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# THE FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONTINUUM IN PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

# By

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**INTRODUCTION**

This discussion is concerned with modalities for empowering individuals with relevant knowledge and skills to manage conflicts and relationships constructively. Conflict exists when people manifest incompatible behaviours. It is not necessarily negative by nature because it is only a manifestation of unmet or suppressed needs and desires. However, the individuals’ ability to manage conflict constructively results in the establishment of peaceful environments. Peace is threatened when conflict degenerates into violence. Therefore for peace to reign in the society, individuals need to be empowered to manage and resolve conflicts non-violently and constructively. How to empower individuals in this regard is the overriding goal of this presentation which is based on the premise that peace behaviour is more caught than taught. Peace behaviour is caught through listening, observation, imitation and other interactive processes as the individual performs daily life activities. Hence it is both in-schools and out-of-schools that individuals acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills to opt for non-violent solution to problems. The discussion starts with a brief examination of the formal, non-formal and informal forms of education. This provides the background knowledge of the extent peace education curriculum can be implemented in each form of education. This is followed by a review of peace education and its basic elements. This leads to the discussion on peace education curriculum and strategies for its implementation. The presentation then highlights the abilities required of the teacher as the chief implementer of peace education curriculum.

**FORMS OF EDUCATION**

Some people erroneously equate education to school learning. This is the atomistic view of education which presents the concept as something that starts and ends at a given period in a person’s life. To people with this type of mindset, what happens before and after the stipulated period of education is anything but education. Again equating education to schooling implies reducing education to the acquisition of a given body of knowledge and certificates. Education in its totality is concerned with the development of capabilities in the learners. It is a process that leads to behavior change of an individual through the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. This process can take place in or out of school. The emerging knowledge of the nature and process of education has resulted to the present emphasis on lifelong learning. This again has given rise to the realization that education is concerned with all forms of knowledge acquisition, in and out of school. In this regard, one identifies three forms of education based on nature of organization and these are the formal, non-formal and informal education.

Formal education takes place in a school or institution and it involves the use of predetermined sequential curriculum to enable learners at different stages of learning to acquire knowledge. This form of education is structured in such a way that learning at one level is expected to reinforce learning at the past level or levels. On the other hand, non-formal education (NFE) is the form of education that takes place outside the framework of the formal school system. It embraces all forms of organized and systematic learning acquired outside formal education. This includes adult literacy classes, literacy by radio, vocational education/skill acquisition and other forms of continuity education organized by Ministry of Education, Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs), Non-Governmental Organizations, commercial agencies and civil society bodies such as religious organizations.

NFE is basically less structured and often more learner centered than formal education. Informal education can be viewed as the unorganized process of knowledge acquisition from daily experiences. As a person engages in life activities in the home, office, playground, market, church and in any environment, the person acquires education in one form or the other. This is informal education and it is not only unorganized but also unstructured and unintentional. Despite these short comings, Coombs and Ahmed in Rogers (2004:3) opine that informal education “accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning- including that of even a highly “schooled” person.” This is because, informal education takes place anytime, anywhere and anyhow an individual can acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes from daily life experiences. Smith (2008:4) uses an administrative concept to distinguish among these three forms of education by stating that “formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left , e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues”.

Apart from viewing these forms of education from administrative perspective, it is necessary to note that they constitute a holistic and comprehensive view of education or what Obanya (2007:17) calls education with a capital “E”. Obanya maintains that each of these forms of education “describes the dominant activity at given points in the course of a given educational event. In real life situations, the three education modes tend to coalesce, and complement and enrich one another.” Consequently, appropriate peace education curriculum should cover the three forms of education.

**CONCEPT OF PEACE AND PEACE EDUCATION**

Let us consider the peace concept by examining these four scenarios:

**Scenario 1:** Mr. and Mrs. Egheghe are rich and they have three children aged 35, 37 and 40 years. After years of graduating with questionable certificates, none of them has a family and none has a job. They still depend on their parents for everything. Each time their father refuses to give money to any of them, that one goes to their father’s company and collects money from the accountant. Mr. and Mrs. Egheghe find it difficult to sleep at night because they are worried about their adult children.

**Scenario 2:** Mr. and Mrs. Okowi are casual labourers. They have four children who they managed to send to school. These children are now adults. Each has a job and family. Apart from being very supportive to one another and to their parents, these four siblings accept one another’s individual differences.

**Scenario 3:** Mr. and Mrs. Iyolloo have three grown up children. These grown-up children are not only antagonistic but selfish. Mrs. Iyolloo easily picks up quarrel with people especially, her husband. Though Mr. Iyolloo is rich, he is proud, stingy and has no interest in his family. He enjoys the company of his friends more than that of his family members.

