

Our challenge: find a way to help prevent war with only \$250.00. There are a multitude of organizations and societies promoting peace and justice. It wouldn't be hard to donate our money to any number of these organizations, but would that really accomplish our goal? Truly preventing war requires work at the very base of society. That is, preventing war requires a fundamental act, not something that we do in our spare time through other organizations.

As Virginia Woolf did in her essay *Three Guineas* let me explain where this donation should go and why. The heart of war is taught to our children through both direct and indirect education. Formal schools are not the only place these kids learn of war and aggression, they're learning about it in books and by observing the world around them as well. In order to prevent war we have to reform the formal education system so that it actively teaches peace instead of implicitly teaching war and aggression. Woolf's first guinea went into a college for women; the direction my donation will go is a similar one; the direction of education. If our children are universally educated on peaceful principles then a couple generations from now war may simply fall out of existence.

An education that is more actively tied to peace and less inherently aggressive is something that would have to be as gender neutral as possible. Maybe our sons learn more aggressive behavior in education than our daughters do today. But if for no other reason than the equity of both genders we can't have our donation be for just one gender. Woolf focused her first guinea on the higher education of the daughters of educated men. But our goals will only come to fruition if both genders are affected equally.

Education is a huge area, our kids first enter into education before kindergarten and some don't leave educational systems until their own kids are in kindergarten. Do we donate to a graduate program, an undergraduate program, a high school, an elementary school, or an organization that works with preschools and elementary schools to affect the earliest forms of education? Let us dig into each option and see which makes the most sense.

Graduate programs specialize in one specific area. Donating to one of these programs will only reach people who have already committed themselves to peace in some form already. Will donating money to a graduate program actually prevent war? I think the likelihood is relatively slim, though at least it exists.

Undergraduate programs are for the most part the same way. The only people affected by a donation here are those who enter the specific program. However, we could donate money with the condition that the institution embeds a certain amount of peace education into their basic graduation requirements. That could make some change, but we're still dealing with adults and a layer of education not everyone elects to attend.

High school is a required layer of education, so a donation here would affect everyone. If we gave a school or educational organization money to eradicate the curriculum that leans towards aggression then we may see some change a couple generations down the road. But since high school students are nearing their adult existence much of what their values are may already be "set in stone" so to speak.

That leaves us with the organizations that affect elementary and preschool education. But for a donation in this area to be truly beneficial we need to think of

both environments these young children will be in. That is, not only do we need to make sure the kids' education is actively related to peace, but we need to make their parents understand how important such a component of their kids' education this is so they don't teach against it at home.

If we could split our donation so that we're not only establishing early education that is actively tied to peace, but also educating parents who weren't brought up in a similar environment of the importance of peace education and awareness then we will have some hope that we'd have once and for all prevented war a couple generations from now. So now the question of where to donate our money is all that remains.

One organization that could use our donation to the ends described above is the Peace Education Foundation ([peaceeducation.org](http://peaceeducation.org)). This organization works on curriculum development and teacher training for similar goals to those listed here. Giving to this organization would accomplish the formal education part of our goal, so let us give this organization \$175.00 of our donation to prevent war. But should we do with the remaining \$75.00 to educate parents on the importance of this component to their child's education?

For this component, partly because of our limited funds, we should choose one or two specific educational institutions to jumpstart our campaign to teach parents, and if more funds present themselves we can expand the program. Where to start this program should follow the lead of the Peace Education Foundation and start in the schools they have the largest presence in. Maybe we don't do a separate program, but rather give all \$250.00 to the Peace Education Foundation with \$75.00

to \$100.00 specified for parent education. So in the end I'll just give the \$250.00 to the Peace Education Foundation.

Ultimately early childhood education won't be enough to prevent war. We need all sorts of programs run by many different organizations in order to even hope to prevent war once and for all. The real problem that aggression and war is rests on a cultural foundation that has come upon the boundaries of our very human nature. Because of that it will, sadly, take lots of work in many areas to unravel aggression from our culture and prevent war. What I propose here is just one element of what is needed, but cannot be used as the sole method to prevent war. If donating to the Peace Education Foundation were all we did to prevent war, and remember this is all we have the funding for right now, our efforts will ultimately fail. But, as we need to donate this money somewhere, the Peace Education Foundation will just get \$250.00 richer.