

## REFORMING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Nigeria's transition to democracy from 1999 to date has been saddled with persistent civil unrest and violence as a result of conflicts between communities and ethnic nationalities. Education in general and Technical Vocational Education and Training in particular should be providing students with conflict and peace building skills among others to address such challenges. However, the TVET system at Polytechnic, College of Education Technical and Technical College levels are deficient in Peace Education. Against this backdrop the need for reform emerges. This paper therefore examines the scope of Peace Education, TVET system at Polytechnic, College of Education Technical and Technical College levels, identifies Peace Education gaps in the vision and mission statements, curricula, the school environment and pedagogy of the teachers for the purpose of reform. Also, the paper suggests strategies such as the introduction of core values of Peace, Tolerance, Diversity as well as nature and causes of conflicts and strategies for its management in the curricula of the TVET system in Nigeria. Six recommendations were made among which is that the NBTE and the NCCE should ensure that the curricula are reviewed to reflect the peace education requirements of Nigeria during the next review of the curricula.

**KEYWORDS:** TVET, Peace Education, TVET System, Reforming

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's transition to democracy stated in 1999 and has been saddled with lots of developmental challenges. These challenges are addressed through the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). The NEEDS focuses on four main areas namely;

- Reorient values
- Reducing poverty and empowering people
- Creating wealth
- Generating employment (National Planning Commission 2004).

Education remains the main instrument for turning around these focus areas. The goals of Education, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) are:

- The development of the individual with a sound and effective citizen
- The full integration of the individual into the community.

- The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens at primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal system.

From the foregoing therefore, the ultimate objective of education is to bring about Peace and Development in Nigeria. Peace is simply defined as an occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviours and freedom from fear of violence (Wikipedia 2014), while development is the ability of a country to improve social welfare of its citizenry by providing social amenities, portable water etc (Wikipedia 2012). The provision of effective Education in general and Technical Vocational Education and Training in particular is the surest way of helping to prevent violent conflicts because TVET empowers people with employable skills towards creating jobs, social citizenship, career, persons skills for enhancing development (Ibegbu 2011; Teacher without Border, 2010).

TVET is defined as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences as well as the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economic and social life (FRN, 2004). The TVET system in Nigeria and indeed across the globe is structured into three namely formal, informal and non formal. The formal TVET is provided in school- based setting. This includes Polytechnic, College of Education Technical, Technical College and Vocational Training Centre, Vocational Enterprises Institute while the informal TVET is provided in the informal sector of the economy as Apprenticeship Education. Furthermore, the non formal TVET is provided in industries. The objective of all the types of TVET is to prepare beneficiaries for labour market by providing them with employability, adaptability, transferability and appropriate technical skills in addition to other general education goals (UNEVOC 2009) so that they can contribute effectively to societal development.

In recent times the transition to democracy in Nigeria is saddled with persistent civil unrest, violent conflicts between communities and nationalities (Abdul-jelil 2009; Oikelomeand Igiri 2013; AFP 2014). These challenges suggest that the educational initiatives for addressing them are weak and can be overcome through effective Peace Education programme (Ibegbu 2011, Deneshn.d;& UNESCO 2012).

Peace Education, according to Teachers without Border (2010) is education that empowers learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to end violence and injustices and promote culture of peace. It teaches principles and practices of peace and would enable children, youths and adults to prevent violent conflict, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to development.

Against this backdrop therefore there is a need to reform the TVET system to do more towards providing peace education skills to the students. This paper therefore, identifies the scope, objectives and principles of Peace Education, examines the TVET system in Nigeria and identifies gap and suggest strategies and recommendations.

### **The Scope and Objectives of Peace Education**

The scope of peace education is very wide. From the review of related literature (Susan 1999; United Nations 2010; CRETE 2010; Teachers Without Borders 2010), the following were identified as components of Peace Education:

**Human Right Education:** This is a UNICEF initiative on education about Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Children, African Charter on Child Rights among others. The essence is to help educate students about their rights effects of violation of such rights and the need to assist those whose rights have been denied.

