

Peace Education in Africa: Initiatives, Implementation, and Impact

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Abstract

Peace education has become critical to educational transformation in Africa, particularly amid persistent conflicts, socio-political instability, and developmental challenges. Rooted in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7, peace education aims to promote values, knowledge, and skills necessary for peaceful coexistence, global citizenship, and sustainable development. This article assesses the process of peace education, including policy frameworks, curricular integration, pedagogical practices, and the impact of peace education initiatives across African nations. Based on continental strategies, international interventions, and country-level experiences, the paper highlights the transformative potential of peace education while critically analysing its limitations and implementation challenges. Based on the ensuing discussion, recommendations have been made to strengthen peace education as a tool for social cohesion and sustainable development in Africa.

Keywords: Africa, peace education, impact, phased integration, pedagogical approaches, role of teachers

1. Introduction

Africa is a large and diverse continent made up of around 54 countries and home to numerous ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups. This diversity has brought great richness to the continent, but it also creates problems. The Equator bisects the continent of Africa, allowing a variety of climates, including tropical rainforests, savannas, and deserts such as the Sahara. Its size and terrain are barriers to communication between communities. Before European colonisation, Africa was divided into numerous independent kingdoms and societies with little political cohesion. At the Berlin Conference, the colonial powers partitioned the landmass, ignoring existing cultural and ethnic lines. This created artificial borders that united disparate groups, fostering regional rather than national identities.

At the same time, oil, minerals, and arable land provide ample raw materials to whoever controls the state – and that has historically been a source of conflict in Africa. Power struggles and civil wars marked Postcolonial Africa. During the Cold War, however, external powers exacerbated these cleavages, which were not geographical but increasingly political and ideological. Conflict in countries like Rwanda, Liberia, and Sudan demonstrates the necessity of strong peacebuilding instruments. Persistent violence, including civil wars and extremism, has made peace a much sought-after goal.

Within this framework, education has been regarded as a strategic instrument for advancing peace, resilience, and social cohesion alongside development. United Nations-led global efforts and frameworks, such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (in particular Target 4.7), address education for human rights,

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the environment, and a culture of peace. Agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF have been instrumental in these endeavours across the continent. The African Union, through instruments such as Agenda 2063, is also advancing education as a means to peace and development. Consequently, peace education in Africa is increasingly significant for supporting post-conflict recovery, nation-building, averting violent extremism, and consolidating democratic ideals.

Theoretical Foundations: Peace (negative or positive) provides the foundation for an interdisciplinary analysis that synthesises knowledge from peace studies, education, sociology, and political science to explore human and social issues related to coexistence amid conflict. Johan Galtung distinguishes “negative peace” (or absence of direct violence) from “positive peace” (or presence of justice, equity, human rights, and good social relations). This differentiation broadens the scope of peace education beyond conflict prevention to include fostering an environment that nurtures human dignity and well-being. Thus, peace education should incorporate more than conventional conflict-resolution methods; it must also cover a range of integrated areas. This includes education for human rights (rights education is knowledge of basic rights and the legal protections of these rights), Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which promotes common responsibility in an increasingly global society, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which links peace with care for the environment, social justice, and sustainable, collective well-being in the long term. Intercultural and ethical education are essential for teaching to understand and respect opposing viewpoints and make moral choices. In the African context, these theoretical positions are undergirded by indigenous epistemologies and philosophies, such as Ubuntu, that emphasise the communal nature of existence, shared responsibility, and the belief that one’s humanity cannot be fully realised in isolation from others. Ubuntu provides a contextually relevant epistemology that views peace as grounded in the micro-dimensions of everyday social life, sustaining mutual relations and togetherness. Thus, peace education is not only a matter of education and policy but is also lived in people’s and communities’ lives, embedded in cultural and social values and in the day-to-day life of communities, for both individual development and social transformation.

Policy Framework: Peace education in Africa is embedded within a multilayered policy and institutional framework that operates across global, continental, and national levels, reflecting a coordinated effort to address conflict, promote social cohesion, and foster sustainable development. At the global level, the United Nations, through its Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4.7, provides a comprehensive mandate for integrating peace education into national education systems by emphasising the development of competencies related to global citizenship, respect for cultural diversity, human rights, and non-violence. This global agenda is further contextualised at the continental level through the African Union’s Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025), which explicitly recognises peace education as a strategic priority, linking it with conflict prevention, democratic participation, and the promotion of social cohesion across diverse societies. Complementing these frameworks are significant international interventions led by organisations such as UNESCO, which implement large-scale peace education initiatives in numerous African countries, focusing on teacher training, curriculum integration, and youth engagement to build a culture of peace at the grassroots level. Similarly, UNICEF underscores the critical role of equitable and inclusive access to quality education as a foundation for long-term peace and social stability, particularly in conflict-affected and marginalised regions. Collectively, these interconnected policy frameworks and institutional initiatives have created a robust ecosystem that supports the mainstreaming of peace education across Africa, ensuring that it is not only a pedagogical priority but also a key instrument for sustainable development.

