

An integral approach to education as a catalyst for world peace



Moshe Poltorak¹ and Haim Vilevi²

¹Department of Counselling and Human Development, Faculty of Education,
University of Haifa

²Department of Peace, IHUD, Geneva, Switzerland

The global education system is at a crossroads that stems from a mismatch between a rapidly evolving world characterized by interconnectedness and interdependence, and an outdated education system that remains rooted in individualistic, competitive frameworks. As societies become increasingly globalized and interwoven, the need for educational models that cultivate unity, social responsibility, and a holistic understanding of human relationships has grown more urgent. However, the traditional Western educational system continues to function according to a competitive-individualistic paradigm, overlooking the necessity of equipping students with the skills and mindset required for thriving in an interconnected world. This gap not only hampers individual development, but also exacerbates global issues, as it fails to prepare future generations for effective collaboration and problem-solving on a global scale.

Jewish thinkers of the last century anticipated this transformation toward a more interconnected world and proposed fundamental shifts in how we perceive education, social relations, and human development. They argued for an approach beyond the conventional boundaries of the Western traditional education system, integrating emotional intelligence, empathy, and a sense of collective responsibility into the learning process. Building on these insights, we propose a solution as a framework that we term 'an integral approach to education,' which incorporates the latter principles into a comprehensive theoretical and practical model. An integral approach to education seeks to realign educational goals with the realities of an interconnected and interdependent world, emphasizing the development of unity and mutual support as essential competencies for addressing contemporary societal challenges.

Biography:

1) Dr. Moshe Poltorak is an educator, researcher, and lecturer in early childhood education. Professionally, he works as an educator, developing a dialogical-social educational approach in kindergartens. Moshe is also a pedagogical advisor and lecturer at the Levinsky-Wingate Academic Center in the Faculty of Education's Early Childhood Program. His PhD was on examining the interpersonal and pedagogical dialogue of kindergarten staff members and the classroom climate in the context of different personal staff member characteristics, and his research continues to focus on the educational climate, relationships among educational staff members, and empathy in early childhood education settings. Dr. Poltorak also holds a Master's degree in Jewish Philosophy from the University of Tel-Aviv.

2) Dr. Haim Vilevi is a researcher, author, and head of the Peace Department at IHUD (since 2024), specializing in peace studies and conflict resolution through an integral approach. He earned his PhD in Peace Studies from Selinus University, with a focus on peace-building initiatives and the connection between personal development and social progress. Since 2018, he has also chaired and edited the '22nd Century Club' website, which promotes personal and social development.