Artful Dialogue: Moving towards an Alternative Peace Education Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

At scale, limited research considers arts-based practice as research towards understanding how local and indigenous cultural art forms can facilitate dialogue with and between children and youth, educators, and policymakers to advance everyday peacebuilding. This paper presents a conceptual framework for a pedagogy, 'Artful Dialogue,' which begins to respond to how cultural forms can be used for dialogue and create alternative spaces for peacebuilding efforts and curricula development. It encourages an adaptive, emplaced, and intergenerational peace education pedagogy in non-formal, informal, and formal post-conflict learning contexts. The framework draws from the learnings and findings of the 'Mobile Arts for Peace' (MAP), a four-year applied research project (2020-2024). Artful Dialogue proposes a value system foregrounding process, relationality, plurality, and a pang of hunger for qualities of experience before product/outcome. It suggests a different ontological and epistemic focus for peace (art) education, one that understands engaging with art forms as dialogic communication that is expansive, generative, and impactful in and of itself. The framework considers three optics: deepening adaptations of indigenous art forms, disrupting space and emplaced dynamics, and reframing intergenerational relations. Artful Dialogue moves towards creatively revealing and transforming structures and situations of violence stemming from harmful social norms.

KEYWORDS

Inter-generational dialogue; arts-based; youth; emplacement; peace education; practice as research.

INTRODUCTION

At a time when culture and art are being reduced to the 'creative industries' alone (O'Connor, 2024), and many educational and research practices, more specifically those that consider 'life skills,' focus on things 'that are deemed useful, positive, teachable, concrete and objectifiable' (Ronkainen et al. 2021, p.2), there is a need for greater understandings and possibilities of arts-based practice: specifically, research approaches that can contribute towards understanding how local and indigenous cultural art forms can be used to create alternative spaces, dialogue, and communication structures for everyday peacebuilding approaches and curricula development at local, national, and international levels. The Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) four-year applied research project findings show that arts-based educational and research practices, partnered and led by supported young people, can reframe and reposition the kinds of knowledge, resources, and information contained within notions of indigenous and local knowledge; youth rights; capacity building; intergenerational dialogue; the reconstruction of cultural representation, and ultimately pedagogy as not only learner-centred, experiential, participatory, but ever-evolving (MAP Joint Report, 2024). The Artful Dialogue Framework, therefore, proposes a different ontological and epistemic focus for peace (art) education, one that understands engaging with art forms as a dialogic communication that is expansive, generative, and impactful in and of itself. It is grounded in a value system that foregrounds process, relationality, and the art of plurality (Thorne, 2022).

Firstly, this paper presents the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) applied research project and situates the project's methodology within Practice as Research (Barrett & Bolt, 2010). Secondly, it discusses critical contextual literature concerning peace education, the pedagogical benefits of arts-based methods/educative approaches, especially in post/conflict contexts, and connections between political capabilities/policy influencing and the roles arts-based approaches can have (Fricker, 2007; Solimen, 2022). Thirdly, it discusses the literature on dialogue and the artful dialogue framework itself through narrative braiding (Cobb, 2013), emplacement (Pink, 2011), and intergenerational (Parker, 2018) optics. It then presents the evidence used to inform this conceptual framework, namely four semi-structured interviews, analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and supported by ethnographic notes from four events in Nepal, Rwanda, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia. The paper then presents and discusses the findings from the thematic analysis and ethnographic notes, including the significance of themes that focus on 'physical space extending performance,' 'expressing freedom,' and 'empathy and confidence building.' Finally, the conclusion suggests how the framework could be used in different learning contexts and areas for further study/reflection.

Mobile Arts for Peace: practice as applied research

'Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP): Informing the National Curriculum and Youth Policy for Peacebuilding' is an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funded four-year applied research project.[i] It aims to create two-way communication between children, young people, and decision-makers using arts-based

methods for peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries. The MAP project began in July 2020, and Phase 2, working across 12 projects in four countries, concludes at the end of 2024. To date, MAP has collaborated with stakeholders from the local to the national level in each country, including partnering with over 150 civil society organisations, over 21,000 youth participants and researchers, over 800 policy and decision-makers, and with cultural artists on various issues of concern. Young people identify community-based issues that have included themes such as child and gender-based violence, educational reform, and mental health and well-being, and through art forms, seek ways to work at local/national levels with artists, officials, civil society, and academics. My role in the project was as a Post Doctoral research Associate from January 2023 – October 2024. For this conceptual paper, the five overarching questions of MAP are not under examination. However, it is worth noting that one of the research questions relating to the understanding of dialogue and indigenous approaches sparked the exploration of what an Artful Dialogue pedagogy may look like in the context of the MAP project. This question was: How might cultural forms be used for dialogue with and between children and youth, educators, and policymakers to advance peacebuilding through a local and indigenous approach? It is through adapted indigenous art forms, in partnership with adult allies (researchers, educators, civil society), sought to affect/effect change in local/national curricula and well-being/educational policy. Central to the MAP approach was the adaption of local cultural forms for dialogic purposes, and this remains embedded in the emerging framework presented in this paper.