**Multicultural Education:** This model of peace education seeks to address cultural understanding tolerance solidarity and respect in a globalised world.

**Global Citizenship Education:** This is a programme aimed at helping students to acquire knowledge in areas such as social justice, diversity Globalisation and independence Sustainable Development, peace and conflict resolution as well as skills in critical thinking debating challenging injustice and inequality, respect, cooperation and conflict resolution. Also values such as identity and self esteem empathy, belief that everyone can make a difference.

**Conflict Resolution Education:** This is a programme designed to help young people understand conflict, its causes and skills for resolving it. According to CRETE (2010), it teaches emotional awareness empathy and perspective in emotional management, problem solving, communication and effective decision making.

**Education for Development:** This initiative is geared towards building global solidarity, peace, acceptance of differences, social justice and environmental awareness in young people.

**Gender Training:** This programme was designed by UNICEF to educate young men and women about gender conflict and ways in which it can be handled.

**Life Skills Education:** This type of peace education is geared towards helping young people to develop wide range of skills that help them cope effectively with the challenges of everyday life. Some of skills taught include communication, decision making, problem solving among others.

**Landmine Awareness Education:** This is a programme developed by UNICEF for countries that have undergone armed conflict to educate young people

**Psychological Rehabilitation Awareness:** This is a programme developed by UNICEF for children affected by war and violence. It is a therapeutic strategy aimed at promoting self expression coping skills and psychological healings.

**Global Education:** This programme consists of environment and ecology peace, conflict avoidance personal health, cooperative skills multiculturalism comparative views on human and child rights.

**Disarmament Education:** This is an education for and about Disarmament. It consists of topics such as armed conflicts, rising weapon related expenditures, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms and other threats that continue to challenge the foundation of international peace and security.

In whatever context it is coined, Peace Education is about teaching principles and practices of peace. According to UNICEF in Susan (1999) the objectives of Peace Education are: Awareness of own needs, self awareness; understanding nature of conflict and peace; Ability to identify causes of conflict and non violent means of resolution; Conflict analysis; Enhancing knowledge of community mechanisms for building peace and resolution of conflict; Mediation process; Understanding of uprightness and responsibilities; Understanding of interdependence between individuals and societies; awareness of cultural heritage; recognition of prejudices (Susan 1999).

## Skills

### The Practical Skills Include

- Communication; active listening, self expression, paraphrasing, reframing
- Assertiveness

- Ability to cooperate
- Affirmation
- Critical thinking
- Ability to think critically about prejudice
- Ability to deal with stereotypes
- Dealing with emotions
- Problem solving
- Ability to generate alternative solution
- Constructive conflict resolution
- Conflict prevention
- Participation in society on behalf of peace
- Ability to live with change (Susan 1999).

### **Attitudes**

#### **The Attitudes Include**

- Self respect, positive self image, strong self –concept
- Tolerance, acceptance of others, respect for differences
- Respects for rights and responsibilities of children and parents
- Bias awareness
- Gender equity
- Sympathy
- Reconciliation
- Solidarity
- Social responsibility
- Sense of justice and equity
- Joy in living(Susan 1999).

These objectives are pursued through the curricula, school environment, school values and teaching and learning practices.

### **Principles of Peace Education**

Effective peace education programme should be based on the following:

- A learning environment where both teachers and students teach and learn peace from one another through equitable dialogue.
- Combining academic study with practical application towards societal transformation
- Analyzing issues in holistic way
- Accounting for the past, present and future, and including the personal, local and global levels.
- Promoting values such as compassion, equality, diversity, sustainability and non violence (Cibbon, 2010).