2. Curriculum Integration and Peace Education

The integration of peace education within African education systems is becoming more consolidated through a mix of formal inclusion in subjects, transdisciplinary cross-curricular approaches, and the opening of spaces and autonomy at the level of higher education, in consonance with the global agenda outlined by UNESCO and anchored in regional priorities through the African Union. At the level of the formal curriculum, peace education is taught across core subjects, such as Social Studies, Civic and Citizenship Education, History, and Cultural Studies, which explicitly address conflict resolution, human rights, democracy, and national cohesion. For example, in Kenya, peace education has been mainstreamed into Social Studies and Life Skills Education as a response to post-election violence, with a focus on conflict prevention, tolerance, and community cohesion. It also infuses peace and security education into the Civic Education syllabus with its lessons on ethnic conflict, extremism, and national integration. The historical experience of the genocide in Rwanda has led to the clear definition of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and genocide studies modules in History and Citizenship Education, thereby contributing to building collective memory and social healing.

Apart from subject-specific integration, there are thematic, cross-country methodologies that weave peace-related issues into many other disciplines and encourage critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and other culture-related perspectives. For instance, in South Africa, the Life Orientation syllabus mainstreams peace education through issues such as human rights, diversity, and social justice across several learning areas and challenges students to confront social issues outside the classroom. Peace education in Uganda is mainstreamed into the curriculum and supported through co-curricular activities such as debates, peer mediation, and school clubs that promote values of cooperation and dialogue.

Teacher training institutes are equally important for mainstreaming peace education by providing professional courses and research activities. In countries like Ethiopia and Ghana, peace and conflict studies are embedded in development studies, political science, and international relations, equipping teachers and practitioners with both theoretical and practical skills for peacebuilding. Modules on classroom conflict management, inclusive pedagogy, and values education are increasingly integral to teacher education programs. In short, peace education is reflected in the pedagogic methodologies teachers use and the curricula they follow. They also proclaim that these multi-layered actions confirm that peace education in the African context has transcended the limits of a single subject and is now on a platform responsive to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values as a whole for sustainable peace.

3. Pedagogical Approaches for Peace Education

Pedagogical strategies for peace education in African schools are increasingly adopting participatory and experiential learning approaches that transcend rote instruction, positioning learners as active participants in the actualisation of peaceful societies. Based on advice from groups such as UNESCO, educators use techniques such as dialogue, storytelling, peer mediation, and role-play to build empathy, critical thinking, and conflict-resolution skills. For example, in Rwanda, storytelling and facilitated dialogue are used in schools to confront painful aspects of the genocide and to foster the processing of collective memory, while fostering reconciliation and unity. Peer mediation and drama-based exercises are embedded in school curricula in Kenya, teaching young learners practical tools for handling interpersonal and community-wide disagreements, particularly in areas affected by ethnic strife. Likewise, participatory methods in the Life Orientation curriculum in South Africa promote lively classroom discussions on human rights, diversity, and social justice, often aided by case studies and group work.

Teacher training and capacity building are essential for the sustainability of these pedagogies; in countries such as Ghana and Uganda, in-service training workshops have been established to support teachers in implementing learner-centred, peace-oriented pedagogical approaches. There are still formidable obstacles in terms of teacher preparation and classroom practice. Among other constraints, teachers in regions such as Nigeria and Ethiopia face inadequate training, large class sizes, a lack of materials, and examination systems that emphasise content coverage rather than value-based education. Such challenges do hinder the full application of peace education principles in day-to-day teaching, underscoring the importance of ongoing teacher training, policy support, and resources to harness the transformative power of the pedagogy of peace education on the continent.