**Scenario 4:** Ikote town is not a very big community. It is a community in which everybody knows and wants to know every other person. However, with the recent demise of the leader of the community, some of the adult members of the community are struggling for the leadership position. This has split the community into factions with each group supporting a particular contestant.

Which of these four scenarios presents peace situation? None of these scenarios presents a war situation, yet each presents a different degree of peace situation to the extent that people in at least one scenario are likely to have no peace if there is no proper conflict management. This indicates that peace exists not only because people are not fighting but also because of the existence of social, economic and political justice. So existence of peace indicates the absence of both overt and structural violence. In fact most conflict situations result from structural violence emanating from poverty, discrimination, lack of access to opportunities and the inability to understand the other person’s point of view. Whenever two or more people are doing something as a group, conflicts are bound to arise due to individual differences. Peaceful co-existence of the group members depends on their conflict management abilities. These abilities constitute the foundation of a peace process which is a preventable measure. In this regard, peace education is the process of equipping learners with tools for developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for resolving differences and conflicts in non-violent ways and in living peacefully with oneself, others and the environment. Consequently, peace education is concerned with resolving conflicts at intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup levels without violence. It is also concerned with conflict resolution at local, national and international levels. The intrapersonal conflict resolution is important because most group conflicts result from internal conflicts in the individuals. So peace education is also concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for creating atmosphere of peace within the individual or for achieving inner peace. In fact peace education is both a philosophy and a process that is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about different manifestations of peace and violence as well as peacemaking skills. It is a process of inculcating elements of peace education (see Table 1) in the learners to enable these learners develop the ability to manifest tolerance, the skills for non-violent conflict resolution and the sense of dedication to the establishment of a culture of peace.

**Table 1. BASIC ELEMENTS OF PEACE EDUCATION**

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| S/N | PEACE DIMENSIONs | BASIC ELEMENTS |
| 1. | Knowledge | Peace, Justice, Human rights, Civic participation, Emotional literacy, Problem solving (including conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution), as well as Understanding (including international and intercultural understanding) etc. |
| 2. | Values and Attitudes | Tolerance, Caring, Social equity, Peace, Justice, Cooperation and Solidarity, Human rights, Active citizenship, Gender equity, Self awareness, empathy, Conflict resolution using peaceful means, Promotion of sustainable environment, Freedom of religious practices, Compassion, Respect for human life etc. |
| 3. | Skills | Active listening, Understanding similarities and differences, Cooperation, Mediation, Problem solving, Trust, Critical thinking, Self reflection, Self esteem, etc. |

The acquisition of these elements of peace education will enable learners develop peace building skills as well as the knowledge, skills, values, behaviours and capabilities to recognize and confront violence. This is the aim of education for peace which is the aspect of peace education being emphasized in this paper. The other aspect of peace education which is education about peace is concerned with peace education as a school subject. Though the two aspects of peace education are geared towards using education to establish a culture for confronting and resisting violence, the main stay of this discussion is education for peace.

In recognition of the central position of education in bringing about behavior changes in people, the United Nations (UN) has gone beyond political and diplomatic peace dialogues to take a bold step in promoting a culture of peace through education. In fact peace education is the driving force for all UN action oriented strategies in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence. Since the 1997 proclamation of the year 2000 to be the International Year for the Culture of Peace and the 1998 proclamation of the period 2001- 2010 to be the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, the United Nations has continued to encourage member States to promote a culture of peace through education by basing “education on principles and methods that contribute to the development of the personality of pupils, students and adults who are respectful of their fellow human beings and determined to promote peace, human rights and democracy” (UNESCO, 1974:1).

A culture of peace is a universal value of recognizing violence in all its ramifications and adopting a non-violent approach to its management. This reiterates the 1945 UNESCO constitution which states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constituted” (UNESCO, 2005:1). Constituting the defenses of peace in the minds of human beings implies peace education. The implementation of this type of education requires the development of appropriate curriculum.

**PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The case has been made earlier in this presentation that it is wrong to equate education to school learning. In the same regard, it is narrow to equate peace education curriculum to school curriculum or with education that takes place in the school. Consequently, our focus in this presentation is on education curriculum. This is a holistic curriculum that covers informal, non-formal and formal education. It is also necessary to note that in this presentation curriculum is conceived as a veritable instrument for achieving the educational goals of the nation. It covers educational goals, the content or facts to be learnt, the learning experiences, outcomes of learning encounters and the learning environment.