MAP's methodology is based on 'practice as research' (Barrett & Bolt, 2010; Candy & Edmonds, 2018). This is grounded in a belief that artistic practice, as research shows that knowledge originates from doing, being, and from the senses. It is a generative inquiry drawing from subjective, interdisciplinary, and evolving/emergent methodologies. In the case of MAP, these are primarily indigenous performative or visual art forms such as *Deuda* (a call and response performative song and dance from far western Nepal) or *Imigongo* (traditionally geometric paintings made by women using cow dung on walls, pottery, and canvas). The art forms are all dialogic (requiring the engagement of performers with an audience), and collaboration is rooted in the preparation, production, and/or dissemination stages (often iterative rather than linear). The art forms contain affordances that enable investigations/praxis of identity, problem, and solution finding of so-called community issues towards collective action and integrate mentorship and peer-to-peer learning (youth-youth and youth-adult) through active listening and trust-building exercises (see the MAP manual in the references) that support re-imaginings of pedagogy/curriculum/policy.

Arts-based methods and peace education: generating alterities

Arts-based co-creation methods become a means to break/re-form harmful social norms. In this educative context, art goes beyond aesthetics alone and grapples with processes of imagination, criticality, and pluralism that objectivist and reductionist pedagogies are restricted by (Sullivan, 1993). In recent years, increasing evidence suggests positive outcomes associated with arts-

based methods and pedagogical approaches, including that they (1) enable diverse forms of participant expression with restorative, empowering, and therapeutic qualities (Leavy, 2017), (2) enhance mental health and social resilience (Hacking et al., 2008) (3) promote social cohesion, empathy, and learning to live together (Catterall et al., 2012). Ultimately, though, while artistic endeavours, as forms of human expression, can be instrumentalised, and serve a purpose, it is in the very acts of creating, making, re-making, co-creating that 'art does not need justifying: it is the place of complexity, time, and deepness' (Minister of Education of Portugal, Dr. João Costa at the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education, February 2024). Artistic endeavours, ways of being and becoming, are a reminder of our shared humanity (similarities and differences), empathy, and generative qualities that make reductionist ideologies obsolete.

Arts-based methods enable the use of symbols, metaphors, legitimizing bodily expressions such as song, dance, spoken word (oral ways of knowing) that can be both popular/emergent and traditional (Hunter et al., 2019; Türkmen & Cesur, 2024). The nexus of arts and peacebuilding theory and methods brings new 'ways of knowing' into peace education. In doing so, arts and peace educators can facilitate fewer threatening ways to discuss matters of social importance/concern, which facilitate co-constructed alternatives, acknowledging challenges, accepting pluralities, and revelling in human experience and emotive expressivity such as joy, sadness, anger, and pride (Cameron, 2010). This complex relational aspect of art-based approaches makes them a powerful tool for conveying the capabilities (Sen, 1985; Walker, 2005) of young people and creating the conditions for young people to present alternative visions and solutions to adults (teachers, policymakers, parents) in ways of knowing that they are comfortable with. By engaging adults in this sensory praxis towards everyday peacebuilding (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015; Ware & Ware, 2021), young people reach deep entangled layers of communication with adults (Breed et al., 2022). This is particularly nuanced in post/conflict groups, where adults may experience echoes of similar lived experiences/patterns of structural violence, whether it is gender-based violence, educational exclusion, or experiences of ill mental health and well-being. I will return to this in the discussion section.

The MAP research project is a probing/journeying into understanding what an international and cross-cultural peace education initiative could be, starting from non-formal and informal settings and moving towards integration into formal education systems (as in the case of Rwanda). Peace education foresees a transformation of the present human condition through changing existing structures and social norms about violence and peace through altering educational content, structures, and pedagogy, as well as policies to address structural forms of violence at all levels (Arikan, 2009; Bajaj, 2008, 2018; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2016). Thus, art education (through applied research processes in the case of MAP) generates an alternative pedagogy and curriculum grounded in critical, creative peace-seeking that aims to transform structures and situations of violence through arts-based methods. This goes beyond school settings to include community and local/national authorities. Education, like art, is never neatly bounded. Policy influencing is therefore important to this pedagogical peace (art)

education approach, because the use of art and cultural forms/resources enables participants to work with others, refine their ideas, and build general political capabilities through role-playing, discussing potential challenges, and sharing ideas (Fricker, 2007; Soliman et al., 2022; MAP, 2024; Zorba, 2023). In doing so, they must embrace contradictions in our lives and seek alternatives to social change. Art is always political.

Conceptualising dialogue

After undertaking a narrative review (Greenhalgh et al., 2018) of the literature on 'dialogue' across peacebuilding, education, and public policy disciplines, including both academic and practitioner sources, I frame dialogue as 'something more than conversation, discussion or debate,' and instead as 'an art in itself', Henrik Hammargren, Executive Director, of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Gruener et al., 2019, p.7). There are inherently many definitions of dialogue, often as a type of focused communication, and this multiplicity acknowledges its very nature. Dialogue is not inherently about reaching a consensus on one viewpoint; the process accepts the many lived experiences and interpretations of histories, just as there is no hegemonic culture but rather *living* culture*s*. However, attributes of 'dialogue*s*' typically include the praxis of creating a 'safe space'; strengthening relationships: intentions to increase mutual understanding, both of one's own *and* others' positions; and examining assumptions (Gruener et al., 2019). While the notion of 'safe spaces' and associated 'voice' and 'empowerment' should be problematised because they can be used either with very little meaning and/or in a domineering/hegemonic way, as Parker (2018) suggests, I would add a fourth attribute: finding ease with an element of unease. This is where Arao and Clemens (2013) concept of 'brave and safe spaces' is a more accurate construction of dialogic processes, acknowledging power, privilege, and oppression as inherent challenges in processes of dialogue with young people in socio-culturally diverse groups.

