolerance teaching students to respect different religions while leaving largely unexamined the structural conditions that actually drive conflict: economic marginalization, political exploitation of identity, gender inequality, and the everyday erosion of trust between communities. Conflict in Indonesia rarely emerges from religious difference alone; it emerges when difference becomes a fault line along which deeper grievances over land, livelihood, recognition, and power are mobilized. An education that addresses only the religious surface of these tensions cannot reach their social roots. This requires a pedagogical approach that instills the values of tolerance and peace, upholds human rights, and promotes social justice (Galtung, 1969; Tanyel & Kiralp, 2021). In this context, peace education is a pedagogical approach that not only teaches knowledge but also internalizes values and develops empathy, tolerance, critical consciousness, and the capacity to resolve conflicts without violence. Recent evidence further demonstrates that effective peace education integrates experiential learning, dialogue, and community engagement to cultivate positive peace and long-term social transformation (Arystanbek et al., 2026; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2020; de Souza & Velez de Castro, 2025; Kester, 2020; Saleh et al., 2025).

In this regard, the Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP), a peace school based on Gus Dur's values, is relevant to this discussion. The Wahid Foundation initiated GDSP. GDSP is based on the thoughts of the Indonesian hero and former president, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid. The Gus Dur Peace School serves as a cadre training space for the younger generation. The GDSP program does not treat peace as a doctrine to be memorized. Instead, it treats peace as something to be internalized, internalized, practiced through social action, and deepened through reflective experience. Gus Dur's approach as a pluralism activist was never abstract. Gus Dur is known for strongly condemning discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, and race. Gus Dur interpreted diversity as a resource rather than a threat and consistently linked democracy,

religious pluralism, equality, and social justice as prerequisites for peaceful coexistence (Franklin, 2024; Nurcholish, 2015; Safitri, 2024; Wahid, 2007). Gus Dur's legacy continues through civil society institutions that promote moderate Islam, pluralism, democratic participation, and peacebuilding in contemporary Indonesia (Franklin, 2024). These values make the GDSP approach relevant not only to Indonesia's internal conflicts but also to the broader challenges of building a pluralist society.

Although peace education has received growing scholarly attention worldwide, recent reviews indicate that the field remains dominated by studies of formal school settings and curriculum implementation, while community-based, values-driven peace education initiatives remain comparatively underexplored (de Souza & Velez de Castro, 2025; Kester et al., 2025). In Indonesia, existing studies have primarily examined pluralism and multicultural education within formal Islamic educational institutions (Asiah et al., 2024; Mu'ti, 2023; Nurlaili et al., 2024; Nurman et al., 2022). Consequently, little is known about how non-formal peace education programs grounded in local philosophical traditions facilitate transformative learning and translate peace values into sustained social action. This study addresses this gap by examining the Gus Dur School for Peace as a community-based model of values-oriented peace education rooted in Abdurrahman Wahid's philosophy.

Theoretically, this article draws on Peace Education Theory as developed by (Bar-Tal, 2002; Rosen, 2009), which distinguishes between direct models (explicit instruction in peace values and conflict resolution) and indirect models (cultivating peace values through social experience and role modeling). Both are analyzed through a transformative education framework encompassing cognitive, affective, and active dimensions (Bar-Tal, 2002; Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009; Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2019). Through this framework, peace education is understood not merely as discourse, but as a movement toward social transformation and universal humanity.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive case study design, drawing on Stake (1995, 2006). This approach was chosen because it focuses on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within its specific context, rather than on producing generalizable findings. Through this design, the research explores how the actors involved in the GDSP program shape and understand meanings, experiences, and values. The selection of GDSP as a research case is based on the program's unique and contextual characteristics. This program is not viewed as a uniformly replicable educational model, but rather as an educational practice that evolves through the social interactions of its participants. The values espoused in the program do not exist as static concepts, but are continually negotiated, interpreted, and embodied in action by the individuals involved. Therefore, an approach oriented toward measurement and generalization is deemed inadequate to capture these dynamics.

During the research process, the researcher participated in various GDSP activities as a participant observer, both during online training sessions and in documenting social projects produced by participants. This involvement provided an opportunity to understand dimensions of learning often not captured in formal reports, such as negotiating ideas, emerging doubts, interaction dynamics, and spontaneous reflections that developed during the program. Nevertheless, the researcher's position as a non-GDSP participant allowed for analytical distance in reading and interpreting the phenomena under study. The researcher collected data through three main techniques. First, the researcher conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews online via Zoom. The researcher purposively selected four informants based on their level of involvement and role in the program. The limited number of informants was not seen as a weakness of the study, but rather a consequence of the epistemological orientation of interpretive case studies, which prioritize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. As Stake (1995) explains, the strength of a case study lies in its ability to provide rich interpretations of a particular case. These four informants represent different layers of GDSP

implementation, from idea formulators and program managers to participants who enact the program's values in their social practices.

Table 1. Research Informant

No	Code	Position
1.	U1	Senior Staff Research
2.	U2	GDSP staff Program
3.	P2	GDSP Alumni
4.	U3	GDSP Staff

Data were collected through three techniques: interviews, observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online and lasted approximately 45–90 minutes to explore participants' experiences in the GDSP program, their understanding of Gus Dur's values, and their application in social action. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted during the training sessions, noting interactions between facilitators and participants, the delivery of materials, and the internalization of values that emerged during the activities. Document analysis focused primarily on the GDSP training module, which was cross-referenced against interview data to verify the program's curricular foundations, including the nine core values, the sequence of program stages, and the integration of pluralism, gender equality, and human rights as interconnected peace themes. We reviewed activity reports and social project proposals to trace how module content translated into field practice.

