INNOVATIONS AND TRANSFORMATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING: EMPOWERING THE NIGERIAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH PROACTIVE COUNSELLING SKILLS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Abstract  
There have been series of conflicts in modern times. While the spate of the conflicts continues to grow unabated, and response pattern to the conflicts reactive and systemically ineffective and dysfunctional, the inability of parties and state actors to design an all-inclusive approach that honours transformation and resolution without recourse to violence and peace enforcement have sparked further reproach in the conflict handling styles that have thus far been adopted for use. The cost of a poor response to conflict is enormous and tasking, especially on soft and vulnerable population. This aside, the impact of negative conflict generally could be overbearing and overarching. This study has therefore decided to look at conflict handling beyond the realm of force exertion, violence, combativeness and aggression as it is now the case among parties in conflict and as it is with track I diplomacy, that is, the state actors in conflict resolution. In furtherance to this, the study has demonstrated how the use of proactive Counselling resolution techniques could empower children on conflict management through the introduction of peace education or peace studies at the school level. This is important, if the current indoctrination and dogma that have affected children’s perception of conflict are to be altered and be made to accommodate a better world view. The paper has among others, made some recommendations among which are the need for manpower development of those who are to implement the peace building programmes at the school level and the establishment of trauma centres to handle the emerging psycho-emotional crises that keep emanating from the series of the prolonged conflicts that have taken the centre stage of our social system. There is the need to close rank among the victims of violent disputes by helping to put the past behind them. This we can do, by healing the wounds that were inflicted on them by negative and protracted crises.
The recent upsurge of conflicts and rising cases of insecurity across the global community has continued to debase the sacrosanct of life. It is a development that has disrupted the basics for a safe humanity, a safe habitat and a safe social system. The stalemate as it now portends, has beyond rhetoric and mere policy pronouncements, called for change, possible innovations and transformations that could reduce the threat to safety and security among the different cultures and people. Not only has the disturbing development of negative conflict affected and weakened peaceful coexistence and mutual cohabitation today, it has done that along ethnic and religious divides and has engendered a break in the socio-political system as well. That armed and violent conflicts have permeated the rank and file of our socio-political life is no longer news. Nearly every conflict now tends to be violent, devastating and destabilizing in nature. As it is now, the disintegration has factionalized and decimated coexistence, such that coexistence is now patterned and placated along a residential segregation that might be linked to grievances that are ethnic or resource based, religious or ideologically driven especially in a complex political environment. This is a stark reality that we now face as global citizens and, as a global community sequel to the emerging degeneracy of unresolved conflicts and destabilizations.

Since conflict is inevitable in human existence, it could be impossible virtually to address conflict eradication as a project. Nonetheless, conflict reduction and transformation, effective resolution and a change in conflict definition and understanding all would help to give meanings to our drive for a new world of peace and a more accommodating social order. The use of force in conflict management and resolution by state actors (the track I diplomacy) rather than the use of mechanisms that promote conflict transformation has been fraught today by massive failure and several abuses aside of mistrusts. It suffices to say that not only is the process considered to be ineffective, antihuman and unacceptable, it is a technique that is costly and abysmally conflict perpetuating since the technique hardly addresses conflict issues but rather, sweeps them under the carpet. Though seen as an effective remedy, the government apparatus that are used to quell conflicts in modern times are no longer dependable in conflict resolution and in peace enforcement in view of the recent cases of desertion, mutiny, alleged cases of complicity, self interests and biases during peacekeeping operations. A typical example of the unreliability of the use of arm in modern conflict resolution was a case of defection of 480 Nigerian soldiers to Cameroon during a recent encounter with the insurgents in...
One of the ways by which we can remedy the ugly situation of armed conflict is to build a paradigm that is people-oriented and all-inclusive as far as conflict management is concerned. To do this effectively, we would be compelled to redesign our school programme by mainstreaming peace studies into the school project to tackle a number of the emerging stalemates and challenges. The block-and-tackle approach therefore as this might sound to be, is to ensure that the present generation of school-goers embraces peace and sees peace as fundamental to human existence, cohabitation and development. This again is to transform and remould their perception and thinking regarding conflict and conflict response through some form of diagnostic and remedial programmes.