Most dialogue constructs consider two main approaches (Gruener et al., 2019). These are:

1. Outcome as purpose: the process of dialogue needs to focus on producing an issue-based result (that contributes to resolving conflict) OR

2. The process as purpose, i.e., the practice of dialogue itself – creating the safe space and mechanism for exchanging views, examining assumptions, and strengthening relationships – is the primary purpose, with outcomes regarding issues resolved considered secondary (but still essential). While this separation may seem an artificial construct, and of course, there are shades in between, it foregrounds the latter approach. Both are evident in MAP; however, this paper aims to strengthen the evidence/findings concerning process as purpose. Process as purpose approaches focus on 'opening up judgments and assumptions' and developing 'shared meanings' (Bohm,1996, p.19). There is also a focus on transforming relationships, underlining that 'always the moderators and participants are searching for the dynamics of the relationship that cause

the problems and must be changed before the problems can be resolved' (Sanders, 2001). As Holloway (2004) states,

Dialogue aims to transform understanding of issues through open, honest sharing and deep listening. It does not aim to provide answers. It does aim to leave people questioning. One of the most important outcomes of a dialogue is not what answers the participants have arrived at but what questions they leave with (Holloway 2004, p.19).

Process as purpose: problematising an overemphasis on policy outcomes

The process as purpose conceptualisation of dialogue also problematises notions of (policy) outcomes/impact that often overemphasise the importance of changing a policy document or increasing a budget alone, i.e., on outcomes alone. Policy influencing is far more complex: it is process and product (Wildervsky, 1979), both text and action (Ball, 1993), and is about 'who defines, who decides' (Stephens, 1991). While outcome indicators can be meaningful, the MAP project demonstrates that dialogic art-based approaches, as a policy influencing praxis, are also equally significant/meaningful. Why is dialogue, particularly as a process, so meaningful? In the literature review, dialogue as the process is essential because it is understood as a critical mechanism for promoting inclusivity, engaging women, youth, marginalised groups, and other actors who are typically not at the centre of educational policy/decision making (Gruener et al., 2019), including at district levels (Bertrand et al., 2023) and regional/international (Banjac, 2016). Furthermore, according to Gruener et al. (2019), it can 'transform strained vertical relationships between the state and society, or cultivate civic trust in governance and official institutions' (p.11). Democratic principles of addressing inequality and building social trust are embedded in most concepts of dialogue. I now present the Artful Dialogue framework, which will explain how arts-based approaches can be infused into holistic (both processes and outcomes) understandings of dialogue for policy influencing and impact.

The Artful Dialogue framework

Artful Dialogue offers an adaptive, emplaced, and intergenerational peace education pedagogy, understood through findings from MAP, which shed light on everyday peacebuilding (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015) as an embodied, expressive, emotive, and generative praxis. The framework's principles focus on multiplicity (as divergence and commonality), foregrounding 'process as purpose' and then acknowledging product/outcome, and considering peace (art-based) education as a form of impact in and of itself. In addition to these three principles are three iterative (non-linear) optics to construct this type of peace (art) education pedagogy. These are considerations of indigenous art form adaptations, emplacement (an awareness of embodiment and use of space), and intergenerational relations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

The Artful Dialogue framework.
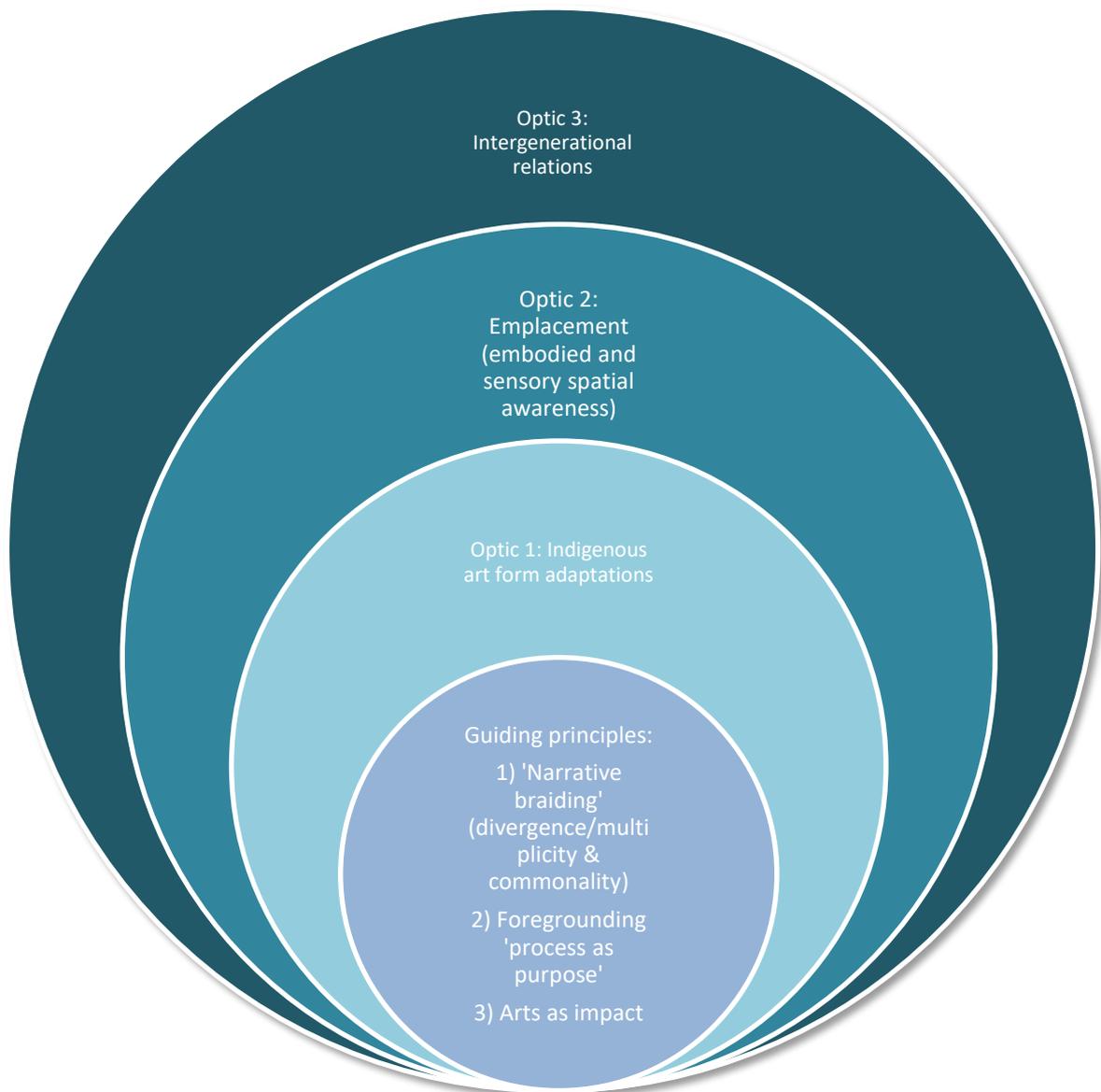
This framework builds on Cobb's (2013) notion of 'narrative braiding', originally intended to create better-formed stories, weaving strands of conflicting narratives into larger wholes, opening out and representing all sides. MAP's approaches to dialogue as peace (art) pedagogy can be viewed as seeking to both open out/seek complexity in narratives of impact/social change, i.e., there are different approaches across countries that are also contextually specific, as well as understand the common threads (MAP Joint report, 2024). The Artful Dialogue framework proposes a different way of understanding impact/social change as an expression of narrative braiding, which is relevant for peace education learning contexts, especially in cross-cultural post-conflict contexts, with young people. Narrative braiding does not seek a most significant change approach (Davis et al., 2003), i.e., a narrowing into commonality alone, but instead emphasises the importance of narratives holding both divergence/conflict and