4. Role of Teachers and Teacher Education Institutions

Teachers play a pivotal role in adapting peace education from the macro level of policy to the micro level of classroom practice, with major implications for teacher education across the African continent. The pre-service curriculum in teacher education institutions includes peace education components, yet the extent and uniformity of these components vary across nations. In Kenya, teacher training colleges offer peace education as a core subject, with UNESCO's endorsement, equipping future teachers with practical skills in conflict resolution, facilitating classroom dialogue, and promoting inclusive pedagogy. In Uganda, elements of peace education are integral to the teacher education program and are being mainstreamed alongside life skills and citizenship education. In Rwanda, teacher training programs address unity and reconciliation at the periphery of the Rwandan Genocide, with the result that teachers can handle neighbour-sensitive historical material. Some of these cases reveal that integrating peace education into teacher education institutions is critical to grounding teachers in both competent and reflective practice.

Professional development and lifelong learning are essential for maintaining high-quality peace education after completion of initial training. Several African countries rely on in-service training, workshops, and other forms of collaborative learning to enhance teachers' competencies and address new challenges. In Ghana, teachers are geared towards active teaching and learning methods linked to peace-related issues across the curriculum. In South Africa, a series of continuing professional development programs provides educators with guidance on teaching the Life Orientation curriculum, which addresses human rights, diversity, and social justice. Elsewhere, in more fragile contexts such as South Sudan, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international agencies frequently play a central role in delivering training in peacebuilding and psychosocial care, filling gaps in national capacity. Yet the sustainability of such endeavours relies on embedding professional development within national education systems rather than on external support alone.

Teachers are also peacebuilders on the front lines, influencing not only what is taught but also the social and emotional environment in classrooms and communities. Across Nigeria, and particularly in areas hardest hit by Boko Haram-linked insurgency, teachers are active in countering extremist narratives by teaching tolerance, dialogue, and critical thinking. In Sierra Leone, teachers have made significant contributions to post-conflict healing and have promoted reconciliation and good citizenship among young people who were victims of the civil war. Similarly, in Ethiopia, teachers are regularly called upon to resolve classroom and community disputes arising from ethnic heterogeneity, indicating that the teacher's role is one of social leadership that extends beyond mere pedagogy. These instances underscore that teachers are not merely agents of curriculum delivery but engage substantively with peacebuilding activities at various levels.

Teachers independently prepare themselves emotionally and psychologically for peace education. The reason is that they can be the first victims of violence, displacement, or death. In Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, initiatives have been established to provide psychosocial support and trauma-sensitive training to educators, helping them care for themselves while attending to students. In Rwanda, obtaining a teaching certificate involves courses on handling sensitive historical topics and managing emotional responses in the classroom. Teachers may also be less able to conduct critical discussions on such issues of conflict, or may contribute to reinforcing prejudices without adequate support in these endeavours. Such exemplifications demonstrate that educators are not merely deliverers of curriculum but engaged agents in peacebuilding at multiple tiers.

5. Community-based Non-Formal Peace Education

It closely complements formal education across Africa, especially in contexts where education systems alone are insufficient to overcome entrenched social divides and histories of conflict.

The spectrum of peacebuilding actors, including NGOs, faith-based organisations, and community groups, is actively creating and delivering peacebuilding programs based on local needs and contexts. Groups like Search for Common Ground and Catholic Relief Services continue to be key players in facilitating dialogue, reconciliation, and community rebuilding in countries like Nigeria and South Sudan, where inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions are endemic. Faith-based institutions, using a moral and spiritual lens, frequently lead trust-building and mediation efforts; church-based peace work in Kenya has notably contributed to reconciliation after elections by hosting inter-community dialogues and peace marches. Also, Islamic groups in some parts of West Africa have played a part in combating violent extremism by teaching lessons of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Young people's participation is a key focus of these non-formal approaches since youth are seen as both potential perpetrators of conflict and agents of peace. Peace clubs, school-community partnerships, and grassroots youth organisations are common tools for developing leadership, dialogue skills, and civic responsibility. In Northern Uganda, youth-led peace clubs supported by civil society engage students in peer mediation, using drama and community outreach to promote a culture of non-violence. In Sierra Leone, a country with a history of civil war, grassroots youth organisations have also played a key role in restoring trust and promoting democratic participation through arts-based peace education and community service. These programs frequently go beyond school walls into communities, making peace education a lived social practice rather than just an academic exercise.

Adult education and reconciliation initiatives are just as crucial, especially in post-conflict states where significant numbers of citizens may not have attended school or are traumatised by violence. Community-based initiatives such as local dialogue forums and reconciliation workshops—often dealing with the Rwandan Genocide legacy—in Rwanda have been instrumental in promoting healing and social reintegration. Also, in Liberia, adult literacy and peace education programs sponsored by nongovernmental organisations have integrated basic education with conflict resolution and civic awareness to assist post-war rehabilitation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), local organisations and international partners conduct peace dialogues and trauma-healing workshops in conflict-ridden areas, particularly in the eastern provinces, where cycles of violence persist in breaking social cohesion.

