

## Incorporating Peace Education into Primary School Education Curriculum: Issues and Roles in Conflicts Prevention

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### Abstract.

*The continent of African has experienced several kinds of violence, oppression, suppression, wars and conflicts. It is a truism that people live in groups, and wherever people lived in groups; they interact among themselves; and formulate regulations that will harmonize them in that very society. These regulations a times go contrary to some cultural/traditional beliefs, which may result to conflicts/violence or war as case may be. History reveals that in Africa, there have been persistent inter-state and intra-state conflicts, violence, religious crisis, political instability, economic recession and debt burden, to mention but a few. These issues and other problems constitute the bulk of the critical issues in national integration in Africa. In order to redress the wrongs that have been perpetuated by conflicts, wars and violence in Africa, peace values should be of paramount importance to all. Peace education is an academic discipline yet to be incorporated in the primary education curriculum of most countries of the world especially, in Africa; but the incidence of disruptive behaviours like conflicts, violence of all sorts, wars etc. calls for an urgent incorporation of such education in the education curriculum. This paper therefore, presents incorporating peace education into Primary education curriculum as a sustainable means for preventing and/or putting to a stop or minimizing the rates at which conflicts, wars, and violence in most African countries occur. Additionally, concept of peace education; needs for introducing peace education into primary and post-primary education curriculum were highlighted.*

**Keywords:** Peace Education, Violence Prevention, Education Curriculum, Conflicts Resolution

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### Introduction

The quest for educational practice that will meet up with drastic changes in our children and youths by inculcating attitudes of peace in them have led to reforms that will bring schools in line with society. Education in its daily sense could mean formal training given in schools and an institution; that is the acquisition of ability to read, write and calculate. It could also mean specialized training that enables one acquire skill in certain field. In wider sense, education could mean training of entire person to enable him/her not only to be able to read, write and calculate or to be proficient in a given job but also to enable him to fit himself for living in a society, which he/she contributes to maintain peace. In order words, a society free of violence, wars and conflicts is one in which educated people live. According to Igu (2006), educated man is one who contributes to growth and development of the society. According to John-Amos (1985), education should be most complete possible preparation for life, both here on earth and the world to come. It should be for all-alike: boys and girls noble and ignoble, rich and poor. Looking at the words of 19<sup>th</sup> century about education, for instance, John Locke (1632-1704AD), states that “education has only one aim: virtue, then direct virtue, which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education” (Rusk 1965:58). Herbart agreed with Locke when he said that “The one and whole work of education may be summed up in concept of morality” (Rusk 1965:24). It can be safely concluded that philosophers and academics of 19<sup>th</sup> century believed that the central purpose of education is morality and building a peaceful society for all. Education is an instrument for

conflict resolution and national unity. An institution, school or college should be an organization charged with education and training for improvement, growth and quality of teachers and graduates who will contribute to building peaceful and better world.

Peace is a state of undisturbed, quiet and calm environment. Peace is not involved in a war or battle; rather, it is living to work together in a friendly way and not quarrelling. Peace according to Edikpa (2006), involves freedom from anxiety or troubling mind. Odoh (2006), avers that peace can be seen as existence which includes the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationship, and include the presence of justice and peace at individual level. This implies real or complete peace, since it includes both the absence of war that is direct violence and absence of unjust structures or indirect violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. Peace as a matter of these definitions is generally seen in this study as harmony, the absence of conflict and that which promotes growth and development of the society and the way of life of people. Any factor which is a threat to peace promotes conflict, war and violence.

The United Nations and other peacekeeping groups have played vital roles in resolving conflicts, violence and wars in Africa, yet for the past 50 years, results of these efforts are not yet measurable when compared to the amount of efforts put in settling these problems (<http://www.un.org>, 8 March 2014). Despite all the peacekeeping efforts made in some countries in Africa, the situations have not changed too positively. This has resulted in severe refugee problems further compounding the security situation in and around such conflict areas. In modern times, peacekeeping operations have evolved into many different functions, including diplomatic relations with other countries, international bodies of justice (such as the International Criminal Court), and eliminating problems such as landmines that can lead to new incidents of fighting. List of UN peacekeeping missions since the United Nations was founded in 1945, organized by region, with the dates of deployment, the name of the related conflict, and the name of the UN operation.