commonality. Narratives and stories help craft knowledge and understanding of impact (how/what social change has occurred). Stories catalyse meaning-making in all cultures (Fairey, 2024). Shaping how individuals and collective/community groups perceive each other, informing beliefs, and ultimately directing actions and behaviours (Polletta et al., 2011; Buckler et al., 2022). Narratives can be understood as the patterns generated from stories, enabling a structure/framework for specific stories to take hold towards either conflict or peace (Fairey, 2024). Narratives of social change are also not static or singular, and arts-based methods embrace the meaning-making/doing in a direct and evocative way, which is pluralistic, as the findings demonstrate.

In addition, the framework builds upon Parker's (2018) conceptualisation of intergenerational dialogue at a macro level as 'community without closure' (Couldry 2004, p.17). Communities are not easily regulated/defined but instead are 'contact zones' where digital media art [I would suggest other performative and visual arts as well] 'can inspire a sense of belonging, even as it recognizes difference' (Parker 2018, p.373). Similarly, Pink's (2011) notion of 'emplacement' provides a more micro-relational understanding of social geographies as bodies, performance, and materialities inter-acting. She perceives emplacement as the idea of bringing the biological body into the analysis; second to examine the relationship between the sensing body, movement, and human perception; and third attending to a theory of place as means of comprehending the environments in which the sporting/performing body engages (Pink 2011, p.347).

Hence, the body-mind is perceived as an intrinsic part of places, and movement within and through a specific socio-cultural environment provides a sensory feast for understanding the affective/effective lived experiences of intergenerational dynamics. I now outline the data collection methods that informed the framework's development.

Methods of data collection for generating a conceptual framework: interviews and ethnographic notes

Qualitative research, especially those with phenomenological underpinnings, can be grounded in valuing the singular/small data sets: there is no assumption that scale provides robust rigour, or rather 'rich rigour' (Tracey, 2010). This values the appropriateness of contexts and transparency of samples and analysis, rather than scale. According to Tracey (2010), a communication scholar, the dominance of quantitative research, stemming from a positivist paradigm still dominates public (and arguably academic) understandings of what equates with empirical validity. Yet applying traditional criteria like objectivity, and reliability to qualitative research is mismatched; similar to "Catholic questions directed to a Methodist audience" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 202). The qualitative intentionality for this conceptual paper, is to draw from a small data set, within a much larger study, using the qualitative criteria set out by Tracey (2010). In particular, asking: is this a worthy topic? Is it timely? Is it interesting? Does it generate *credibility* through members' reflections and multivocality? Let us now consider the method of interviewing and analysis before turning to the ethnographic approach.

Between September 2023 – April 2024, I conducted four semi-structured interviews (Longhurst 2003), using a non-probability sampling method, with either a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator from the Phase 2 Medium grant projects of MAP. They were deliberately selected from each of the four respective countries (Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan) as well as non-random factors, such as availability and interest to participate. The types of questions asked were each framed around one of the three deductive optics of the conceptual framework for an Artful Dialogue pedagogy and included:

Cultural/indigenous art form adaptations: How has x cultural art form been adapted and developed by young people? How is it used to communicate/resonate with policymakers (in a different way to non-arts-based methods)? Have specific parents, schools, and policymakers changed attitudes/guidelines/processes/practices in response?

Emplacement (space and embodied/sensory dynamics): How physically is space used at events to create dialogue? Does your project have a particular understanding of what a 'safe space' is? Does the space/art form encourage a particular embodied presence/process? Have specific policymakers made any changes to guidelines/processes in response?