Data analysis used a Stake approach through three categorical aggregation processes, which grouped data from informants and observation notes; direct interpretation, explaining meanings that were difficult to fit into categories or themes; and looking for observable relationships between Gus Dur's values, participant experiences, and alumni practices (Stake, 1995, 2006). Trustworthiness was strengthened through technical triangulation across interview, observation, and document data, as well as member-checking and source triangulation with key informants during initial interpretation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gus Dur's Thoughts as a Conceptual Foundation

GDSP is a program initiated by the Wahid Foundation in 2017. Initially, it targeted only young people in the Peace Village area, also managed by the Wahid Foundation. At the time of this research, the program had reached its fifth and sixth cohorts, with participants from various regions. The 2026 cohort even included participants from as far away as Singapore. The Wahid Foundation's active peace education program goes beyond conceptual learning. It is a transformative peace education initiative. U1 stated this directly:

"At WF, we don't just discuss material, or what we call passive peace... but we promote active education that learns from the root of the problem until it is embedded and implemented in the peace education participants," U1

The concept of active peace promoted in the GDSP is closely linked to Gus Dur's thinking. From this perspective, peace is not understood simply as the absence of conflict, but as a conscious effort to build justice and tolerance. True peace requires individuals and communities to participate in addressing inequalities and changing social conditions that can trigger conflict. Therefore, peace is seen as a moral commitment that encourages people to care for and engage with others in creating a tolerant society. This understanding is reflected in the statement of a program staff member:

"The concept of peace is not limited to places where conflict occurs, but even places where there is no conflict must be made peaceful so that conflict does not arise." U2

The peace education developed by the GDSP aligns with Johan Galtung, a leading figure in peace research. The concept of active peace, which underpins the GDSP, aligns with Galtung's theory of positive peace. Galtung distinguishes between two forms of peace: negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is understood as the absence of direct violence, while positive peace encompasses social conditions free from structural and cultural violence. This view shows that true peace is achieved not only when physical conflict ceases, but also when society realizes social justice, well-being, and equality (Forde, 2022; Galtung, 1969).

The GDSP translates the principles of *positive peace* into an educational context by emphasizing the importance of transforming social consciousness and dismantling structures of injustice. The program goes beyond conflict resolution or post-violence reconciliation but instead focuses on building just and inclusive social relations. GDSP participants' activities, such as social projects, interfaith dialogue, and equality campaigns, demonstrate educational practices oriented toward dismantling structural forms of violence at the grassroots level. This process aligns with Galtung's concept of *peacebuilding*, a continuous effort to build social structures that support long-term peace through justice, participation, and equality.

The concept of active peace in the GDSP also reflects the dimensions of cultural transformation Galtung outlines in his *cultural peace approach*. Gus Dur, through his inherited values, emphasized respect for plurality, dialogue, and universal humanity, which, in Galtung's framework, are included in strategies to overcome *cultural* or symbolic violence stemming from prejudice, stereotypes, and social discrimination (Galtung, 1969; Purwanto et al., 2023). GDSP-developed education aims to change society's perspective on differences by instilling the values of humanity, equality, and social justice as new norms in communal life.

The GDSP peace education paradigm is transformative, as Galtung's theory emphasizes that peace requires structural and conscious change. Peace education in the GDSP model not only transfers knowledge about conflict but also fosters a reflective awareness that peace is the collective responsibility of every individual. The resource person explained that.

"Peace is a serious effort that is actively carried out to prevent conflict from occurring." U1

This statement aligns with Galtung's idea that peace is an active process that requires human involvement in eliminating structural injustice and in building a civilized social system. The integration between Gus Dur's thinking and Galtung's theory is evident in their shared orientation toward just peace. Gus Dur positions social justice as a prerequisite for true peace, while Galtung asserts that true peace is only achieved when social structures no longer oppress or marginalize certain groups. Both views assume peace education must target values, systems, and culture. GDSP thus serves as a vehicle for *peace education*, teaching tolerance and practicing the values of social transformation grounded in justice, humanity, and freedom.

Gus Dur's concept of humanity grounds social ethics in plurality. This view asserts that the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and political views is a source of social strength when cultivated through dialogical engagement. GDSP internalizes this view through inclusive, open, and non-doctrinal peace education. The resource person explained that although Gus Dur is known as an Islamic figure,

"There is no specific material on Islam, but it covers tolerance, peace, the environment, young people, how to develop communities, social advocacy, media, and gender" U3.

The statement shows that GDSP presents religious values in a universal, not sectarian, manner by emphasizing respect for human dignity regardless of religious or ethnic boundaries. The ethical dimension of Gus Dur's thinking is reflected in nine core values formulated by the Wahid Foundation as the core of all GDSP activities (Yani & Rohman, 2023). The speaker explained that these nine values summarize Gus Dur's lifelong struggles.