NO	Name of Operation	Dates of operation	Location	Conflict
1	United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC)	1960–1964	Congo	Congo Crisis
2	United Nations Angola Verification Mission I (UNAVEM I)	1988–1991	Angola	Angolan Civil War
3	United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)	1989–1990	Namibia	Namibian War of Independence
4	United Nations Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II)	1991–1995	Angola	Angolan Civil War
5	United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)	1992–1994	Mozambique	Mozambican Civil War
6	United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I)	1992–1993	Somalia	Somali Civil War
7	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL)	1993–1997	Liberia	First Liberian Civil War
8	United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR)	1993–1994	Rwanda/Uganda	Rwandan Civil War
9	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)	1993–1996	Rwanda	Rwandan Civil War
10	United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II)	1993–1995	Somalia	Somali Civil War
11	United Nations Aouzou Strip Observer	1994	Chad-Libya	Aouzou Strip

	Group (UNASOG)			dispute
12	United Nations Angola Verification Mission III (UNAVEM III)	1995–1997	Angola	Angolan Civil War
13	United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA)	1997–1999	Angola	Angolan Civil War
14	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL)	1998–1999	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone civil war
15	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA)	1998–2000	Central African Republic	Central African Republic mutinies
16	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	1999–2005	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone civil war
17	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)	2000–2008	Eritrea-Ethiopia	Eritrean-Ethiopian War
18	United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB)	2004–2007	Burundi	Burundi Civil War
19	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)	1999–2010	Congo	Second Congo War
20	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)	2007–2010	Chad, Central African Republic	Darfur Conflict, Civil war in Chad (2005–2010)
21	United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)	2005–2011	Sudan	Second Sudanese Civil War
22	United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	2007	Darfur Sudan	Darfur Conflict
23	United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)	2011	Libya	2011 Libyan civil war
24	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)	2004	Côte d'Ivoire	Civil war in Côte d'Ivoire
25	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	1991	Western Sahara	Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara

**Source:** <http://www.un.org>

Prevention they say is better than solution. If Peace education, which should focus on inculcating values (peace) that promote selflessness and community service in children and youths was made available as a primary and secondary school subject or made to be included in the school curriculum, a lot would have been achieved by now since the students would be made to have peace values. For this, this study sought to promote peace education at the elementary and secondary stages as a means of inculcating peace attitude/virtue in the lives of the teenagers in African Countries. The main aim of this paper is to identify the roles incorporating peace education into the primary and secondary school curriculum could play in giving African Children and Youth Peace values and attitudes. However, this paper sought to identify effective strategies for inculcating Peace as a virtue in the life of the African Child through Education and also to design strategies towards effective peacekeeping in Africa through Sustainable Education.

### **Significance of the Paper:**

Having seen the increase in conflicts, wars and violence in many African Countries, there is an increased need for peacekeeping of which the United Nations has become the agency for achieving world peace. The continent's security issues need to be addressed adequately by Africans Leaders in conjunction with the education sector/curriculum developers. Peace education is incredibly imperative in our education system especially in countries with high level conflicts. The Primary, junior/senior secondary schools are the point of concentration.

### **Peace education**

Peace education is that education which focuses on inculcating values (peace) that promote selflessness and community service in children and youth. Peace education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. In summary, peace education aims at the inculcation of social etiquette. These lofty objective/goals cannot be achieved without a proper education that would influence the students and cultivate values such as justice, equality, humility, good human relationships, oneness, friendliness, fairness, respect for others, and co-operation etc. Courses arranged with aims of achieving peace should be offered in schools/colleges and higher institutions as peace education.