Inter-generational relations: What innovative approaches to inter-generational dialogue have you tried? What preparation and follow-through is needed? Did they produce the outcomes you hoped for? Have specific policymakers communicated that they now have a different attitude/approach to working with/including young people? What lessons can you share?

I then analysed the interviews using a reflexive semantic, largely deductive thematic analysis. There are six iterative phases to this process. These are: 1) familiarisation with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) generating themes, 4) reviewing potential themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) writing up (Braun and Clarke 2022).

I supported this data with ethnographic notes (Emerson et al., 2011) from four inter-generational arts policy-influencing events in Nepal, Rwanda, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia. I participated in all of the one-day events in person, expect for the Indonesian event, which I participated in online (it was the only hybrid event). The first was a UNESCO-MAP Roundtable in Kathmandu, Nepal, in September 2023 aimed at sharing arts-based approaches (see the event blog post[ii]), including curriculum development in Nepal, and the second, the fourth Drumming festival of the One Girl, One Drum project[iii] in March 2024. The third was a national inter-generational event in Bishkek in May 2023. The fourth was the Beyond Tradition inter-generational stakeholder performance in March 2024, which was communicated through the art form of *Lenong* (Shahab, 2001). More information on these projects can be found on the MAP website: https://map.lincoln.ac.uk/, which includes the specific contextualisation of individual projects, as well as individual web pages/blogs. It is not the scope of this article to explore each project. Instead, the review of ethnographic notes, written during and post each event, provides qualitative evidence, through foregrounding both participants' lived experiences, as demonstrated by adding direct quotes, *and* my interpretations of participating in these lived experiences. My concise ethnographic notes focused on noticing intergenerational

and embodied/emplaced dynamics, as well as witnessing the cultural forms unfolding, asking who was doing what, where, when and why. Thus, I began to create reflections on how an Artful Dialogue becomes a way to understand the dialogic nature (Wegerif, 2006) of the making of living art forms (in motion as performance), between performers and audience. But also, the receiving of the praxis, as the next section will unpack.

The Thematic Analysis and Findings

For Phase 1 of the thematic analysis, I read the interview transcripts and highlighted resonating phrases. They resonated because of their perceived directness in response to a question and/or the passion communicated by the interviewee. In Phase 2, I generated initial codes across all three optics for the four interviews. Table 1 below provides an example of this process.

Table 1.

An example of generating initial codes.

Interview	(Deductive framing/ colours)	Example context quotes	Specific Codes (interpretative)	Description/ Definition
Indonesian Co-I	Art form adaptations	Perform the line differently than the traditional Lenong. So, first is the participatory approach of the young people, and second is the cultural artists. The second is using digital technology - so they are performing online live simultaneously and on stage. So that's the newness of the approach.	Different from traditional cultural art form Participatory Hybrid approach (in-person and online)	Code content that describes the newness of the co-created approach with Lenong
		What I mean by using digital technology is that you can, you know, just add value in that you can see a different stage where you can engage with the live audience online and in person.	Generative Multiple 'stages' and engagement	The performance stage is in multiple levels/ways.
		It's documented for the first time.	Recorded	Documentation of the art form is significant in and of itself.

Phases 3-5 are iterative and involved printing all the codes generated per theme, cutting them up, and writing them on index cards, which I then could move, align, and re-align in a material and embodied manner. I utilised this approach during my doctoral research (Huxley, 2023). I present an example from Phase 5 in Table 2, which shows how codes aligned to specific themes. There is always an aspect of renaming themes and combining them. For example,

'making meaning and learning' is 'Opening up sensitive topics. Codes could be in more than one theme.

Table 2.

An example of defining and naming themes.

Themes	Codes	*Example quotes*
Opening up sensitive topics through meaning-making	Generative/personal development	*'We teach them how to drum, how to do it normally, how it is it's usually done, but we also encourage them very much to create their own poetry to create their own music. To create you, you know, to put their own touch' (PI – One Girl One Drum)*
	Mixing art form with social issues	*'First, we took the folklore like the folk song like Tamang Selo, or any other, (mostly they are around love…). First of all, how can we use the process that form of local art form and bring the content of social issues…about untouchability, both gender-based violence and forced labour?' (CO-I MAP Nepal).*
	Opening up discussions	*'It allowed them to talk about this difficult topic…If you [consider] the power dynamics, they are like three children from 'untouchable' communities, and the teachers are all from the so-called higher caste. How can they talk about these issues? Art allowed them to have interactions and convey their message.' (CO-I MAP Nepal).*

In Phase 6 – the writing up, I iteratively used Table 3 to consider the wholeness of the themes and how they sit together; there is an element of narrative braiding in the process of a reflexive thematic analysis, allowing some seemingly divergent voices to remain if the insight/power of authentic resonance is interpreted to be of importance. For example, the theme of 'Iterative stages' in the optic of 'art form adaptations' appeared to be contradictory/divergent from the theme of 'systematic process' in the optic of 'Intergenerational relations.' However, on reflection, there is an inherent interplay between how much structure/discipline and how much playful acceptance of alterity should be acknowledged of both processes and outcomes (individually and collectively). This required further investigation, rather than reducing and aligning with one, masking the other.

Table 3.

