# Peace Education for Unity and Development

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**ABSTRACT**

The construction of peace and the promotion of development is the responsibility of individuals, groups and international society. Responsibilities, duties and rights exist at every level and form the basis of peace and development education programmes. The thrust of this paper is on peace education for unity and development. The paper examines the concept of peace education as conflicts resolution training for unity and development and peace education in schools. Conclusion and some recommendations were made in order to appreciate the need of peace education for every individual.

*Keywords*: development education programmes, peace education, Nigeria

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Considering that the world is confronted with a multitude of problems, the development and preservation of peace requires an educational process that is meant to enrich our lives. This will enable us as a nation to use our human potential more effectively to be part of a united global community. The source of happiness in life is unity. Peace education consists in enabling people to live a happy life through the development of their human resources for constructive purposes.

According to (Article 26), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2004), peace education had developed as a means of achieving this goal of global peace. It is education that

is directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.

Nwafor (2007) explains that peace education develops reflective, critical thinking, erasing in the mind of humans militarism, culture of prejudices and all forms of evil tendencies, while inculcating in them the culture of peace necessary for harmonious living and peaceful co-existence. Nwafor maintains that peace education opposes all forms of oppression and conformity. The development and achievement of peace and harmony create for us a win-win situation. That means everyone is a winner and no one is a loser. It also promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. Through humanising process of teaching and learning, peace educators achieve and facilitate human development. They strive to counteract the dehumanization triggered off by poverty, prejudice, discrimination, rape, violence and war.

Peace education provides us with solution of all problems that stem mostly from political corruption. It is based on the idea that adopting knowledge and developing skills is the basis for gaining positive attitudes and behaviour that may lead to the development of intercultural training programs. The focus of peace education programmes is that information about the values, customs, and practices of the members of the different cultures contribute to better understanding of others, thereby reducing prejudices, negative stereotypes, and tensions among people of different cultures. Therefore the program for peace education must not only strengthen the capacity of an individual for critical thinking but also strengthen the majority to avoid discriminations. As stated by Ervin Staub, (1989), for change to happen and spread, there is need for a minimum mass of people who share attitudes, a culture in which they can express those attitudes, and a society that accepts the attitudes. The role of peace education is essential to the promotion of unity and development at the local, national and international communities. This paper therefore looks at peace education for development and unity.


## 2. THE CONCEPT OF PEACE EDUCATION

The complexity of current conflicts, whose roots can be traced to a myriads of factors, including shortage of resources, ethics and religious questions, exclusionary nationalisms, geopolitical factors, migration and marcotics trafficking has been a source of human misunderstanding. Conducting an analysis of these conflicts is essential. This is one of the main goals of peace education: to address the complexity of conflict and to turn it into an educational tool.

Accordingly, peace education could be explained as an interdisciplinary area of education whose goal is institutionalized and noninstitutionalized teaching about peace and for peace. Danesh (2006) states that peace education refers to those aspects of formal and non formal education in school and out-of-school aimed at elimination groups prejudice, stereotypes and hatred which make people prefer peace to war, non violence to violence, co-operation to exclusion, acceptance to discrimination and construction to destruction. Oyebamiji (2001) describes peace education as a social process in response to conflicts aimed at developing positive approach to peace making and developing people who internalize the vision of peace with real sense of personal and social justice possessing the knowledge, skills and motivation to work effectively, opposing violence, dealing constructively with conflicts

and activities building peace, having personal commitment to non violence both as a way of life and as a means of changing society.

Peace education aims at helping acquire skills for nonviolent, conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of values of peace and development. Harris and Synott (2002) have described peace education as a series of "teaching encounters" that draw from people, their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing conflict, and skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and inequality. It is the process of acquiring the knowledge, the values and develop the attitude, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with oneself, and others and the natural environment for the unity and development.

Nwafor (2007) explains peace education as that type of studies that essentially inculcates discipline in people. Peace education provides us with the solution of all problems that stem mostly from political corruption, religious and ethic conflicts.

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education is the key to uniting nations, bringing human beings closely together. In many parts of the world, civil society suffers because of situations of violence and war. It is important to recognize the crucial role of peace education in contributing a culture of peace and condemning instances in which peace education is undermined in order to attack democracy and tolerance. It is also a tool in combating poverty, in promoting peace, social justice, human rights, democracy, cultural diversity and environmental awareness.

According to Galtung (1998) poverty and lack of access to health, education and other resources which prevent a person from realizing his or her potential, can be considered structural violence arising from political, social and economic modes of organization. Gailtung goes on to explain that the development of a culture of peace should imply an effort to combat, overcome and eliminate that which has traditionally and subconsciously contributed to the perpetuation and legitimization of a culture of violence. Education for peace or peace education are educational approaches whose aims, content and strategies are defined according to peace and development agenda and in which a number of different factors from civil society, international organizations (and the current international context) take part. It implies an active concept which values life skills and knowledge of equality, respect, empathy, understanding and mutual appreciation among individual groups and nations. No wonder many teachers are already practicing peace education without calling it by name, eg. Education for conflict resolution, international understanding and human rights, global education, critical pedagogy, education for liberation and empowerment, social justice education, environmental education, life skills education, disarmament and development education, and more are all in the name peace education.

## 4. PEACE EDUCATION FOR UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Education is an essential tool to eradicate poverty, reduce child mortality and curb population. Education is also an investment into a peaceful nation, region and international community. Literate societies are better equipped to meet the pressing challenges of the future

and the quality of life of their people will improve and ideally they will make positive contribution to the societies in which they live.