The school diagnostic and remedial programmes, according to Vishala (2012) are programmes that aim at locating the nature and the root causes as well as providing solution to certain difficulties and deficiencies noted on the child by the school. It is but an upturn of severe and dangerous life pattern and unhealthy occurrences that are faced by our respective communities, especially on ethical issues. Conflicts are normal. They only become absurd when they are allowed to degenerate to violence. They could, especially when properly managed and thwarted from becoming devastating and destabilizing, which often are trends of negative conflicts, bring some dramatic changes and thrilling upturns that could not have emerged without seeking for redress through disagreement. Conflicts become heinous and abhorrent, when they lead to a non-achievement of positive results or rather, are not development-driven or are change-focused.

**Conflict Defined**

Conflict definitions often go along with people’s mindset and prejudices. Congruent upon the preconceived notions that people have of conflict and the negative labeling of conflict as war, fighting, hostility and sometimes; violence, rather than seeing conflict as a platform for transformation, development, transition from negativity, and a potential source of agreement, it is been arduous a task, changing the erroneous beliefs to admit that conflict, could beyond the imposition of pains, engender some mutual benefits to individuals and communities. But while conflict is defined, sequel to our parochial belief as an end rather than a means to an end, Francis (2012) sees conflict as an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence and violent conflict, which is what many define in place of conflict as an aberration. In somewhat a flagrant violation of the general definition of conflict, especially as viewed by many of the African settings and communities, Francis seems to have differed in his expostulation of conflict definition by defining conflict as...
the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups.

By inference, it is but the import of our reaction and the degree of our understanding of conflict that defines how individuals or groups channel their conflict energies positively or otherwise which invariably is what gives a spell to what the outcomes of conflicts are. Because conflict has an ontological basis in human needs, the denial of the needs causes violent conflicts or resolvable differences to degenerate into armed violence or armed conflict. Defining conflict as fight, violence, war and their likes is nothing but a sharp digression from the actual definition of what conflict is. Violence, war or destructive conflicts are never a fraction in the continuum of conflict or conflict definition. In effect, we must initiate a new perspective of conflict definition and understanding and equally a process that dismantles the institutional and conventional practices and policies that project conflict often in the negative, especially now that instability is becoming synonymous with culturally plural societies. Buttressing Francis’ submission, Mohammed (2006) argued that conflict could be considered to be a product of disagreement that is rooted in the belief system and perceptions of threat to people’s goals attainment. There is a significant acceptance of these opinions, with Auwal (2010) sharing from these contributions and quoting Burton (1990) whose postulation was based on human needs theory which posits that all humanbeings have some needs which they seek to fulfill and maximize, the denial and frustration of the needs, could in no small measure be source of conflict or lead to conflict in a large scale. It is not bewildering therefore to see that when individuals, parties or groups could not achieve the desired goals or targets, they result to alternative mechanics that employ the use of force, transfer of anger and aggression, violence and uncivilized means of addressing their grievances which of course has continued to give strength and impetus to defining conflict from a negative view point and, which informs how we respond or react to conflict.

What is Conflict Resolution?

The question of how people can transform or turn conflicts into great opportunities is becoming a relevant issue in global politics, especially with conflict now affecting the soft and vulnerable targets the more, fiercely and majorly and with trans-border conflicts and cases of insecurity endangering socio-economic life of many a nation today. One of the ways, and indeed, the first step into understanding each or one another better, promote a group and social cohesion is for parties to talk about their differences and resolve their conflicts in a manner that is acceptable to all and concordant to best practice in conflict management. It is but conflict resolution that aptly provides the ambience for this, if there are other mechanisms that crave some
opportunities for parties, since resolving disputes via violence does precipitate nothing but negative outcomes.

As much as individuals do not like to live a life that is shrouded in animosity, in intra personal or inter group conflict because of the unhealthy implications that this may have on life and life span, on health, on interpersonal relations, socio-political and economic life, nations are equally becoming zealously opposed to frequent conflict encounters considering how these have been manipulated today to cater for sectional or parochial interest by individuals and again, considering the cost implications of postconflict rehabilitation and development at short and long run.