The final themes

Themes	Optic from Artful Dialogue framework
Opening up sensitive topics through meaning-making	1: Art form adaptations (5 themes)
Playful	
Co-created sense of purpose	
Iterative stages (non-linear)	
Community roots	
Physical space extends performance	2: Emplacement (embodied and spatial dynamics) (4 themes)
Expressing freedom	
Empathy & confidence-building	
Re-shaping power dynamics: creating alternative social realities through bodies.	
Bravery toward new possibilities	3: Intergenerational relations (5 themes)
Tapping into cultural pride	
Systematic process	
Art provides visibility for young people.	
Young people speak out on adult's behalf.	

DISCUSSION: POINTS OF CONVERGENCE FOR ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS

Let us now consider the findings in more detail, reflecting on each optic in turn. This is by no means exhaustive, rather I have chosen to select aspects that I believe may have practical relevance to academics and practitioners alike. These combine both the thematic analysis and ethnographic findings that converge/diverge around the themes in Table 3.

Summary of art form adaptations

The affordances of art forms in opening up learning opportunities on sensitive/taboo topics through meaning-making with arts in post-conflict/conflict contexts is well documented (Popescu, 2018; Mkwananzi et al., 2021; Ware, 2023). A finding from MAP that adds to this is the sense of appreciation, confidence building, and motivation of young people who are part of such a dialogic process. For example, the Co-I of the One Girl One Drum project exclaims,

They see that it is something that people really are applauding, and they [the girls] like this new thing that's having a light shone on them, and they are really loving it and opening up. Before, they used to be really shy, but now they are so proud to showcase their talent.

Furthermore, it is essential that running alongside the exploration of challenging social topics/lived experiences is an element of play and humour. This is evident in the MAP theme on 'artful adaptations.' For example, the Co-I of the One Girl One Drum project states, 'and of course, it's a lot of fun…even the school says they like it. They [the girls] love school more than before because it's now fun in general because of the drumming.' This alignment of fun as associated with challenging/sad issues (in an East African context) was evident in my doctoral research (Huxley, 2023) on fun-embodied learning, which was not directly connected to MAP but could be further investigated.

The interviews conducted for this conceptual and exploratory paper show that adapting indigenous art forms as a way of dialogue towards social change goals facilitates/enables co-creating a sense of purpose (see the quotes below). This starts from an understanding and appreciation of locally understood cultural art forms, which are then adapted (as living cultures) through iterative stages to see how the art form relates to the social issues and, importantly, how it has relevance to the specific young people. The Nepal MAP CO-I states,

The art form came from the community to inside school premises, and then it came from some young people to other young people, and how the form [Tamang Selo dance/song from Nepal] shifted from love affairs to exploring social issues.

This is a different approach to many civil society approaches, which start with the social message and then add an art technique/tool as an insertion only, rather than developing an understanding of the art form in the first instance and exploring what the method of praxis enables/disables as an iterative communication and dialogic process (see Figure 2). The performance in Figure 2 spontaneously grew to involve much of the audience.

Figure 2.

Deuda performance at the UNESCO-MAP Nepal Roundtable. Credit: UNESCO Kathmandu.

In reviewing my ethnographic notes from the UNESCO-MAP Roundtable in Kathmandu in September 2023, I note that,

The women bringing and starting a Deuda circle to the side of the roundtable tables seem to be adapting the form to include men within the circle from the offset rather than starting by facing off. The very act of sharing this form from a remote part of Nepal in Kathmandu at such an event is symbolic: it is a physical assertion of claiming space and a disruption of

normative understandings of conference/roundtable time. The hypnotic chanting and swaying in a collective circle allow participants and myself, to delight in the collective experiential and expressive nature of doing and making together this alternative version of the art form.

Summary of emplacement

My ethnographic notes also describe aspects of the nature of emplacement at the UNESCO-MAP Roundtable in Kathmandu. I reflect that, the podium is displaced from a central high-level stage and placed at the side of the room and lowered. On the opposite side, performances such as Image theatre are constructed with circular tables and seating arranged in the centre of the hotel conference room (recalling the Search For Common Ground (2016) Community Dialogue Design manual). In this way, the space is intentionally laid out to disrupt normative conference expectations and appeal more to the young researchers participating.

Furthermore, my notes from the fourth drumming festival in Huye, Rwanda, in March 2024 show that the normative/expected role of performer/provocateur and passive audience dissolved entirely at the end. The audience joined the girls on the track to dance, celebrate, and fool by learning to drum: the performance extended, becoming a cacophony of body-minds, an outdoor track, drums, and a collectively embodied joy. The warrior stances of girls speaking *Kwivuga* warrior poetry (Dahlmanns, 2015), traditionally from men/boys, exclaiming, "I am the mighty —I don't run away'. 'We are no longer at the back, and I am ready to bring Ingoma to other children.' 'I am fearless!' continued reverberating around the outdoor track for some time after the event. The winning team's exuberant charge onto the track/pitch, disbanding all social norms and knocking over their chairs, was a powerful challenge to the adults in previous festivals who still attempted to control the girls' bodies through their comments on what they should/should not wear. This collective, emboldened charge was an act of striding towards a present and future that positions girls as determined and decisive. The drumming festival in Huye also provides further evidence for the themes encapsulated under 'Physical space extends performance' as well as 'Expressing freedom' and 'Empathy & confidence building.'

In Indonesia, the MAP project Beyond Tradition uses *Lenong* cultural art forms (including spoken rhymes, play fighting, and role play). It provides new evidence/different context regarding the hybrid nature of emplacement (Pink, 2011) concerning the theme 're-shaping power dynamics: creating alternative social realities through bodies.' As Figure 3 shows, at a Policy event in March 2024, the MAP Indonesian Co-I stated, 'They [young people] are performing online live at the same time as they are on the stage….that's the newness of the approach…Lenong has never been performed in this way before, and she went on to say that Lenong is an 'a dialogic pop theatre, normally performers say something, and then the audience respond…but it isn't used to show problems and then ask [high level] audience members for solutions. A key part of the emplacement approach in MAP's *Lenong* is the use of improvisation, which the hybrid nature of the event brought to the fore because 'glitches' (unanticipated pauses) sometimes also added to the atmosphere of excitement and anticipation, rather than simply disrupting.