### **Peace Education Programmes in TVET System in Nigeria**

The TVET curricula for National Technical Certificate (NTC), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) developed by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE 2001) and the Nigeria Certificate in Education curricula developed by the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012) contain very few Peace Education contents. A careful analysis of these curricula by the authors revealed that at the HND, NCE Technical and NTC levels there is no course or module on Peace Education while at the National Diploma level there is a 2 credit unit course titled Citizenship Education with the following general objectives:

- To Understand the constitution of Nigeria
- To Understand the Federal system of government in Nigeria
- To Know the constitutional rights and obligations of Nigerian citizens
- To Understand citizenships.
- To Understand objectives and directives principles of state. (NBTE, 2001).

The course exposes students to significance, principles, benefits, and modes of citizenship in Nigeria. Also, the Rights and obligations of citizens and government.

The following are the gaps in the TVET system in Nigeria:

- There is no peace education initiatives at NTC, HND and NCE Technical levels.
- The peace education initiative at ND (Citizenship Education) is not adequate in objectives and content areas to provide peace and conflict building skills to students which are what they require to contribute Nigeria's development.
- The TVET school environment is not well positioned to promote peace building skills and values (Bukar 2012)
- The Teachers are pedagogically ill-equipped to promote peace education in their classrooms (Yalams&Fatakun 2007).
- TVET institutions do not emphasis enough peace building and conflict in their vision and mission statements.

From the forgoing therefore, it is safe to conclude that the TVET system is not sufficiently positioned to respond quickly to the present day challenges of transition to democracy in Nigeria.

## Strategies

### On the Basis of the Foregoing Issues the Following Strategies are Suggested for Implementation

- The TVET system in Nigeria require reform in the areas of curricula, school environment, pedagogy of teachers in order to empower students with peace building and conflict management skills. The following strategies are suggested for implementation: Core values of peace such as compassion, diversity, tolerance, equality, sustainability non violence etc should be promoted in vision, mission, teaching and learning practices.
- Educational initiatives in the theory of peace, knowledge on peace, peace building and management skills, practical skills in conflict management should be included in the General Education programme of HND, NTC and NCE Technical.
- Extra curricula activities should include initiatives such as peace week, Art festival, peace club among others for the purpose of promoting peace and conflict resolution skills to students.
- Teaching materials such as Study Guide, manual should be developed based on peace education challenges peculiar to Nigeria
- Teachers methodology of teaching should be improved to include methods/strategies of teaching peace education in the classroom. The methods/ strategies are experimental learning, problem solving, modeling, student centred discussion, mediation, communication skills, social media; Face Book, Twitter etc.
- Peace Education Journals and Newsletters, peace education websites should be utilized for the purpose of sensitizing students and for promoting advocacy.
- Partnership between institutions and NGOs on Peace Education should be strengthened
- The contents of some General Education courses like use of English, should enriched with essays on peace, benefits and successful initiatives on Peace and Education.
- Conflict mapping should be strengthened in order to generate base line data for designing peace education programme.
- Quiz completion on peace education for students should be regularly organized to sensitize students and the larger community,

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for effective implementation of the identified strategies.

- The NBTE and NCCE should direct TVET institutions to reflect peace in their core values, vision and mission statements
- The NBTE and NCCE should include peace education initiatives in the General Education components of the HND, NTC and NCE Technical programmes specifically to address conflicts and violence in Nigeria. . The NBTE, NCCE and the management of TVET institutions should organize capacity building workshop for teachers on methodology of teaching peace in the classroom.

- TVET institutions in partnership with students Associations on campus should organize peace week, Arts festival to promote diversity, respect for one other and the need for Tolerance as well as other core values of peace.
- The NBTE, NCCE and the Management of TVET institutions should create windows on their websites for promoting peace.
- NBTE, NCCE and the management of TVET institutions should provide financial grant to lecturers/ teachers who wish to write peace education manuals on Nigeria situation and conduct research on peace.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nigeria in its transition to democracy is facing a lot of violent conflicts and the TVET system as it is today is inadequate in curricula contents and environment to provide peace education skills to the students towards addressing the challenges. Strategies such as curricula review to include peace education initiatives, capacity building of teachers/lecturers, peace advocacy among others will go a long way in reforming the TVET system to respond to the challenges.

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