Experts in conflict management and peace building are of a strong belief that an effective conflict resolution can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes. This aside, it is but only by resolving conflict successfully that many of the endangering issues that led to conflict could be solved apart from getting benefits that one might not at first expect. (Mindtools, 2014). The term conflict resolution could ordinarily be defined as settlement of conflict; an attempt that aims at brokering peace. We also would be right to literally define the term as an effort that is directed at making peace between or among conflictants, disputants or warring parties. The philosophy behind the concept of conflict resolution is to rebuild a severed or broken relationship and perhaps make the relationship to be better and ‘enduring’ than it could have been. Regardless of whatever definition given to express the term, the cardinal concern of conflict resolution lies in its mending fences and rebuilding a defective and souring relationship such that parties rather than work and walk apart, would learn to work and walk together and respect each other’s point of view in future encounters. Where this is lacking, there could not have been a resolve of conflict or dispute.

In the epistemology of ‘resolution’, it is key and fundamental to see that one, the conflict is eventually settled or resolved and two, that parties, having gone through the process of resolution, have agreed without further barriers, to work, live or stay together by removing all impediments either in principle, mechanics or in practice that could fraught coexistence, mutuality and respect for each or one another. However, to resolve a conflict unobtrusively will require talking about the conflict issues and the needs of the parties; bearing in mind that behind every conflict or unresolved conflicts are some needs that are unmet. Would there have been no conflict, there definitely would have been no resolution, peacemaking, peacebuilding, conflict management or conflict transformation and inter alia, there would have been no agitation for postconflict rehabilitation, social reintegration or development. It is
in the light of the inevitability of conflict that the need to resolve the differences in man had significantly arisen.

In the words of Best (2012), citing Miller (2003:3), conflict resolution could be seen as a variety of approaches that are aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflict. Furthering discussion on this, Best, according to Miall et al (2001) posited that by conflict resolution, it is expected that the deep rooted sources of conflict are addressed and resolved, and behaviour is no longer violent, nor are attitudes hostile any longer while the structure of the conflict has been changed. Speaking in a similar vein, Mohammed (2006) elucidated, that the term conflict resolution implies the process of resolving a dispute or conflict permanently. But stressing further, Auwal (2010) argued that a good conflict resolution begins by identifying the problems and demands of each party involved in conflict. This of course, is necessary in designing strategies for conflict mapping and resolution.

When a conflict or dispute is permanently resolved and relationship restored, such that those antecedents that were responsible for violent dispositions become extirpated, paving the way for friendliness rather than enmity and peace rather than proclivity for lawlessness, civil disturbances or crisis agitation, it could be assumed that a conflict has been resolved. This opinion has been articulated by Goldstein (1989) who in his study agrees that if humans as a species appear always to have been more destructive than their circumstances warrant, it is not because they have been bequeathed an excess genetic baggage from their primate ancestors, rather, it is because the very capacities that allow us to shape our environment to suit our convenience also allow us to perceive threats and enemies where none exists. Perhaps, if cognitions can override the body’s need for nutrition, as in a hunger strike, it is said, the same cognition still can override whatever propensities for a nuclear strike that may exist in us.

As individuals would want their raging conflicts resolved; possibly for reasons that hinge on war fatigue, overbearingness, depletion of resources that were committed to continued fighting, or losses - both human and economic, so also do states engage in resolution by calling for truce or ceasefire which could be through a third party intervention; dialogue, negotiation and sometimes, arbitration. Reiter (2009) assesses resolution of conflict from a more detailing perspective by analyzing that war termination, war, and even international relations itself can be fully conceived as a bargaining process, following the famous belief that most conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations. States start wars to get what they want on disputed issues, and at the end are bargains struck to

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create some new settlements of the issues. Providing some lucid analyses of why states ever fight, which inferentially could be extended to asking why individuals or group fight? Reiter (2009) believes that one long-standing solution to the war initiation puzzle is to relax the assumption that the two parties agree on what the outcome of the war would be, and allow for the two sides to disagree. For instance, it is said, if each side thinks it will win, that constitutes disagreement about how the war will end.

If each side thinks it will win, then prior to war each will demand a victor’s share of the disputed good as the price for avoiding war which could serve as a way of resolving an emerging conflict ab initio. It is deserving here to note that as much as individuals could be interested in conflict resolution, groups and nation-states also could through resolution settle their grouses and differences.