Figure 3.

Revitalising Lenong hybrid performance: the audience and performers all share the stage at the end of March 2024. Credit: Harla Octarra.

Summary on Intergenerational Relations

Some of the analysis's most substantial/surprising findings concern the optic of intergenerational relations. The themes generated from the thematic analysis of the interviews are: 'Tapping into cultural pride'; 'Systematic process'; 'Art provides visibility for young people'; 'Bravery toward new possibilities'; and 'Young people speak out on adult's behalf'. Parker (2018) problematises the notion of 'voice,' and the theme of 'art gives visibility [rather than voice] for young people echoes the understanding that art forms provide much more than discursive forms of knowledge production and sharing; it is the multi-sensory engagement from peer to peer, but also with different types of adults (teachers/trainers, artists, parents, policymakers) that facilitate a deep sense/ways of knowing regarding visibility for young people.

The surprising finding is that this goes further: young people can also provide visibility on inter-generational traumas/suffering as protagonists for their parents who may have suffered similar forms of structural/social violence. Young people are re-casting themselves as not just 'agents of change' for their own generation, nor as victims, but seeking to heal/change the injustices their parents have suffered. The MAP Kyrgyzstan Co-I from the Foundation for Tolerance International noted in her interview that some parents express pain at seeing shared injustices, such as gender-based violence or bullying. Furthermore, the strengthening of child-parent relations has been evident in the Kyrgyzstan projects, whereby the Co-I from the Foundation for Tolerance International also shared,

It's all related to family relations and traditions. When, for example, we do not talk about our issues to our moms, to our fathers, and so on, we try to keep everything on the inside (or to just speak with our friends). Forum theatre (with poetry and drawings) is also a way to give some messages to parents…[some parents] start crying and thinking, 'Oh my, Oh my God, I didn't know that my child has these kinds of issues!'

Braiding Lenong: a momentary performance as crucial to achieving social outcomes

Having provided examples across the three optics of the framework, I now discuss how they are evident in one moment of artistic practice, where the multi-faceted and expressive qualities of the collective lived experiences, the unfolding of the Artful Dialogic processes proved essential

in the steps towards achieving social outcomes. I refer to the March 2024 *Lenong* performance in Jakarta that brought together over 80 youth researchers/performers, cultural artists, policymakers, and parents, both online and in a cultural venue. This was an intentional dialogic and performative endeavour to garner interest and support from the Head of the Cultural Office in Jakarta towards accepting the efficacy and utility of the Revitalising Lenong Teaching Manual through his engagement in the adapted participatory art form itself. The Beyond Tradition project's approach to policy influencing included preparing and co-creating a Manual for secondary school youth and out-of-school youth (with artists, youth, and policymakers) and a series of meetings to lay the foundation for this more direct/experiential form of policy influencing. Based on the accounts of Dr Harla Octarra, the Co-Investigator of the project (who was at the physical event), and my online participant observation, the Head of the Cultural Office was engaged in a live solution-finding dialogue, whereby a young performer (acting as the compere and head of the village) asked for the Head's solution regarding the issue of bullying occurring in the story (see Figure 4 overleaf).

Figure 4.

The Dialogue between Youth Performers and a Policymaker at the Beyond Tradition's Lenong Performance. Credit: MAP Indonesia/Padepokan Ciliwung Condet/Teater Alam Sinema.

Below is a transcript of part of the dialogue:

Young performer: We have Bapak Iwan, the Head of Jakarta Cultural Office with us. Sir, what do you think is the best solution to our problem?[...]

Head of Cultural Office: So please remember those [pointing to all the performers on stage]

Young performer: [gesture of open arms, acknowledging peer performers] Respectfully, do you have something you would like to say?

Head of Cultural Office: A speech or what to say? What you do today is not only learning about posture [expressive forms]. You can show you are in shock, happy, laughing with a very good gesture, and the addition is, it would be more perfect if your speeches are civilised [empathetic communications] so that the bullying would no longer happen [addressing the bullying characters on stage].

This example shows the potential of Revitalised Lenong as an instrument for Artful Dialogue between young people and policymakers. Firstly, the playful nature of the art form adaptation was enacted through the jovial tone of the young performer and the Head of the Cultural Office. Both were aware of re-casting power dynamics and opening up a 'play within a play.' Secondly, in terms of emplacement, the audience (Head) became part of the performers, and the theme of 'Physical space extends performance' was highly evident; an enactment of living embodied cultural policy in the making. Thirdly, in terms of 'inter-generational relations', the sub-theme of 'art provides visibility for young people' was evident through not only the art form enabling the young people to express their views through their words, songs, dances as performers – taking the 'stage,' but also guiding the process and rules of engagement, in a culture highly respectful of elders. A policymaker reflecting on the potential of the performance understood that the art form enabled a going beyond the delivery of messages from young people and created an artful dialogic space from which to re-shape and re-imagine social change and outcomes:

So far, the delivery (of children's voices) has only been the Voice of Indonesian Children. Just reading the voices and then finished... but I am interested in the Lenong that you mentioned. Yeah, it's good and cool. It would be great to put that into practice. Where the child delivered (their voices) and then later we would give a response, like that. Well, it's actually important for local governments to also be concerned about children's issues. (Female, national policymaker)

The Revitalising Lenong Teaching Manual, based on documenting the rehearsal processes, was introduced to the Head of the Cultural Office just before the performance. It will likely inform the extracurricular activities of secondary school children and community-based cultural centres in Jakarta from 2025.