Peace education was characterized by Vriens (1987) into four dimensions:

- **Peace Values:** This involves non-violence, social justice, equality, the right of man and woman.
- **Peace Attitudes:** This consists of being critical, democratic freedom.
- **Peace knowledge:** This includes insight into conditions of war and the factors that prevent peace.
- **Peace skills:** These are made up of conflict resolution, the ability to make political changes etc. these are the values students should be educated for onward transmission to their friends and relation in the society. The growth and development of any nation depends on her youths. Therefore, the youths should be exposed to the values and attributes of peace such as humility, patience, kindness, tolerance, politeness, trust, loyalty, respect, caring, patriotism, and dignity of labour to a high esteem at school by making them offer courses organized and established to address peace values and attributes. It is envisaged that when the youths (students) are educated on the peace values and attributes, they would in turn inculcate it to the youngsters, which will help to mould the characters of people, prepare them for life as a responsible, selfless and contented citizens of their respective nations. Peace education will help to reduce disruptive behaviours like violence of all sorts, maintain discipline and character training. It will help people to be organized, develop communication and problem solving skills especially to resolve problems quickly without outside interventions, which may cause conflicts and violence.

For peace to rein in Africa, the students (youths)/teachers should be trained to serve as mediators, which will help to impart positive values and skills such as appreciating differences, active listening, empathy, motivation, impulse control, anger management to others in the society. Peace building also involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peace building is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. It works by addressing the deep-rooted, structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner. Peace building measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions.

The exposure of students (youth) to internet, television, literature books, movies etc. aggravate the everyday life of the younger students to war, pain, power, violence, conflict, injustice, death, distraction, etc. (Onyeshi, 1998). These social ills need to be curbed from our schools and society at large and professional counsellors need to be involved in the proper dissemination of peace values that embrace a lot of attributes. Incorporating peace education in primary and secondary school curriculum will help to inculcate right values that are worthwhile for character formation, good moral behaviour to people and help to reduce disruptive behaviours of young people (students) in the society. This will enable our youngsters to contribute to national building through peace-keeping in any field of work they find themselves when they must have graduated.

## **Conflict, War and Violence**

Conflict, war and violence are universal miasma that manifests in every society and environment, whether developed or underdeveloped. It is not restricted to African countries alone – it has a global trend. The only difference is that root causes, consequences and approaches in the management of violence and conflict which leads to war may be quite different from that of other continents because of environmental differences ranging from poverty, illiteracy, ethnocentrism etc. (Onwe, 2006). Conflict according to Webster new world dictionary (3rd edition) means to fight, battle, contend to be antagonistic, incompatible, contradictory to be in opposition, struggle, war, clash, sharp disagreement or opposition as of interest or ideas, emotional disturbance resulting from clash.