Peace education in its concept has its role in promoting unity and development Burns and Robert Aspeslagh (1996) states that within the field of peace education, one can find a variety of issues, ranging from violence in schools to international security and cooperation, from the conflict between the developed world and undeveloped world, from the question of human rights to the teaching of sustainable development and environmental protection. Peace education focuses on the complete development of individual, which includes the complete social, emotional, and moral development of an individual; the development of a positive self concept is self esteem; and the acquisition of knowledge and skills to accept responsibility for one's own benefit as well as for the benefit of the society. The development of a positive self-concept the foundation for the sympathy for others and building trust, as well as the foundation for developing awareness of interconnectedness with others. When we examine the component of peace education, the program is the only imprudence that would provide for the full development and unity to all both local, state, nations and international community.

## 5. PEACE EDUCATION AS CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING FOR UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Webster Dictionary of English Language describes peace as a "state of tranquility, freedom from war; cessation of hostilities; and harmony. The programme of peace education centres on conflict resolution which typically focused on the social behaviourial symptoms of conflict, training individuals to resolve inter-personal disputes through techniques of negotiation arid mediation.

It will also help individuals to manage anger, fight fair, and improve communication through skills such as listening, turn- taking, identifying needs, and separating facts from emotions. These constitute the main elements of these programmes.
Van Slyck, Stern and Elbedour (1999) emphasise that this type of programme approaches will alter beliefs, attitudes and behaviours from negative to positive attitudes toward conflict as a basis for preventing violence.

Since the early decades of the 20th century, "peace education" programmes in the world have represented a spectrum of focal themes including anti-nuclearism, international understanding, environmental responsibility, communication skills, non-violence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, human rights awareness, tolerance of diversity, coexistence and gender equality among others.

Brabeck, (2001) in his own contribution, has also addressed some spiritual dimensions of inner harmony, or synthesized a number of the forgoing issues into programmes on world citizenship. While the academic discourse on the subject has increasingly recognized the need for a broader, more holistic approach to peace education, a review of field-based projects reveals that three variations of peace education are most common. These are: conflict resolution training, democracy education and human rights. New approaches are emerging and calling into question some of the theoretical foundations of the models just mentioned. The most significant of these new approaches focuses on peace education as a process of world view transformation.

World view transformation to peace education approaches according to Clarke-Habbibi (2005) are starling from insights gleaned from psychology which recognize the developmental nature of human psychosocial dispositions. Essentially, while conflicts-promoting attitudes and behaviours are characteristic of earlier phases of human development, unity-promoting attitudes and behaviours emerge in later phases of healthy development.

Danesh (2008) proposes an integrative theory of peace in which peace is understood as a psychosocial, political, moral and spiritual reality. Peace education he says must focus on the healthy development and maturation of human consciousness through assisting people to examine and transform their world-views. Worldview according to Danesh are defined as the subconscious lens (acquired through cultural, family, historical, influences) through which people perceive four key issues which include:

1. The nature of reality.
2. Human nature.
3. The purpose of existence.
4. The principles governing appropriate human relationships.

Danesh (2007) surveying a mass of material, argues that the majority of people and societies in the world hold conflict worldviews, which expresses themselves in conflict intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and international relationships. He further stated through the acquisition of a more integrative unity based worldview that human capacity to mitigate conflict, create unity in the context diversity and establish sustainable cultures of peace, is increased be it in the home, at school, at work or in the international community."

## 6. PEACE EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS

There has been a lot of questions about the benefits of peace education in the school system. When looking at the functions of peace education programme, it is integrated comprehensive education focusing on life skills covering human rights, democracy, international understanding, tolerance, non violence, multiculturalism, and all other values conveyed through the school curriculum. The program is also for life and an immediate relevance, empowering individuals to achieve a just society in which all human rights of all persons are valued and respected.

Peace education is the all round education of each individual which should be extended to every learner. Because of the importance of this programme, the emphasis is now, the training of the teachers, education workers and all education stake holders including staff from ministries of education. Educators promote the development of the whole person, so as to enable everyone to contribute to society in a caring and responsible manner.

The variety of approaches and attitudes on what peace education actually is leads to the introduction of a series of titles: which includes multicultural training, education for democracy and human rights and education for development.

The implementation of principles of peace education into the institutionalized educational system is a better approach, especially within the subjects encompassing the cultural heritage of dominant society and the ethnic groups belonging to the society can suggest subjects and how they can embody peace, development education.

## 7. CONCLUSION

To go from a condition of awareness of the oneness of humanity, to the creation of practical conditions in which this insight becomes actuality in our everyday life, is the responsibility of peace education. Ignorance, we have seen "is indisputably the principal reason for the decline and fall of people and the perpetuation of prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless peace education is accorded all its citizens. The decision-making agencies involved would do well to consider giving first priority to peace education since it is through educated individuals that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society.

### Recommendations

The role of peace is essential to the promotion of a culture of peace at the level of society, which is made up of people, groups and communities. Peace education as the all round education of each individual should be extended to all learners including refugee and migrant children, children from minorities and disabled with the objectives of promoting equal opportunities through education. Training of teachers for peace education is very crucial, so as to enable everyone to contribute to society in a caring and responsible manner. At the state level, the defence of democratic values and good government through the promotion of peace education policy whose emphasis is on the values of peace, solidarity and social justice is vital.

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