Table 2. Nine Values Gus Dur

No	Value	Concept	Implementation
1.	Spirituality	Spiritual foundation emphasizing the unity of God and the intrinsic dignity of all humans as God's creation	Peace education rooted in spiritual awareness and ethical humanism
2.	Humanity	Recognition of human dignity as central to social life, transcending differences	Learning that fosters empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity
3.	Justice	Universal principle to eliminate inequity and oppressive social structures	Social advocacy, community empowerment, and defense of marginalized groups
4.	Equality	Recognition of equal rights and opportunities for every person	Policies and practices that ensure inclusive participation across religious, cultural, and gender differences
5.	Liberation	Emancipation from fear, ignorance, poverty, and structural oppression	Participatory education that builds critical consciousness and transformative action
6.	Humility	A life that rejects material excess and greed	A lifestyle oriented toward service, humility, and community engagement
7.	Solidarity	A commitment to relational solidarity and mutual care among people	Activities that build networks, cooperation, and mutual support across groups
8.	Chivalry	Moral courage, responsibility, integrity, and constancy in action	Leadership training emphasizing ethical decision-making and personal bravery
9.	Local Wisdom	Appreciation and integration of indigenous cultural values that uphold unity in diversity	Integrating local cultural practices into peace projects and community engagement

Gus Dur's nine values outlined in the table above each has its own meaning. Spirituality (*ketauhidan*) serves as society's moral foundation. *Ketauhidan* means that in the eyes of God, humans have the same place or status as other humans. Essentially, this value regulates the vertical relationship between God and humans. This value serves as a benchmark for other values, from which social values are derived, following spiritual values. This vertical relationship gives rise to the horizontal relationship between humans. In Gus Dur's framework, humanity, justice, and equality are not abstract ideals. Humans are equal creations of God, so discrimination based on religion or ethnicity is not only politically wrong but also theologically inconsistent. Character values such as simplicity, honesty, and exemplary behavior are the next level, related to humans themselves. These values shape the kind of person capable of committing to acting kindly toward others. Meanwhile, U1 describes courage and liberation as the essence of Gus Dur's thinking as a figure who fought injustice and longed for freedom from oppression. These values encourage participants to transcend personal beliefs and move toward public action. The hope is that Gus Dur's nine values are not merely ideals, but are internalized and lead to concrete action in society.

In the Wahid Foundation's Peace School program, Gus Dur's nine values are not taught to be memorized. Facilitators consistently guide participants to truly actualize the values they learn. One informant explained that the material they learned opened their eyes to things they hadn't previously seen. This shift from passive familiarity to active recognition is what the nine-values framework is designed to foster. The data suggest internalization is neither linear nor uniform. Some participants arrived with prior social awareness and moved quickly through the cognitive stages, while others required more time to connect the material to their own experience. More significantly, cognitive grasp did not always translate into affective or behavioral change one staff member noted that certain participants completed their social projects as a program requirement rather than as an expression of genuine commitment, going through the motions without the values having taken root. This tension is not a failure of the program design but reflects the inherent complexity of values-based education: structured stages can create conditions for transformation, but they cannot guarantee it. The GDSP offers a scaffold; what participants build on it depends on what they bring and what they encounter along the way.

This unevenness is not a failure of the program. It reflects the reality that internalization is not uniform. The GDSP provides structure and guidance; what participants do with it depends on what they understand. Gus Dur's thinking, filtered through a nine-value framework, gives the GDSP something that many peace education programs lack. The program doesn't resolve the tensions between these dimensions. Gus Dur never pretended peace was easy, but the program gave participants a coherent vocabulary for navigating it. That vocabulary, more than any single training session, is perhaps what stays with participants long after the program ends.

Implementation of Peace Education at the Gusdur School for Peace

The Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP) is a peace education program developed by the Wahid Foundation as a learning space for young people to understand and practice the values of peace in their daily lives. This program brings together participants from various religious, cultural, and social backgrounds to learn together in an inclusive atmosphere. Through this process, the GDSP strives to shape a generation of young people with social sensitivity, critical thinking skills, and a commitment to the values of humanity and justice. The learning goes beyond conceptual understanding of tolerance and diversity and encourages participants to translate what they learn into social practices in society. All series of activities in this program are based on Gus Dur's ideas on pluralism, humanity, and social justice, adapted to the challenges of contemporary social life (Sari, 2022). With this peace education framework, the GDSP strives to produce a young generation capable of bridging interfaith, interethnic, and intercultural divides, grounded in a universal spirit of humanism.

The Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP) program is implemented through several continuous stages, starting with participant selection, training, mentoring, and community social projects. The program recruits participants openly, providing equal opportunities regardless of religious background, gender, or nationality. Notably, the selection interview also probed candidates' attitudes toward difference and their readiness to commit to designing a community program, using training criteria that signal the program's affective entry point. Participants are not selected solely on the basis of prior activism, but on the basis of whether they already carry a disposition toward social engagement that the program can then deepen. In this sense, the selection stage is itself the first moment of affective assessment, not merely administrative screening. This stage is crucial because selected participants are expected to engage intensively in the learning process and develop peace initiatives that they will later implement through various social activities in their communities. Each applicant must submit a CV or other supporting documents for initial selection. The selection process has two stages: an administrative stage and an online interview. This was confirmed by a GDSP alumnus from the 5th batch:

"Wahid posted that he was opening a training program... the form also includes a CV upload... my friend also participated in the 5th GDSP recruitment, but he didn't make it, so they were screened based on their CV." P2

From this process, approximately 30 to 50 participants were selected from diverse religious and regional backgrounds, including several participants from abroad. This cross-border recruitment model reflects the Wahid Foundation's commitment to building a regional peace network based on youth participation. As a result, GDSP participants are not only rigorously selected but also reflect inclusive diversity.