Proactive Counselling: How the Principle Promotes Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

Questions have been asked in umpteenth times on what proactive counselling is and what the philosophy promotes or what it stands to strengthen. One other question that is frequently asked is how the principle can be applied at the school level aside of the practicability question, its effectiveness and relevance to today’s conflicts and their resolution. First, it behooves to note as posited by Covey (2004) that as long as we are working in our circle of concern or get inclined doggedly to that, we try to empower the things within it to control us. By implication, it is further stressed, we deny ourselves of taking the proactive initiative that is enriching and further still, necessary to effect a positive change. This succinctly, translates to mean that in our reactive focus; adopting the use of a negative energy reduces the circle of our influence, hence the need for proactivity as a measure of conflict resolution or transformation. Proactive Counselling is a Counselling strategy that provides services that are meant to prevent a further breakdown in individual but first, it is a process that tries to minimize individual’s contact with stressors, encounters, experiences that can aid a weakening of their socio-personal development, interpersonal relationship or effective group cohesion and growth. It is a strategy that protects individuals from steps that lead to disruptive behaviours. There is the need to ‘tool up’ by designing some strategies that are apt enough to address the diverse challenges of modern times.

Grooming children on peace building and peace work right from the school level has become a cardinal obligation. The prevalence of crises at the school level today; cultism, drug use and substance abuse, organized crime syndicate, peer influence, anger and psycho-emotional disorder, aggression and fagging all suggest that there is the

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need to develop a new strategy that can change perception and re-prioritize the role of the school apart from that of educating the child; that is, to engage in character and personality-building. There is the urgent need to address the emerging negative collegiate attitudes that have now become the manipulative tools of violent and negative conflicts even within the school milieu. A plethora of strategies had been suggested, while we cannot treat them with a wave of hands or discountenance their relevance, the fact that we are beginning to experience a new wave of civil disorder has challenged the use of strategies that are more of reactive rather than corrective and proactive. Aleck (2009) asserted that in the course of their progress toward maturity, growing persons need help in learning to adjust to themselves, to other people, and to changing circumstances.

But the kind as well as the amount of help needed varies with individual needs and the condition under which they occur. Guidance it is said may be regarded as a process for providing this help.

In corroborating the argument made by Aleck (2009), Durojaiye (1984) concurred that the adequacy of social behaviour that children demonstrate depends on their stage of development and their repertoire of social skills. Such social behaviour like social communication, social cooperation, social competition, social aggression and social prejudice, friendship and leadership all require some sort of regulation and moderation as children grow. Since one of the principal concerns and preoccupations of Counselling is to create a balance between individuals at both intra and inter level, a balance between individuals and the society, it is fervidly believed that personality development, character moulding, ethical and social re-orientation could be enhanced especially in the re-engineering process for peace and stability through the following strategies.

**Introducing Peace Education in Primary and Secondary Schools: A Necessity**

Introducing Peace Education in schools is no longer a choice; but, a necessity. Symphorien (2010) asserted that Peace Education begins with teaching children how to settle immediate differences without resort to fighting and then leading them towards teaching about conflict transformation in their family, community, country and the world. According to a training document used to facilitate one of the several sessions of the West African Curriculum Development Workshop on Peace and Conflict Resolution (2004), over the last few years, education for peace (EP) has increasingly been focusing on the theme of education in and for non-violent conflict resolution. There are various reasons for this it is argued. On one hand it is posited, NGOs and other sectors have been doing...
important work and corollaries to this theme are thematic areas covering co-education, education for development, ecology and so on. On the other hand, the theme itself is one of the specific ones that give concrete value to EP and one from which ground-breaking contributions may be expected because of its focus on non-violence. Though of recent, outright violence is been condemned and rejected as a model, alternative ways of dealing with conflict are unavailable it is observed. As a result, in spite of its rejection and condemnation, violence still remains a way conflicts are being dealt with, except where - still a much more common occurrence - other, equally negative attitudes are adopted, such as submission or evasion. In the words of McLeod and McLeod (2011), most of us live in complex, crowded urban environments in which we are constantly faced with multiple competing stimuli and rules, where a thoughtful considered response is usually most effective. In this environment, a spontaneous emotional response is likely to lead to trouble. We therefore learn early on to suppress our emotions in the interest of getting along with people.