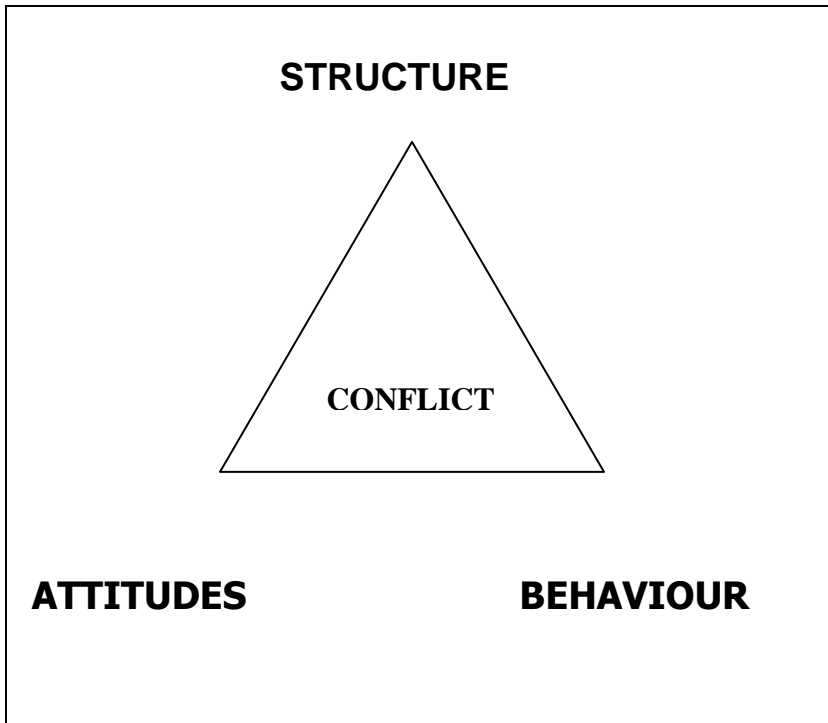
Mc Energy (1985) defines conflict as the overt coercive interaction of contending collective. New Webster's dictionary of the English language, International edition defines violence as use of physical force so as to damage or injure, intense natural force of energy; and abusive use of force, passion, fury; distortion of meaning. In the same vein, it sees conflict as armed fighting, a war, a struggle between opposing principles or aims, a clash of feeling of interest. To be at variance, clash; to struggle, contend. Hansford in Onwe (2006), asserts that conflict is a breakdown of normal activities of an organization in such a manner that the individual or group involved experience disharmony in working together. The group will not just fail to work together, but will also engage in open unpleasant combat or quarrel. This will happen to the extent that the functioning of the entire organization will be disrupted. War, which is a by-product of conflict and violence, comes as inability of one to resolve conflicts. Conflicts are experienced at most levels of human activity and are complex processes which have certain elements. According to Agada (2008), Conflict is a dynamic process in which structures, attitudes and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing one another. A conflict emerges as parties' interests come into disagreement or the relationship they are in becomes oppressive. The parties then begin to develop hostile attitudes and conflicting behaviours. The conflict formation starts to grow and develops, thus the conflict may widen, deepen and spread. This complicates the task of addressing the original, core conflict. Eventually, resolving the conflict must involve a set of dynamic, interdependent changes that involve de-escalation of conflict behaviour, change in attitudes and transformation of relationships or structures.

Agada (2008) avers that there are two sides to conflict; the positive and negative sides. The positive view of conflict persists in most of the Third World where wars served as instrument of transition from colonial rule to independence. However, after independence, this principle has not proved beneficial to most African Countries, rather, it has compounded their problems. Thus for the African States, conflict is a double edged sword; a means to independence but at post independence particularly after the Cold War, conflict escalated into civil wars with devastating effect on many African Countries. This view was captured succinctly by Maj Gen Chris Garuba when he declared that the end of the Cold War has brought a clearer realisation that we on the African Continent have accounted for a disproportionately high number of post-Cold War conflicts (Garuba, 1998). As recently as 1998, people in about 14 of Africa's 53 countries are engaged in armed conflicts simultaneously, he confirmed.

These violent conflicts have taken severe economic and social tolls on the continent, seriously undermining development efforts in many countries.' In some other parts of the world the positive sides of conflict enabled states to maintain or extend control over territories. Agada in his study (2008) gave instance of South Korea's independence, which was achieved as a result of conflict. Similarly the borders of the State of Israel were defined through conflict, also the borders of Iran and Iraq. The first Gulf War of 1991 ensured the continued existence of Kuwait as an independent state. Conflict could therefore be also productive. One way of conceptualizing the relationship between these elements is a Conflict Triangle at Figure 1, with structures, attitudes and behaviours at the points. Galtung first proposed this model for understanding conflict.

## **FIGURE 1**

### **Conflict Triangle**



**Source:** Woodhouse and Tamara (eds). *Peacekeeping and International Conflict Resolution* (New York: UNITARPOCI, 2000) p.22

Woodhouse and Tamara (2000) were of the opinion that structures refer to political mechanisms, processes and institutions that influence the satisfaction of security, welfare, recognition and identity needs. Attitudes include the parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other and of themselves. These may be positive or negative, but in violent conflicts, parties tend to develop increasingly negative stereotypes of opposing parties and increasingly positive self-group identity. Galtung sees behaviours as actions undertaken by one party in conflict aimed at the opposing party with the intention of making that party abandon or change its goals. Violent conflict behaviour is characterized by threats, coercion and destructive attacks.