The GDSP program consists of several complementary stages. The first stage is a three-month training program. Training is conducted both online and offline, tailored to participants' needs. Online sessions are held every weekend, Saturday and Sunday, and average three hours per session. One of the GDSP staff further explained the implementation format:

"There are Zoom meetings for three months, three to four hours a week each... the rest of the time they have field assignments, fieldwork, or reading. There are lots of assignments, it's like a lecture." U3

The material presented covered peace theory, conflict resolution, human rights, gender equality, pluralism, leadership, and community-based advocacy. Each session featured speakers from various fields and countries, including social activists, academics, interfaith activists, and

GDSP alumni who have successfully implemented peace projects in their respective regions. The online format made it easy for participants from various regions to participate actively without being constrained by distance, although participants in remote areas still experienced technical challenges such as unstable internet connections.

During this stage of the training, participants were also given weekly assignments designed to hone social awareness and foster creativity. These assignments included visiting interfaith houses of worship, interviewing disabled friends in their respective communities, developing social campaigns, and compiling gender analyses in their respective regions. A GDSP alumni from the 5th cohort shared their experiences:

"In between training sessions, we also had offline activities, so we were independent. The assignment was to conduct interviews with places of worship. Everyone had to visit a place of worship. Yesterday, I went to a temple and a Chinese temple." P2

Through this series of assignments, participants were trained to think critically, communicate effectively, and innovate in voicing the values of tolerance and social justice. This process also fostered awareness that peace is not solely the responsibility of institutions, but rather a collective movement that must begin with us.

The second stage is the design and implementation of a social project as a concrete manifestation of the peace values they have learned. At this stage, participants receive guidance in developing a social project proposal based on their observations and reflections on real-world issues in their respective communities. Participants analyze existing problems, formulate creative solutions, and develop a realistic implementation plan. Each participant or group must create a proposal that reflects peace issues in their community. Proposals are assessed based on the problem's relevance, clarity of objectives, implementation strategy, and potential for sustainability. The GDSP staff explained the proposal selection process:

"So, there are a lot of participants, around 50. They will study for 3 months. After studying, they will be directed to submit social project proposals. After that, we will select 10 proposals. The successful proposals will be funded to implement them, and of course, they will be monitored by the WF." U2

Proposals deemed feasible then receive mentoring from GDSP facilitators along with financial support for their implementation. Mentoring is provided not only during the activity but also from developing the program plan to the final report. Through this mechanism, participants can discuss issues that arise during the activity and adapt the program to the target community's conditions. Participants undertake diverse activities, ranging from interfaith dialogue and children's education to women's empowerment and efforts to strengthen cooperation among community residents. Thus, the learning process in GDSP does not stop with presenting material during training but continues through direct practice in the community.

The implementation phase provides participants with the opportunity to apply the ideas formulated in the proposal to real-world activities. During this stage, participants encounter various field conditions, such as building communication with the community, collaborating with relevant parties, and adapting activities to local needs. Throughout the process, facilitators continue to mentor participants to help them overcome obstacles and ensure activities proceed according to planned objectives. This experience gives participants an opportunity to understand how peace values are applied in diverse social contexts.

After completing the activities, participants take part in an evaluation phase as the final part of the program. Evaluation involves compiling reports, presenting activity results, and conducting reflection sessions with facilitators and other participants. Through these activities, participants review the processes undertaken, identify any obstacles encountered, and discuss possible future program developments. For organizers, evaluation also helps assess the extent to which program objectives have been achieved, while for participants, it serves as a learning platform to understand the experiences gained during the social project. The evaluative discussions are participatory, creating an open dialogue where participants can share experiences and learn from each other's successes and failures. This process reinforces the awareness that

peacebuilding is a long journey that requires consistency, empathy, and the ability to adapt to ever-changing social dynamics.

After the social project evaluation, the program continues with a live-in activity, where participants spend several days living with the community to experience grassroots social realities firsthand. Participants who pass the proposal selection and complete the initial implementation stage attend this activity, entering the contextual learning phase with practical experience. The live-in is designed as a space for exchanging experiences, dialogue, and in-depth observation, where participants interact directly with residents, understand social dynamics, and explore the values of local wisdom that underpin social cohesion. In addition to engaging in the community's daily life, participants receive support materials from facilitators to help them understand the context, manage diversity, and reflect on the learning process.

"We invite them to live-in for a week, to learn together, and we cover several business models and community development models, as well as professional development. Banyuwangi Bangsring is like the ultimate example: a peaceful village that is truly self-sustaining, transforming from illegal fishing to ecotourism, with the entire community working together." U3

The live-in locations are selectively chosen based on social issues and local peace potential, including areas with strong tolerance practices as well as areas that have experienced social tension, such as Bangsring (Banyuwangi). During the live-in program, participants live and interact directly with the community at a designated location. During this program, participants participate in various activities, such as dialogues with community leaders, observing religious practices, visiting local communities, and participating in reflection sessions with facilitators. This experience provides participants with the opportunity to see firsthand how diversity is lived in daily life. Through interactions during the program, participants not only gain an understanding of the material presented in class but also learn from the experiences of the people they meet in the field.