The institutionalization of Peace Education as reported by Njoku (2004) citing Obasanjo (2002) is an investment in the present and future generations; opportunities to understand the links between peace, conflicts, security and development, and to develop within the individual culture of peace of historical importance. It was toward the promotion and realization of this laudable and noble objective therefore that attempts were made in Africa through the African Leadership Forum (1991) on security, stability, cooperation and development in Africa (CSSDCA) and Organization for African Unity (now African Union) in 2000 to postulate from experiences that it is cheaper and far more humane to prevent conflict than to fight a war. This in a sense, discourages the concept of external intervention in conflicts and lends credence to the concept of ‘Africa First’.

‘Manifesto 2000’ was an effort initiated by UNESCO to promote a culture of peace and was reported to have received over seventy-four million signatures of endorsement throughout the world. The manifesto reiterates that the objective of the International Decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world is to further strengthen the global movement for a culture of peace following the observance of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in 2000. In addition, the manifesto had mandated member states to place a greater emphasis on and expand their activities promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, in particular during the decade at the national, regional and international levels and to ensure that peace and non-violence are fostered at all levels. (United Nations, 1995). This we can implement, one, through the school and two, it again demonstrates
unequivocally, the premium that is placed on youth and global peace, nonviolence, social cohesion, reintegration and youth rehabilitation for positive change in conflict understanding. According to Symphorien (2010), the prevention of violence and inculcation of peace values need to be incorporated into all aspects of the school curriculum, in formal and informal education, and must be reflective of the diverse groups within the society.

The accounts of the different scholars are in effect indicative of the fact that teaching the values and virtues of peace building, nonviolence, conflict transformation and resolution are not practices that are developed just in a day; they are more effectively imbibed and practised after some span of time of training and retraining and capacity building. Some of the core principles and values of Counselling are listening, following, being receptive, and giving the person or client a space in which a person can begin to develop his or her own solutions to problems. These are quite in contrast to a resolution mechanism that preaches or adopts the use of militancy, militarization or radicalization technique to conflict resolution. In Counselling, building an enduring relationship could involve meeting several stakeholders and significant others while resolving a problem. One of these could be parents, peers or siblings, friends or those important associates that could resolve an intra personal or rather, inter personal problem. Introducing peace education at the school level serves a community better and reduces people’s contact with negative or violent conflict as a tool for resolution. It is a process that favours proactive rather than reactive or evasive means to conflict resolution and children need to be trained on these core values. The concept and practices of peace education, duly recognizes the need to inculcate the culture, the value, the mechanics and principles of peacebuilding into children while they are growing and, while they are yet to be indoctrinated into the construct of violence, destruction and armed or negative conflict.

The Role of School in Diagnostic and Remedial Services

The school has a major role to play in detecting and remedying certain imbalances that are identified as potential factors that could inhibit the smooth academic transition and favourable personality development of the child in life. To the extent that the child spends a better part of his day in school interacting with several factors; human, environmental and social are strong indices that call for diagnostic and remedial programmes that could handle, to a reasonable degree, the needs of the child. Vishala (2012) posited that one of the purposes of educational diagnosis is to provide a threefold service: corrective and preventive measures on one hand, and enrichment programmes on the other. Vishala

proceeded further in her analyses by identifying that many factors such as mental, physical, environmental, pedagogical, emotional, volitional, social and moral factors all impinge on the child’s learning and unknowingly, make the child to establish some wrong bonds while learning. It is imperative therefore to put in place certain machinery that could fast track the change from maladaptive to impeccable behaviours by the child and practices that might affect his normal growth in all facets. This is where the need for diagnostic and remedial services becomes necessary and exigent. Doing this will require the synergy of the school and the school’s Counselling unit as well as the home to detect, discover, and remould the child to be a useful, cooperative, empathic and passionate individual or personality that sees the need for diversity, selflessness, multiculturalism, synergy, teamwork and joint problemsolving as proactive mechanisms that are essential for peace, development and growth.