The overriding goal of peace education in formal, non-formal and in-formal education is to develop in the learner the disposition and confidence as agents of peace who can live in harmony with oneself, others and the natural environment as well as promote peace, human rights and democracy in the society. This goal of peace education is based on the eight keys of peace education emanating from United Nations’ resolutions and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates’ Manifesto 2000 (Hawke Research Institute, 2010:2) as presented in Box 1.

Box 1: Eight Keys to Promoting Culture of Peace

* *Respect all life*: respecting the rights and dignity of each human being
* *Non-violence*: rejection of violence, obtaining justice by convincing and understanding
* *Sharing*: developing attitudes and skills for living together in harmony, putting an end to exclusion and oppression
* *Listening to understand*: giving everyone a chance to learn and share through the free flow of information
* *Preservation of the planet*: making sure that progress and development are good for everyone and for the environment
* *Tolerance and solidarity*: appreciating that people are different and that everyone has something to contribute to the community
* *Equality of men and women*: ensuring an equal place for men and women in building society
* *Democracy*: making decisions by having your say and giving others theirs.

To achieve the goal of peace education requires instructional delivery that is geared towards developing in the learners the basic elements of peace education (see Table1) and the knowledge, skills and values covered in the eight keys to promoting culture of peace. This will result in the creation of a culture of peace among people. In other words, the application of these eight keys to instruction will develop in individuals the ability to make peace a way of life and of doing things in the society. Specifically, it will develop in people the mindset of peace consciousness and non-violent approach to conflict resolution. Though peace education practices in formal, non-formal and informal education are directed to inculcating in learners with the habit of peace, respect for the earth and other human beings irrespective of citizenship, gender, social status and age so as to establish a culture of peace and non-violence in the society, the means to realizing this goal differ to some extent among the three forms of education delivery. This necessitates a closer look at the implementation strategies of peace education curriculum in the three forms of education. Emphasis in this presentation is on the delivery of peace education curriculum.

It is necessary to point out here that this presentation is not proposing peace education curriculum to be implemented as a separate subject on the school timetable. Rather it is proposing the creation of peace dimension across the curriculum; the implementation of peace education as a transdisciplinary education that takes place in all learning spaces. In this regard, elements of peace education are mainstreamed into all instructional activities, in all subjects, in all years of study and in every learning environment. The place of learning environment in the effective implementation of peace education curriculum cannot be overemphasized. The learning environment determines the extent children’s rights are upheld, the type of discipline methods used in the school, the organization structure of both classroom and school day, and how decisions are made (Fountain, 1999). Also, since peace behavior is more caught than taught, it pays to complement school learning of peace behavior with concerted, conscious efforts to promote peace behavior in a systematic way both in-school and out-of-school. This is a way of ensuring that the culture of peace instilled in school is fully complemented by the culture of peace promoted in the society. Here lies the continuum in the delivery of peace education curriculum in the formal, non-formal and informal education.

**DELIVERY OF PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN FORMAL EDUCATION**

A curriculum for formal education is concerned with planned objectives for learning, content to be learnt, activities for learning the content, delivery strategies for achieving the objectives, evaluation to certify the extent the objectives have been achieved and the environment within which learning takes place. This curriculum is predetermined, organized and sequentially arranged. However it is necessary to note that the delivery of peace education curriculum in formal education includes both conscious classroom, teacher-directed work and “incidental” curriculum within the school. To achieve the goal of peace education through the conscious classroom teacher directed work, we are proposing in this presentation the integrative approach to peace education instruction. Elements of peace education are integrated into all learning subjects and implemented while bearing in mind the eight keys to promoting a culture of peace as well as the basic elements of peace education.

The integration occurs at the levels of content, instructional methods and materials. While developing and presenting the learning content of any subject of study, the teacher endeavours to identify and highlight any item or idea that is related to the basic elements of peace education and the eight keys to promoting culture of peace. These peace education elements are integrated appropriately into the learning process. They are mainstreamed across the curriculum.

Mainstreaming peace education across the curriculum implies the use of peace-prone instructional methods and strategies. These are methods and strategies that promote interactive learning processes and they include cooperative group work, peer teaching, problem-solving, discussion, role plays, mediation, consensus building, negotiations, simulation and other learner-centered instructional strategies. Apart from promoting participatory, cooperative and problem-solving abilities in learners, each of these instructional strategies is experiential based. These participatory instructional methods are used in the teaching of topics whose learning aims relate to knowledge, attitude and skills of peace education. Also when students participate in these types of learning strategies, they listen to one another and this develops in them respect for differences.

With regards to instructional materials, care is taken to ensure that instructional materials presented to learners are of such nature and condition that can promote participatory learning. Above all, instructional materials for implementing peace education curriculum should not present any biased information or message that may be derogatory to any person or group.