One participant described the live-in experience as a crucial part of their learning process. According to them, the activity helped them understand the community's social conditions more realistically and gave them the tools to develop social activities after the program ended.

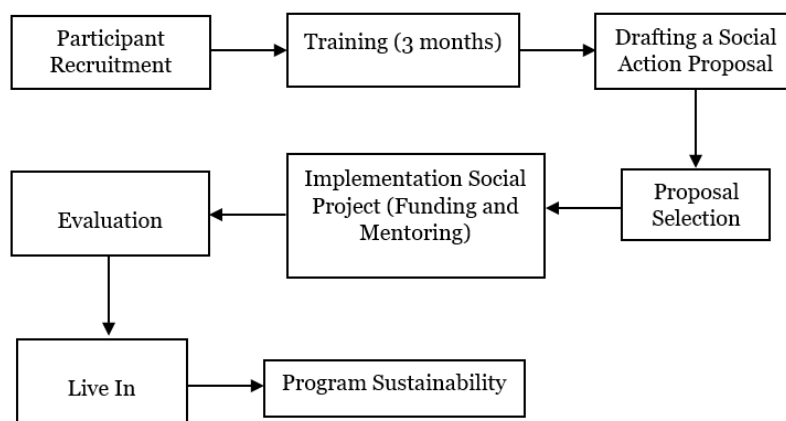
"I was in Banyuwangi during the live-in program. While there, we were taught a lot of material, and we were also taught to go into the field. There, we learned how to understand the community, which was relatively new to us. I can still feel the impact of that, to the point where I can build my own community here." P2

After the live-in program concluded, participants took part in a follow-up phase to maintain continuity in the learning process. At this stage, participants are encouraged to turn the ideas and experiences gained during the program into activities in their communities. These activities take various forms, ranging from discussions, social campaigns, interfaith and cultural forums, to the formation of communities focused on issues of tolerance and social justice. Through these activities, the values gained during the GDSP program are not limited to personal experiences but are developed into activities that involve the wider community. A GDSP staff member also emphasized the importance of post-training follow-up. He explained that the program's goal is not only to raise participants' awareness of peace issues but also to encourage concrete actions that can be taken collectively.

"We don't want it to just end with discussions or broadening our horizons, but also involve actions that can be taken together. Because we believe that's where the challenge lies. People can understand, they can be aware, but what do they do after that?" U3

This statement demonstrates that the GDSP places social action as a crucial part of the peace education process. Therefore, participants are not only invited to understand the values of peace through discussion and reflection, but are also encouraged to apply them in activities relevant to the needs of their community.

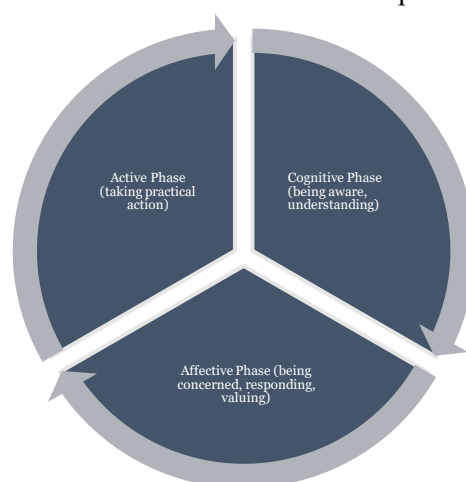
Figure 1. Flow of GDSP Peace Education Implementation



The GDSP activity series shows that the learning process does not end with training completion. After receiving the material, participants move on to other stages, such as implementing social projects, live-in, evaluation, and follow-up activities. These stages give participants opportunities to apply the knowledge and experience gained during the program to situations they encounter in their communities. Interviews revealed that many participants continued their social activities after the program ended. Some formed communities, held discussions, or developed activities related to diversity and peace issues in their respective communities. This shows that the experiences gained during the GDSP are not only training material but also valuable resources for participants in various social activities after the program concludes.

Gusdur School for Peace as Transformative Peace Education

Based on research findings, the peace education implemented in the Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP) program focuses not only on delivering material on peace and diversity. The learning process also aims to help participants understand these values, internalize them, and apply them in their daily lives. This is evident in activities designed not only for material delivery but also for discussions, reflections, live-in sessions, and implementing social projects in the community. When analyzed using the peace education typology, the GDSP learning process encompasses three main dimensions: cognitive, affective, and active. The cognitive dimension is evident in providing knowledge on diversity, tolerance, and peace. The affective dimension is evident in the program's efforts to foster empathy, appreciation for differences, and sensitivity to social issues faced by other groups. Meanwhile, the active dimension is realized through participant involvement in various activities and social projects that encourage them to apply peace values in their social lives (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2019). These three dimensions are interconnected in GDSP's learning process. Participants not only gain knowledge about peace and diversity but are also encouraged to understand, experience, and apply these values through various activities. Thus, the learning process goes beyond conceptual understanding and encourages participants to implement them in their daily lives.