The Relevance of Global Citizenship Education in Contemporary Learning Environment

The need to teach and inculcate the principle and practice of global citizenship at the school level is no longer a matter of choice but rather, that of necessity. The issue of the appropriateness of the skill, and where more to learn of global citizenship education (GCE); the home or the school has continued to be a debate, but this is better handled by the school but efforts at reaching the goals that are set for the programme could be partnered with, or complemented by the home. In a new publication just released by UNESCO, it is observed that global citizenship education is a learning programme that develops the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need to build a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world. In a globalized and fast changing world, it has been argued that these are critical skills that current and future generations need to act today so as to find some plausible solutions to tomorrow’s global challenges. Again, the starting point of the GCE is to recognize the relevance of education in understanding and resolving global issues in their social, political, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions. It also implies acknowledging the role of education in moving beyond the development of knowledge and the so-called cognitive skills, for instance, reading and mathematics to build values, social and emotional skills and attitudes among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation. (Human Rights Education, 2014).

Counselling a Proactive Aggressor, Mood and Anger Management

It is argued that Counselling consists of conversations; a view that is equally supported by McLeod and McLeod (2011). The conversations in
Counselling mostly centre around the most personal aspects of the client’s life: understanding why a client feels the way he does, making significant life decisions, and resolving conflicts in close relationships are a part of what Counselling does. These in reality, are problems that are faced by teachers and school administrators on daily basis. A mismanagement of these routinely encountered problems could precipitate a degeneration of conflicts among preteens as well as teenagers and more disturbingly could transcend to fight or altercations among peers, parents, groups and communities, hence, it becomes an intra party conflict, or on a larger scale; a cross boarder or inter group conflict if the prognostications to such are left unhandled or handled but lately, carelessly and or unprofessionally.

Talking about aggressive behaviours, Groebel and Hinde (1989) explained that many episodes of aggression involve an interaction occurring between two (or more) individuals, an interaction referring to a series of exchanges occurring within a limited span of time. When two individuals have a series of interactions, each interaction may be influenced by the preceding ones and or by expectations of future ones. Typologically, it is believed that humans are aggressive and notorious. Consequent upon this, safe, acceptable channels for the expression of this destructive instinct must be found or society as a whole will suffer. Secondly, failure to express anger could result into problems such as heart disease, stress and high blood pressure and thirdly, it is believed that violence is the result of an aggressive drive that is inherent in man. In some individuals and group, this motive is abnormally strong and must be checked and be arrested early in life. (Goldstein, 1989). How we arrest the problem in time through interventions, demobilization, de-orientation, disabuse, demographic and environmental shift of the behaviourally bankrupt individual are better suggested by Counselling through the use of appropriate modification techniques. Techniques such dissociation or extinction could remedy a misconduct or an unwanted behaviour in a child. Feldman (2013) reported that to produce extinction, or what could be termed disengagement ordinarily, one needs to end the association between conditioned stimuli and unconditioned stimuli. By doing this, the child is denied of those factors or stimulants that promote, ignite or sensitize the repeat of a reproachful conduct that makes him to be morally light weight as an individual. It is the dual role of the school and the school Counsellor inter alia, to continue to innovate those mechanisms that transform the child from becoming a right abuser or a crime inclined individual to a change agent, human rights defender, problem solver, a facilitator, an enabler and a world class active citizen. Becoming all these would have to start from the grassroots, by
committing children to think locally, and act globally as citizens.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

One of those core values that need to be imbibed by children as they are growing is the culture of creating a safe and supportive environment. This is significant to learning today because a number of children no longer could access education easily in flashpoint areas or in volatile zones where conflicts have thus far become endemic and repetitive or serial. Sharf (2008) argued that a vast array of conditions such as social, cultural, political, and economic considerations affects individuals and that these factors generally are outside the control of the individual. One major task of Counselling is to engage individuals in tasks and ensure that they are appropriately engaged. When this is done, it reduces their tendency of criminality, radicalization, militancy, dissonance, involvement and indulgence in other social vices and acquisition of wrong cultures and ethics. These aside, Counselling or Counselling psychology ensures that individuals expend their time often; gainfully and their leisure time to build their health and reduce boredom and stress. The school time table, curriculum and the counselling unit owe it as an obligation to ensure that children or pupils are actively engaged and their activities properly coordinated.