Another means for delivering peace education instruction in formal education is through the hidden curriculum and this can also be implemented using the integrative learning approach. The peace education hidden or the “incidental” curriculum embraces all activities out of class that promote the application of peace behavior. The formal education curriculum is always planned and implemented within the continuum of hidden curriculum which is unplanned, inherent and subtle. Elements of this hidden curriculum are being taught all the time. Experience has shown that what is learnt in the open curriculum is often forgotten immediately after examination while what is learnt in the hidden curriculum lasts a lifetime. Therefore there is need to ensure that the hidden curriculum presents to learners what the school wants them to learn or that the hidden curriculum complements the open curriculum. How do teachers in the school respond to students’ problems? How do teachers relate to one another in the school? How does the school administration resolve conflicts? Is there an atmosphere of a culture of peace in that institution? Answers to these questions indicate the content of the hidden curriculum presented to learners in that school. For learners to acquire knowledge, attitude, values and skills of peace and non-violent reactions to conflict situations, effort must be made to ensure that what is presented to learners in the hidden curriculum does not contradict what is presented to them in the open curriculum.

**DELIVERY OF PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

It has been stated earlier in this presentation that Non-formal education (NFE) embraces all forms of organized and systematic learning activities that take place outside the framework of the formal school system. However the implementation of peace education curriculum in non-formal education is almost the same as in the formal education setting in the sense that non-formal peace education curriculum is implemented with predetermined objectives, content, activities, instructional strategies and evaluation procedures as is the case in formal education. The non-formal education curriculum is also organized but the curriculum elements are sometimes not as formally structured as those of formal education. For the effective implementation of peace education curriculum in non-formal education, concepts in the basic elements of peace education and the keys to promoting culture of peace are integrated appropriately into the different aspects of the curriculum. The ideal thing is to enrich the learning of any topic with appropriate peace education elements.

The integration of peace education into non-formal education may be in the content, learning methods and instructional materials. While planning a lesson, effort is made to note areas for interjecting peace education ideas and concepts. Instructional materials are selected and presented based on their perceived ability not only to facilitate the learning of the presented content but to contribute to the development of knowledge, values and skills of peace education in the learners. Participatory instructional strategies are used in the teaching of peace related topics. The participatory instructional strategies already proposed for presenting peace education in formal education are also good in the case of non-formal education. However, the choice of instructional strategies in non-formal education is to be done with more flexibility than is the case in formal education.

Again the hidden curriculum plays important role in the NFE learners’ acquisition of knowledge, values, attitude and skills in peace education. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure that the structural or organizational and cultural climates of the learning environment reinforce what is explicitly presented to the learners in the open curriculum.

**DELIVERY OF PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN INFORMAL EDUCATION**

Both formal and non-formal education curricula are delivered within dedicated learning environments while the informal education, the curriculum is implemented in a non-dedicated learning environment. The informal education curriculum is not organized. It is dialogical or conversational and non-course based. The contents emanate from everyday life activities. Informal education occurs when a person is interacting with family members, friends, work colleagues and others. This implies that every member of the society is a student of informal education and needs the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, values, attitude and skills of peace education. In fact while in the formal and non-formal forms of education, elements of peace education are acquired during interactions in the learning environment, in the case of informal education, these elements of peace education are acquired during life experiences anywhere and anytime in the society. Therefore informal education is the fastest route through which the rudiments of peace education can easily permeate the society and be firmly rooted in every member of the society. Establishment of a culture of peace cannot be realized if peace education remains a school affair, to be given to some people at a particular period in their lives. It will be realized when every member of the society is peace literate and peace conscious.

A useful starting point for the delivery of peace education curriculum in informal education is conducting advocacy visits to the various communities and initiating conversations and discussions on elements of peace education and keys for promoting peace and non-violence. During such discussions and conversations, members of the community would be made to understand the need for peace and how to establish non-violent solutions to conflict resolutions. Also, organizing sports and other social events brings people together and helps them develop understanding and tolerance for one another. Mass media facilities such as radios, televisions, newspapers and magazines can be employed for the promotion of dimensions of peace education in informal learning. Jingles and cartoons are good avenues for promoting peace and non-violence in the society. In fact the establishment of a culture of peace through the delivery of informal peace education curriculum serves to reinforce peace education endeavours in the formal and non-formal education. It is necessary to note that while both formal and non-formal education experiences are affected to a reasonable extent by those of informal education, these formal and non-formal education experiences also extend into the informal education experiences. Fig 1 presents the formal, non-formal and informal education curriculum continuum.