Figure 1. Chart Flow of GDSP Peace Education Implementation

Source: (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2019)

The first dimension is the cognitive dimension, which occupies a foundational position in building participants' intellectual awareness of humanitarian issues and social justice. This dimension centers on two key stages: awareness (*being aware*) and understanding (Setiadi et al., 2017). In the awareness stage, participants are encouraged to examine various issues existing in society, such as discrimination, inequality, and social conflict. Through the discussions and reflections during the training, participants begin to understand that peace does not simply mean the absence of conflict, but also how society can live in a just and respectful manner. The next stage is understanding. At this stage, participants receive material on peace, human rights, pluralism, gender equality, and conflict resolution. However, the material is not presented solely in theoretical form. Participants are also encouraged to relate it to the experiences and conditions they encounter in their respective environments. A GDSP staff member explained that the program seeks to build on existing community conditions.

"The Wahid Foundation's approach is highly contextual and cultural. We first try to understand what resources and strengths the community already possesses, and these become the tools and strengths we use to empower people on the ground." (U3)

This statement demonstrates that the GDSP seeks to initiate the learning process from existing conditions within the community. The community's potential, experience, and resources are crucial to program implementation. In the cognitive dimension, participants gain knowledge on peace, diversity, human rights, and conflict resolution. This material is discussed through training, seminars, and group discussions. Through this process, participants not only gain an understanding of peace but are also encouraged to examine various social issues in society from a broader perspective. Through this learning, participants begin to understand that conflict is often related to injustice, discrimination, and inequity in social life (Freire, 1970). Participants do not only study theory; they are also invited to examine conditions in their immediate surroundings discrimination, intolerance, or the marginalization of vulnerable groups as dimensions of social conflict. This process generates a critical awareness that is not merely academic, but grounded in participants' lived experiences within their own communities.

Figure 2. Chart Flow of GDSP Peace Education Implementation



In addition to imparting knowledge, the GDSP also strives to foster attitudes and values related to peace. This is evident in various activities that encourage participants to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. Through this process, participants learn to understand others' experiences, appreciate differences, and become more sensitive to the issues faced by specific groups in society. Research has shown that this aspect is a crucial part of the peace education process at the GDSP. Participants are not only encouraged to understand the concept of peace through the material presented but also to experience firsthand encounters with diverse social realities. These experiences help participants develop empathy and foster mutual respect in their daily lives (Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2021). This affective process unfolds gradually through three primary levels: *being concerned*, *responding*, and *valuing*, drawn from the affective taxonomy developed by Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

Based on the interviews, the changes participants experienced were not only related to their knowledge, but also to how they viewed others and the social issues around them. During the program, participants met many people from diverse backgrounds. This experience made them more open and understanding of the experiences of other groups they had rarely encountered before. One participant shared that she began to develop a different perspective on women's role. She believed that women should not only be protected but also given space to participate in various policies and activities in society.

"It turns out that women not only need to be protected, but also need to be empowered and involved in various public policies, both in training and other activities. Because they are the ones who will ultimately determine the progress of a nation." (P2)

Experiences like this encouraged participants to care more about issues in their communities. Several participants then became involved in social activities, building communities, or developing programs related to diversity and peace. Even after the program concluded, some participants continued these activities in their communities. This shows that the values gained during the GDSP are not only understood as training material, but also influence how participants behave and act in everyday life.

"The essence of peace is when people are free to be themselves and free to contribute to their communities. That, more or less, is the common thread across all the answers we hear." U3

The affective process in GDSP demonstrates that transformative peace education does not simply teach theory or moral principles, but brings emotional experiences to life experiences that cultivate critical awareness, a sense of humanity, and social responsibility.

Figure 3. Chart Flow of GDSP Peace Education Implementation

At this stage, participants begin to become directly involved in various community activities. Participants then apply the knowledge and experience gained during training through social projects, community activities, and initiatives developed to suit the conditions in their respective environments. Therefore, the learning process takes place not only during the training but also when participants encounter various issues directly in the field. This was also conveyed by a GDSP staff member who emphasized the importance of concrete action after participants gain knowledge and awareness regarding peace issues.

"We want to see the action, what can be done together. If there's anything lacking, it's in the action part. Sometimes what participants gain is only additional insight and awareness. Now, after awareness, what then? That's what's important." U3

The various experiences in the field taught participants many things they couldn't have learned from the training materials alone. They learned to communicate with the community, collaborate with various parties, and adapt activities to existing needs. One participant even said this experience was the most memorable part of the program.

"I think the program was extraordinary because it wasn't just training. We were taught how to prepare proposals, communicate with the community, and even negotiate. For me, it was a very valuable experience." P2

From this experience, it was clear that the activities participants undertook were not just part of a series of programs, but also learning experiences that helped them understand how the values of peace are applied in their daily lives. Through this active approach, GDSP emphasizes the importance of positive peace that is constructive and enduring. Positive peace is not simply the absence of violence (*negative peace*), but a social condition in which justice, equality, and collaboration can take root. Each participant is therefore encouraged to continue developing social movements after the program ends, as a form of moral responsibility toward the values they have internalized.

These three dimensions demonstrate that the learning process in GDSP doesn't stop at providing material. Participants are encouraged to understand, experience, and apply the values learned through various activities throughout the program. In this way, learning becomes not only knowledge but also experiences that can be applied in everyday life.