### **The underlying causes of conflicts in African Countries**

The black continent – Africa, has experienced all sorts of violence, oppression, suppression, wars and conflicts. However, we should not fail to understand that wherever people live in groups, they interact among themselves; they formulate regulation that harmonized human beings in that very society. These regulations a times go contrary to some cultural/traditional beliefs, which may result to conflicts/violence or war as case may be. History reveals that in Africa, there have been persistent inter-state and intra-state conflicts, violence, religious crisis, political instability, economic recession and debt burden to mention but a few. These issues and other problem constitute bulk of critical issues in national integration in Africa. The after-math of colonialism left the states in Africa socio-culturally ravaged, technically, language wise and generally misinformed (Onwe, 2006). He further states that the manner the African states were drafted into world capitalist societies through the introduction of the market economy brought her under different levels of under-development and exploitation; poor technological base resulted from the poor foundation laid by the colonial administration in Africa; political instability caused by military intervention in Africa polities, according to so many scholars is also attributed to colonialism as it has widened the elasticity of political violence in Africa.



These are some of the problems of Africa that metamorphosed into violence and conflicts and in some cases resulted to war.

1. **Style of management:** When the style of management is uncompromising, autocratic, non-participatory etc, tension could rise leading to industrial conflict. In Africa, workers tend to react sharply to this type of situation thereby leading to violence in some cases because goal congruency cannot be achieved through bad style of management. In some cases, it may be due to failure of management to provide necessary social and welfare amenities for the workers, etc.
2. **State and Religion:** Most African states are heterogeneous in character, housing people of different tribes, custom, tradition, religion etc. a situation that makes governance difficult because locality question is always in doubt. In Nigeria for instance, the northern parts of the country are synonymous with religious conflicts and violence because of difference among the Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the Igbo Christians.
3. **Labour Legislation:** If the labour laws contain provision that do not protect the interest of the workers effectively, the reaction of the workers may be direct against such laws. This can also breed conflict and finally culminate in violence.
4. **Ethnicity:** Nigeria for instance is made up of different and differing ethnic groups which no sociologist or anthropologist can correctly classify. This heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but also applicable to a host of other African countries. According to Onwe (2006), this diversity manifests difference in culture, religion, belief, custom, tradition, values, norms, interests and orientations. What one ethnic group in a state wants differs from what the other wants and finally what metamorphoses is what nobody wanted. This has been the major root cause of conflict and violence in Africa.
5. **The Military Intervention:** African States are characterized by coups and counter-coups. The military believe that the civilians are corrupt and that they also mismanage the resources of the country and claim to salvage the country by launching a takeover. The coup may appear noble and faultless at conception but questionable in execution. This had been the lots of some African states. For instance, the 1966 coup in Nigeria that later brought about the civil war, the Liberia power tussle, the Angola crises etc. are good testimony that absolute quest for power breeds conflicts, wars and violence.

According to the United Nations Peace Building Commission (2014), since 1970, more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa; the vast majority of them were intra-state in origin. In 1996 alone, 14 of the 53 countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts accounting for more than half of all war related deaths world-wide and resulting in more than 8 million refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The consequences of these conflicts have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long term stability, prosperity and peace of its peoples.... Preventing such wars is no longer a matter of defending states or protecting allies. It is a matter of defending humanity itself.

This study has reviewed most UN Peacekeeping documents for Africa and found out that despite all peacekeeping efforts, there is continuing lack of progress in the peace process and in national reconciliations.

### **The UN Peacekeeping and Their challenges**

The United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa has done a lot to maintain peace in Africa. Though United Nations Peacekeeping started in Africa about 50 years ago, it is still not as successful as it should have been. Consequently, we reviewed and examined the UN Peacekeeping projects in Africa over the last 50 years and discovered that there are challenges facing United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa.