FORMAL EDUCATION

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

INFORMAL EDUCATION

Fig. 1: The Formal, Non-formal and Informal Education Continuum.

Fig 1 shows that a person’s experiences in one form of education affects that person’s experiences in the other forms of education. This reiterates the fact that effective implementation of peace education curriculum requires a holistic and integrative learning approach.

While considering instructional strategies for peace education, it is necessary for the teacher to ensure that he/she is teaching for peace and not just teaching about peace. While teaching about peace is teaching peace as a topic of instruction, teaching for peace involves developing elements of peace education as part of the instructional process. These elements of peace education can be developed through any subject and varied life activities. The teacher in both formal and non-formal education settings uses appropriate instructional strategies to facilitate the learner’s acquisition of peace elements.

**THE TEACHER IN THE DELIVERY OF PEACE EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The learning content for peace education as presented in this paper comprises all facts in the learning subjects and learning atmosphere that relate to the already named elements of peace education. This implies that the teacher’s role in the implementation of peace education curriculum is crucial in the sense that he/she knows the learning content that lends itself to peace education instruction and the best instructional strategy to promote its learning. This calls for infusion of peace education dimension into teacher education programmes. For teachers to implement peace education curriculum as presented in this paper, these teachers need to learn how to integrate elements of peace education into the various school subjects. Emphasizing the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods as well as cooperative group work and group discussions in teacher education will equip these teachers with the skills for implementing peace education curriculum. Adequate training will enable teachers internalize the knowledge and skills of peace education and will also put them in a better position to help learners develop these peace knowledge and skills.

In fact effective delivery of peace education curriculum requires that the teacher, as the chief guide in curriculum implementation demonstrates the ability to:

1. Appropriately integrate elements of peace education into all learning activities.
2. Use more actions than words to lead learners through the paths of non-violence.
3. Strive to promote non-violent values by manifesting sense of responsibility, cooperation, creativity, understanding and solidarity in personal and professional endeavours in and out of school.
4. Demonstrate good knowledge of human rights.
5. Deliver instructions using cooperative learning, cooperative games, creative problem- solving and other participatory learning strategies.
6. Use strategies appropriate to the situation (e.g. age, class, level of intellectual development of the learner, etc) to guide learners in the process of acquiring peace-loving, peace-making and peace-affirming skills.
7. Create a learner-centered learning climate through the use of appropriate instructional strategies.
8. Desist from being gender-biased in personal and professional dealings.
9. Adopt environmental friendly attitude.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of the following dimensions of education for a culture of peace

* Mutual understanding
* Peace and non-violence.
* Human rights.
* Democracy.
* Tolerance.
* International, intercultural and inter-faith understanding.
* Cultural and linguistic diversity.
* Active citizenship

1. Accept parents and other stakeholders in education as partners in the establishment of culture of peace in all learning environments.
2. Show willingness to engage in life-long professional development.
3. Demonstrate skills of care, empathy, tolerance, democracy and conflict resolution in dealing with learners, colleagues, parents and other stakeholders in education.
4. Help learners engage in free self-expression so that while they listen to one another, they become aware of and asses the consequences of their actions.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Our discussions so far have shown that it necessary for every citizen to acquire the knowledge, peace, values and skills in peace education so as to establish a culture of peace in the society. In this regard, the society has to adopt a tripartite approach to implementing peace education curriculum through formal, non-formal and informal education. This implies that peace education curriculum is better viewed and practiced as an indispensable component of basic education. The effective delivery of peace education curriculum in the three forms of education will result in a peace literate society and the teacher’s role in this regard cannot be overemphasized.

The teacher occupies a central position in the effective delivery of peace education curriculum mostly in the formal and non-formal forms of education. The teacher also plays indirect role in the delivery of this curriculum in the informal form of peace education in the sense that the seeds planted by the teacher in the formal and non-formal instructional ventures germinate and spread in the informal arena. This calls for adequate preparation of the teacher to ensure effective delivery of this curriculum. Therefore there is need to offer a course on principles and strategies of peace education to trainee teachers in all teacher training institutions. Where it is not possible to offer such a course, the principles and strategies of peace education are integrated into basic methodology courses offered to trainee teachers.

In the same vein, the delivery of peace education curriculum in informal education, requires the contributions of education stakeholders such as parents, members of the media, film producers, religious bodies and anybody who wants peace to reign in the society. The delivery of peace education curriculum in this form of education, ensures that every member of the society is manifesting the type of values, attitude, traditions and behaviours that opt for non-violence, democracy, intercultural understanding, tolerance, respect for human rights as well as respect for nature and environment. The manifestation of these characteristics of a culture of peace confirms the establishment of this globally desired culture of peace in the society.

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