CONCLUSION

Amongst the literature on peace education and dialogue, MAP findings support the need for thorough planning and implementation involving building trust, group connectedness, and a sense of belonging. In addition, MAP findings contribute to the need for follow-up and sustained engagement and opportunities for young people to design and deliver performances, create arts-based research outputs, and engage throughout policy-influencing cycles of engagement, from co-creating policy (art) briefs to contributing to meetings, and providing feedback. In support of this, the role and identity of project facilitators/adult allies and artists is key to

success, including recognising that this calls for accepting and valuing plurality. This inherent valuing of plurality (of views, ideas, art forms, and cultures) is intrinsic to MAP's understanding of living cultures and art forms. Both are constantly in motion, emerging and transfiguring.

This paper presents a conceptual framework for an intergenerational peace education pedagogy, 'Artful Dialogue.' It encourages an adaptive, emplaced, and intergenerational pedagogy in non/in-formal and formal post-conflict learning contexts, which is grounded in principles of multiplicity (as divergence and commonality), foregrounding 'process as purpose' and then acknowledging product/outcome, and considering peace (art-based) education as a form of impact in and of itself. One limitation of this paper is that it seeks to foreground the process and acknowledges outcomes as equally meaningful but does not present the same attentiveness to policy outcomes. This is because of the intention to contribute towards impact/social change that moves beyond positivist ontologies/technocratic focuses and instead sheds light on qualities of experiences afforded through cultural art praxis. I hope this is not misunderstood/misrepresented, as policy change outcomes are unnecessary. This is not the case. Instead, 'process as purpose' receives far less attention.

A second limitation was the practical restrictions of the data gathering in support of the framework presented. The ethnographic notes from four one-day events were time-limited and restricted by funding considerations. Detailed notes were taken on the day of the events, and reflections within a week after, however, this level of writing did not continue throughout my tenure. Rather, I brought a general/wider lived experience of supporting the projects as a PDRA (reviewing deliverables, setting up webinars etc.), based in the UK via emails and video conferencing over a year. This facilitated a level of supportive (embodied) knowledge. However, it did mean that 'at the time' ethnographic writing was curtailed. I, therefore, frame this paper as 'moving towards' an Artful Dialogue pedagogy. It is propositional based on initial credible research. I see this approach aligning with 'patchwork ethnography' (Gökçe, and Watanabe, 2024) who advocate 'for writing with rather than against the disruptions' (p. 131).

Let us now turn to social impact and acknowledge emerging social change outcomes relating to policy/curricula generated from working with and through different art forms. Some were intentional, and others were unexpected. Artful Dialogue as pedagogy creates an expressive space for the spontaneous and unexpected. These social change outcomes included Rwanda reduced dropout rates (unexpected) in the schools where the One Girl One Drum projects ran and an 'improved school environment'. In Kyrgyzstan, the implementation of forum theatre in the Kyrgyz government's Youth Policy (2020-2025). In Indonesia, my colleagues are working with the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology to create diverse spaces for engagement in school/education settings (using the Lenong and mural manual). MAP has also informed regulations and guidebooks on 'Child and Adolescent Participation in Development Programs' led by the Ministry of Women Empowerment & Child Protection. In Nepal, the UNESCO-MAP Roundtable catalysed the pilot development of an Art

Education Framework with Kathmandu University (unexpected). These are by no means exhaustive but offer a reflection on research outcomes.

There is undoubtedly scope to use this emerging framework in different learning contexts, acknowledging that formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts are increasingly intertwined, primarily because of digital lives, but also to acknowledge that there are opportunities to consider how young people's lives can move between these learning contexts with the Artful Dialogue Framework. This would be an area for further research and adaptation to the framework. Other areas for further applied research include: What barriers do policymakers face when responding to young people, and how can these be overcome? How can policymakers (at local, national, or international levels) be more involved in the whole policy process cycle, including in learning about the art form?

Romney (2005) reminds us that 'Dialogue, unlike debate or even discussion, is as interested in the relationship(s) between the participants as it is in the topic or theme being explored. Ultimately, real dialogue presupposes an openness to modify deeply held convictions' (Romney 2005, p.2). There is a beautiful trouble in working with the optics of Artful Dialogue, which is focused on the narrative braiding of a pedagogy's adaptive, emplaced, and intergenerational optics, often concerned with process. This framework necessitates a degree of unpredictability/spontaneity and, at times, unease, especially when working with art forms. The creative practice of art forms shifts both how groups relate to each other, but also with themselves. Many young people engaged in MAP can identify as participants, trainers, researchers, evaluators, policy influencers, and/or peacemakers at different times. In addition, they also learn about what they value in themselves and their communities, as well as what peace means, through an appreciation and acceptance of pluralities/multiplicities.

Peace (art) education does not happen in a cultural vacuum; each context has a plurality of customs, myths, traditions, and histories at play, as well as varied communication affordances within each unique art form that convey complexity, temporalities, and more profound (often challenging) understandings of our humanness. The Artful Dialogue framework strives to catalyse our evolving capabilities (as learner and facilitator), to acknowledge similarities and differences, often simultaneously: a narrative braiding that understands living cultures, less as pinned butterflies and more as the iridescent air we breathe. The world is ultimately made, and *re-made,* to be free in.

Acknowledgments

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