Table 3. Typology of Peace Education at the Gusdur School for Peace

Dimensions	Learning Focus	Implementation Form	Final Destination
Cognitive	Conceptual knowledge of peace, human rights, pluralism, and conflict resolution.	Online training, thematic seminars, theoretical discussions, and social analysis.	Formation of critical awareness and understanding of the roots of conflict.
Affective	Development of empathy, multicultural awareness, and appreciation of differences.	Interfaith dialogue, group reflection, and intercultural collaborative work.	The formation of attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and social solidarity.
Active	Application of peace values in real social actions.	Social projects, public campaigns, community advocacy, and live-in.	The realization of positive peace and of actions for sustainable social transformation.

Based on research findings, the peacemaking implemented in the GDSP focuses not only on delivering material on peace and diversity. Participants are also encouraged to understand various issues in the community through discussion, reflection, and direct field experience. This process helps participants view social issues from various perspectives and understand how peace values can be applied in everyday life. These findings indicate that learning in the GDSP goes beyond knowledge but also involves social experience and practice. The knowledge gained during the training is then reinforced through community interaction and involvement in various social activities. Thus, the learning process not only helps participants understand peacemaking issues but also encourages them to engage in efforts related to diversity and community life.

This three-dimensional integration further underscores that peace education in GDSP operates through the logic of positive peace, as articulated by Galtung, who understands peace as a social condition requiring justice, equality, and functional social relations (Galtung, 1969). From the entire process undertaken by the participants, it is clear that learning in the GDSP does not take place solely in the training room. Various post-training activities provide participants with opportunities to apply the knowledge and experience they have gained. Therefore, the values of peace are not only understood as learning material but also practiced in various community activities.

CONCLUSION

Research results indicate that peace education in the Gus Dur School for Peace (GDSP) program is developed through three main dimensions: cognitive, affective, and active. In the cognitive dimension, participants gain an understanding of peace, pluralism, human rights, gender equality, and conflict resolution through learning activities that connect the material to social realities. In the affective dimension, participants experience attitude formation through interactions with diverse individuals and groups, fostering empathy, social awareness, and respect for differences. Meanwhile, the active dimension is realized through participant involvement in social projects, live-in activities, and follow-up programs that provide space for them to apply the values of peace in community life. Research findings indicate that these three dimensions do not operate separately but are interconnected in a continuous learning process. The knowledge participants gain forms the basis for understanding social issues, interactive experiences foster empathy, and involvement in social activities provides a space to apply the values learned. Through this process, peace education at the GDSP not only enhances

participants' understanding of peace but also encourages them to engage in efforts related to diversity, humanity, and social life in their respective communities. Thus, peace education at the GDSP demonstrates that peace learning can be achieved through a combination of knowledge, experience, and social practices that mutually support the process of shaping participants' attitudes and actions.

These findings reflect the scope of a study conducted within a single non-formal program with limited informants from one cohort; whether the transformations documented here endure over time remains an open question for future research. The nine core values structuring GDSP's curriculum are not exclusive to non-formal settings. Grounded in universal humanism rather than sectarian doctrine, they can be adapted to PPKn or IPS curricula, provided the pedagogical approach shifts from doctrinal instruction to reflective, facilitative learning. More broadly, the Gus Dur model demonstrates that peace education does not need to be imported to be theoretically rigorous. Rooted in Indonesia's own intellectual tradition and tested through years of practice, it stands as a locally grounded alternative to Western-centric frameworks one that grew from the ground it was meant to cultivate.

REFERENCES

- Arystanbek, A., Bukutova, A., Toleu, G., Parmenter, L., Cremin, H., & Ospanbek, A. (2026). Implementing Positive Peace Education in Schools: A Systematic Literature Review of Global Practices. *Educational Research Review*, 50, 100759. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2025.100759>
- Asiah, M. R., Jamaludin, U., & Leksono, S. M. (2024). Pendidikan Pluralisme di Indonesia. *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal*. <https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/mij/article/view/25302>
- Bar-Tal, D. (2002). The Elusive Nature of Peace Education. In G. Salomon & B. Nevo (Eds.), *Peace Education: The Concept, Principles and Practices Around the World* (pp. 27–36). Lawrence Erlbaum. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410612458>
- Bar-Tal, D., & Rosen, Y. (2009). Peace Education in Societies Involved in Intractable Conflicts: Direct and Indirect Models. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 557–575. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308330969>
- Bekerman, Z., & Zembylas, M. (2020). Critical peace education for social justice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(4), 356–368.
- Davies, L. (2021). Education and extremism: Rethinking prevention. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 81, 102330.
- de Souza, C., & Velez de Castro, F. (2025). Is Peace Education out of Style? The (Im)Possibilities of a Transformative Education. *Education Sciences*, 15(10), 1293. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15101293>
- Fanani, R. (2022). Revolusi tanpa penindasan: Telaah atas teologi pembebasan dan teologi perdamaian Asghar Ali Engineer. *Spiritualis*, 8(2), 124–144. <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v8i2.471>
- Forde, S. (2022). The Violence of Space and Spaces of Violence: Peace as Violence in Unequal and Divided Spaces. *Political Geography*, 93, 102529. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102529>
- Franklin, N. (2024). Gus Dur's Enduring Legacy: Accruing Religious Merit in the Afterlife. *Politics and Governance*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.7874>
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder and Herder.

- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>
- Gleditsch, N. P., Nordkvelle, J., & Strand, H. (2021). Peace research—Just the study of war? *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(2), 143–159.
- Howe, P. (2019). The triple nexus: A potential approach to supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals? *World Development*, 124, 104629. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.104629>
- Kester, K. (2020). Peace education and structural violence. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(6), 593–605.
- Kester, K., Kim, H., & Kwon, S. (2025). Peace Education Research in East Asia, 2020–2025: Key Works Published in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 26, 851–863. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-025-10101-x>
- Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain*. David McKay Company.
- Linner, A., Sharifi, A., Simangan, D., dos Muchangos, L. S., & Chandran, R. (2023). Interactions Between SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions): A Review of Co-benefits, Synergies, Conflicts, and Trade-Offs. In A. Sharifi, D. Simangan, & S. Kaneko (Eds.), *Bridging Peace and Sustainability Amidst Global Transformations* (pp. 31–51). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7572-3_3
- Mu'ti, A. (2023). Pluralistic Islamic Religious Education: A Vision for Indonesia. *American Journal of Islam and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2023.2200280>
- Navarro-Castro, L., & Nario-Galace, J. (2019). *Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace* (Third Edit). Center for Peace Education, Miriam College.
- Nurcholish, A. (2015). *Peace Education \& Pendidikan Perdamaian Gus Dur*. PT Elex Media Komputindo. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=0Mg8DwAAQBAJ>
- Nurlaili, S., Hidayat, M., & Prasetyo, A. (2024). Toleransi dan Pluralisme di Indonesia. *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal*. <https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/mij/article/view/26541>
- Nurman, Yusriadi, & Hamim, S. (2022). Development of Pluralism Education in Indonesia: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 9(3), 106–120. <https://www.ejecs.org/index.php/JECS/article/view/1207>
- Pratama, A. D., Haq, M. T., Firmansyah, F. Z., Hidayat, W., Wismanto, W., & Mayasari, F. (2025). Konsep Keadilan dan Perdamaian dalam Islam. *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal*, 2(1), 49–57. <https://doi.org/10.61132/reflection.v2i1.378>
- Purwanto, Y., Suprpto, Munaf, D. R., Albana, H., Ma'rifataini, L. D., Siregar, I., & Sumarni. (2023). The Peace Education Concept and Practice at Universities: A Systematic Review. *Cogent Education*, 10(2), 2260724. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2260724>
- Rozi, S., Noor, F., Gayatri, I. H., Pabottingi, M., & Widjojo, M. S. (2021). *Politik Identitas: Problematika dan Paradigma Solusi Keetnisan Versus Keindonesiaan di Aceh, Riau, Bali dan Papua*. Bumi Aksara. https://books.google.co.id/books?id=8IU_EAAQBAJ
- Safitri, N. N. (2024). Gus Dur's Philosophical Approach to Pluralism: Insights for Social Harmony in Indonesia. *Islamic Thought Review*, 2(2), 129–139. <https://doi.org/10.30983/itr.v2i2.8790>
- Saihu, M. (2020). *Merawat Pluralisme Merawat Indonesia (Potret Pendidikan Pluralisme*

Agama Di Jembrana-Bali). Deepublish.
<https://books.google.co.id/books?id=KrxAEQAAQBAJ>

- Saleh, M. N. I., Hanum, F., & Rukiyati. (2025). Approaches to implementing peace education in high schools for nonviolent conflict resolution. *Cogent Education*, 12(1), 223–246.
- Sari, R. M. (2022). *Optimization of Gus Dur School for Peace Program Implementation Framing Etman Perspective*. 199–205.
- Setiadi, R., Kartadinata, S., Ilfiandra, & Nakaya, A. (2017). A Peace Pedagogy Model for the Development of Peace Culture in An Education Setting. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 10, 182–189. <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874350101710010182>
- Singh, A., & Singh, V. (2024). The role of institutions in peace and justice for achieving sustainable development goal 16 and societal sustainability. *Revista Amazonia Investiga*, 13(80), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.34069/ai/2024.80.08.1>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage Publications.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. Guilford Press.
- Tanyel, S. S., & Kıralp, F. S. Ş. (2021). Tolerance for Sustainable Peace Culture in a Divided Society: The effect of Peace Education on Tolerance Tendency and Human Values. *Social Indicators Research*, 156(1), 223–246. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02630-w>
- Uksan, A. (2024). *Pendidikan Perdamaian: Confidence Building Measures Dampak Konflik Poso*. CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher). <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=0ub8EAAAQBAJ>
- United Nations. (2021). *Sustainable Development Goal 16: The importance of good security sector governance for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda*.
- Wahid, A. (2007). *Gus Dur menjawab kegelisahan rakyat*. Penerbit Buku Kompas. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=1SGdQFpH0xwC>
- Yani, A., & Rohman, F. (2023). Sembilan Nilai Utama Gus Dur Perspektif Etika Ibnu Miskawaih. 2(2), 269–277. <https://doi.org/10.55123/sosmaniora.v2i2.1796>
- Zembylas, M., & Loukaidis, L. (2021). Affective practices, difficult histories and peace education: An analysis of teachers' affective dilemmas in ethnically divided Cyprus. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 97, 103225. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103225>