At first, it was seen that conflicts in many African countries increase on daily basis, because, the African People have not been made to develop peace as a virtue and a state of mind. In course of examining the UN Peacekeeping projects, we found out that, peace cannot be achieved in conflict prone countries in Africa through Military interventions and legislation; a measure often adopted by the UN Peacekeeping Commissions. Sometimes, during military intervention processes, the innocent civilians/citizens are often harmed, maimed, killed or even displaced from their homes. Using the legislative measures also has lots of challenges as well. Sometimes, the legislators may not debate, discuss or dialogue the minds of the people. This is why this paper came up with the argument that Peace education as discovered and recommended in this paper is a sustainable means of resolving the already existing conflicts and those yet to come later. The reason is that primary education, which is compulsory in most African

countries, would be a soft ground to educate the children about the dangers of violence and conflicts in their rural communities.

The idea is that as the child learns the skills on how to solve mathematics, he/she should be able to learn and develop professional skills on how to solve little day-by-day person-to-person conflicts, which may rise/lead to community wars and conflicts (if not nibbed at the bud) as seen in many communities. The Primary school teachers should be trained to be agents of peacekeeping such that they'll be able to inculcate the values and attitudes in the school pupils. The argument is that at the primary school age, the child's mindset is not yet filled with violence, and his/her mind could be moulded towards leading peaceful lifestyle. This is in line with the postulation (clean slate) of John Locke. As the child grows, having been tutored to have peace values, the child will not be part of any form of violence in his/her community. Such individuals will in turn be agents of peace.

### **Incorporating Peace Education into Primary School Curriculum/Policy Implications**

African nations need to belong to the globalization of education since the world has turned to a global village. The nations have to integrate the young ones in the adoption of global education. When they fail, it seems they are seeking for international isolation. In view of the above, Egbo (2005) advocated for education eclecticism which means taking from the west only what best suits African Nations' interest and then merging it with the bases. Though, it may increase the existing subjects/courses. Oderinde (1997), was of the view that the existing school subjects/courses had failed since the orthodox school curriculum, the world over has given the world everything from religion (moral instruction) to hi-tech. except peace. Peace education calls for an urgent introduction in the primary, secondary schools and colleges. Legislations and military interventions are good strategies for resolving already existing wars, conflicts and violence but they are not the best approach to preventing conflicts, wars and violence from occurring. The best solution as provided by this study is inculcating peace attitude and values through education, which must be included in the school curriculum for proper implementation.

### **Conclusion**

It has been discovered from this study that there were some lofty objectives which the orthodox school subjects/courses could not achieve. But introducing peace education in primary and secondary schools will help the students (youths) develop and master the peace values properly and in turn teach and educate others. Introducing peace education into school curriculum will help to reduce tribalism, violence, hostilities, destruction of government properties etc. it will help to develop the students and make them responsible, conflict, war and violence free citizens.

### **Recommendations**

Meanwhile, here are suggested ways to incorporate peace education in primary, secondary schools/colleges curriculum in Africa.

1. Seminars and conferences should be organized to the public to create peace education awareness. And the governments of various African Countries, Public and Private sectors should support such awareness campaigns.
2. School teachers should be trained and retrained on peace education to be able to handle the subjects dealing on peace issues.
3. Moral instruction should be reintroduced in all religious denominations to help speed good human relations that will bring peace.
4. National Policies on Education of the African nations should be re-organized to include peace Education in school curriculum. Curriculum developers, Ministries of Education of various African countries etc. should work towards achieving this goal.
5. African nations should introduce peace education in all levels of educational system since other nations in developed world have taught character education. This will enable some African nations belong to the globalization of education or they will be isolated.
6. Stakeholder should help the Federal Government in funding education most especially peace education.
7. Moral instruction should be reintroduced in our educational institutions at all levels.



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