Creating a safe and a stress-reducing environment would require the availability of the necessary facilities; didactic story books, invitation of role-models and mentors for speech and talks on ceremonial days in schools, introduction of peace clubs and the right learning environment, interactions with successful individuals in and outside the child’s immediate community, lectures about nonviolence, conflict management and transformation, collaboration and partnership with parents and many more to these. Granello and Young (2012) assessed the Counsellor both as a mediator and, as an advocate or agent of social change. Mediators according to the duo are individuals who help two or more parties that are involved in a dispute reach a resolution that they can agree upon rather than having a resolution imposed on them by a third party; they try as much as possible to de-escalate emotion. As change advocates, they strive and intervene not just to help individual clients but work to change the world in which the clients live. It is only when our communities are safe and secure that things like human and food security, environmental security, good governance and development could all be guaranteed or be sustained.

Teaching the Principle of ‘Do no harm’ in Schools

It is a common encounter for children to be rough. This could be at play or while performing some tasks. Fagging or continuous battering of junior students in secondary schools,
especially in boarding schools for instance, is a way of demonstrating nothing but seniority, ego and superiority by those in higher classes or by prefects. Sometimes, it goes without saying that the junior ones are exhaustively punished such that they are wounded or get worn out while teachers are unaware of this. Stubbornness could lead to inflicting pains on others. It is therefore a major task on school Counsellors to get children with such attributes and traits of criminality de-radicalized and reformed. One way by which this could be done successfully is to include the principle of nonviolence and do-no-harm as well as that of dignity of human life in the curriculum of peace education in schools. Preaching the gospel of love, oneness, creating a we-feeling in children right from infancy or childhood, teaching the virtues of sharing and caring, empathy rather than sympathy, affection and passion, unity, de-tribalization, patriotism, statesmanship, destroying the paranoia of enemy image and mindset all could be sources of changing our conflict perception, stereotyping, labeling and stigmatization.

Diamond (2001) remarked that there is need to factor peace studies into the school curriculum. The reason for this could not have been far from the fact that children as he lamented, spend much of their working hours at school. Through subject matter taught in the classroom, from peer interaction and by how people treat each other - in class, in the cafeteria, in the halls and on playground - our children are being socialized everyday, told which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. A consistent message at home and school about the culture of peace can give our children the support they need to follow. How this could be done is to design a school programme that allows children speak on each of the topics that were listed above from time to time. The work of a school Counsellor here would be to:

i. Support playground diplomacy.

ii. Encourage schools to use principles that preach and promote peace as a daily teaching tool - ask that they be displayed in every classroom; discussed regularly; use as a reference for appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

iii. Suggest assembly programmes, units, themes and sub-themes in peace studies and field trips that highlight the message of nonviolence, human rights, conflict resolution, diversity, pluralism, multiculturalism, divergence, reconciliation, and tolerance.

iv. Request an educational approach that helps children learn they are global citizens. Let them study other cultures and broaden their understanding of such. Engage children in world affairs; introduce them to areas where wars are taking place and the implications of their
action on education, unity, health, water and sanitation, human and food security, migration, displacement, agriculture, economy and so forth. Exchange student programmes and visit refugee centres for children to appreciate peace and peaceful coexistence and see the ruins of violent or negative conflicts.

v. Support approaches to history that focus less on wars and more on the peace process that ended the wars; less on conquerors and more on the fate of the conquered; less on military heroes and more on the great peacemakers of the world, typical of these are people like Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi of India, etc.

vi. Strongly encourage cooperative, group-oriented approaches to learning and playing, team-based projects in school, and non-adversarial ‘new games’ for play. Strengthen the values of cooperation and joint problemsolving. Encourage proactive approaches to conflict handling and transformation.

vii. Encourage a replication or step down trainings to other members within the school but not necessarily confined or limited to the school community as a social service.

Trauma Healing and Psychosocial-Emotional Disorder: The Role of Crisis Counselling

Sometimes, people are in great and dire need of some sort of support that could be other than finance. Remembering a sour past for instance could endanger relationship or trigger reprisal. It could as well lead to loss of trust and confidence or call for restorative justice. But vastly, as people go through trauma; they are faced with some life threatening challenges that could be tasking to their entire life. In such moments, there is need for someone to restore hope and remove them from despair or their present state of despondency. For children who have lived much of war rather than peace, it could be tremendously exerting to change their belligerent perception and enemy image. But to avoid recycling conflict, changing their world view is fundamental to postconflict development and social reintegration. This is where Counsellors’ work becomes necessary at the junior school level though the same is needed in other areas. Granello and Young (2012) were of the opinion that the Counsellor’s role after the crisis is to help individuals, families, groups or communities cope with tragedies through crisis counselling. Crisis counseling is said to be a combination of counseling, education, guidance, and support. Rather than a substitute for long term Counselling, it is but intended to help individuals get through the immediate trauma or psychological stress or disorder and its short term
accompanying stress or effects. Corroborating the fact that existentially, man is bound to encounter some deadlocks that could weaken his psychological and emotional stability, McLeod (2009) posited that in multicultural, pluralist democratic societies, it is inevitable that competing value systems and cultural traditions will generate different ideas about human personality.

Conclusion

Teaching the core value of peacebuilding and conflict transformation requires a holistic and a multi-disciplinary approach. The use of fire brigade techniques in conflict management is failing and overwhelmingly becoming disappointing; children now get co-opted into conflicts as foot and child-soldiers by those who exploit their teeness and juvenility as well as work on their psyche to wreck havoc and subject the population to acute sufferings and hardships. Children are conscripted daily to fight a particular social order across the globe; they are made to fight against their community, their kinfolks and fight an established ideology; both political and economic. The unhealthy phenomenon of children’s involvement in conflicts features more in conflict prone and flashpoint areas where conflicts get endemic, perpetuated and destabilizing. The global concern today is that of addressing the spate of negative and armed conflict. It is but a common concern and a fierce and sharp agitation for a new world of peace and brotherhood. But fraternizing relationship as it is now been propagated, and re-inventing a new world of order that is erected on global citizenship must be able to honour and acknowledge the stark need for partnership and collaborative process with the school. The medium must see the need to re-invent or redesign our programme contents and textual materials to accommodate peace education and the training of the school children on peace and conflict transformation. It is believed that transmitting such messages and initiating ideas and modules or units on peacebuilding with a view to transforming the child to a change agent and peacebuilder could better be handled first by the school before any other sector of the society. Our recent conflict timelines and conflict antecedents and our poor response mechanisms are suggestive of the need to involve the school fully on peacebuilding project. It is only right therefore, that we accord the school its deserving place to initiate strategies that are capable of transforming the child and inversely, the society in the herculean task of our transformation agenda.

Recommendations

To install a sustainable peace constituency and a corps of change agents and peace vanguards in our respective communities today will require the use of a multi-track approach and a synergy of proactive efforts that
aim at overhauling the trend and growth of the ongoing problem of negative conflict and rising cases of violence. It is fervently believed the school has a substantial role to play by innovating mechanisms that can engineer some transformational values. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study has found it imperative to recommend the following:

i. Peace Education to be introduced as a programme or subject from primary to secondary school to impart children with skills in conflict prevention, management, transformation and resolution. This should be encouraged further in other sectors of our education and school system.

ii. Peace Education curriculum to be simplified such that it is not technically difficult and cumbersome for children to learn the skills, imbibe, practise, replicate and teach to others at home and, in their respective communities.

iii. In view of the prevalence of conflicts in modern societies, it is but imperative to have trauma centres established where children or people with trauma and psychological wounds are healed, and where the need for reprisal and retributive justice are de-emphasized. The trauma therapies that are given will help victims of conflicts, and those abused as a result of perpetuity of violent conflicts, unprofessional conducts and other observed laxities to learn to prop up with life with minimum pains and grief.

iv. Constant manpower development such as training and retraining will help to introduce the school Counsellor to current information, workable and practicable ideas in conflict management, transformation and resolution. This it is believed will help to improve their service delivery and skill-building practices.

v. Institutions, bodies and agencies that work on peacebuilding, conflict management, transformation and resolution to be further strengthened and be better empowered by government and development partners for best practices and effective service delivery. Networking by schools, partnership, teamwork could better be achieved through some form of interactions and collaborations with agencies that are in to peacebuilding and conflict management practice.

vi. Educational trips, sight-seeing journeys to places where peaceful coexistence and nonviolence to conflict resolution have worked to favour development, the socio-economic and political growth of the society would be necessary to change the negative perceptions and the dogmas or indoctrinations that
are already acquired by children in support of armed and violent conflicts especially in flashpoint zones but this should not be exclusive of those significant others.

vii. Introduction of peace clubs, peace bulletins, development and exchange trips or programmes are all necessary today in our school system.

References


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