Additional evidence from conflict-affected settings further underlines the transformative potential and the need for non-formal peace education. In Somalia, a variety of community-based programs run by local NGOs and elders provide mediation, conflict resolution, and the reintegration of youth involved in armed

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conflict, in a context where formal education has been severely disrupted by decades of instability. In the Sahel (Mali and Burkina Faso), local actors collaborate with communities to prevent radicalisation through dialogue, cultural education, and social integration.

These diverse efforts, therefore, suggest that peace education through non-formal means and community initiatives in Africa is versatile and sensitive to context, meeting the disparate needs of its recipients while reinforcing macro-level visions of sustainable peace, social cohesion, and resilience.

6. Impact Assessment

Evaluations of peace education efforts in several African nations paint a nuanced, positive picture, with some reporting outcome-based data and others tracking changes at deeper attitudinal levels. However, these evaluations lack rigour in their methodologies. In terms of concrete results, several countries have reported decreases in school-based violence and increases in social cohesion as a result of formal peace education programmes. For instance, the national peace education program in Kenya, implemented in the wake of the 2007–2008 Kenyan post-election violence, has been linked to improved conflict-resolution skills among students and a decrease in inter-ethnic tensions in the school environment.

Likewise, in Rwanda, post-genocide educational transformations emphasising unity and reconciliation have resulted in relatively high levels of national cohesion and minimal overt ethnic strife. Both school-based and community-led programs bolster them.

In Sierra Leone, peace education and civic engagement initiatives introduced in the aftermath of the civil war have been associated with reduced youth involvement in violence and increased participation in democratic processes, suggesting that education can contribute to stability in post-conflict contexts.

In addition to initial training, ongoing support and learning are essential for maintaining effective peace education. Several African governments provide in-service training and run workshops and other collaborative learning initiatives to help teachers acquire new skills and respond to emerging challenges. Professional development in Ghana focuses on active learning strategies and moral instruction, encouraging teachers to integrate peace-focused issues across subjects. In South Africa, ongoing professional development programs empower educators to teach the Life Orientation syllabus, which includes human rights, culture, and social justice education. In more fragile environments such as South Sudan, non-governmental organisations and international bodies often assume responsibility for delivering peacebuilding and psychosocial support training, filling the gap left by limited national capacity. But the durability of such initiatives depends on making professional development an integral part of national education systems, rather than relying predominantly on external assistance.

As agents of peace, teachers too have become frontline agents, shaping not only Intellectual aspirations but also the social and emotional conditions of classrooms and communities. In Nigeria, especially in areas where insurgency associated with Boko Haram is rife, teachers remain key to combating the extremist narrative with messages of tolerance, dialogue, and critical thought. In Sierra Leone, teaching staff have played a pivotal role in post-conflict rehabilitation by nurturing reconciliation and civic duty among young people once embroiled in the civil war. Likewise, in Ethiopia, teachers are frequently required to broker disputes—both in the classroom and in the wider community—that arise from ethnic diversity, indicating that they must also provide social leadership rather than simply instruction. Although more difficult to measure, these changes in attitudes are the most important indicators of peace education's transformative capacity.

Considering the long-term societal effects, the program shows that peace education operates across different time scales. Outcomes—such as better behaviour in the classroom, stronger conflict-resolution skills, and greater appreciation of values related to peace—are more visible in the short term and are often captured in program evaluations. Yet it is more challenging to link long-term outcomes, such as a stable social fabric, democratic engagement, and the avoidance of mass violence, directly to education programmes. In Liberia, for example, post-conflict peace education programs have been said to have played a role (in conjunction with wider political, economic, and institutional reforms) in creating a more stable social order and increasing civic participation. However, such assertions often outpace the evidence.

Peace education efforts to institutionalise peace education in curricula as a long-term approach to nation-building are also undercut by ongoing ethnic and political tensions, which highlight the limits of education as a one-stop program in Ethiopia.

One difficulty in evaluating the impact of peace education is the constraints of the method. Concepts such as “peace,” “attitude change,” and “social cohesion” are difficult to quantify and are often assessed using qualitative indicators, self-reports, or proxy indicators. In numerous African settings, such as the D.R. Congo and South Sudan, data collection is hindered by insecurity, limited research infrastructure, and meagre resource provision. Moreover, it is difficult to discern the effects of other factors, such as the media, family situations, or national or political events, on peace education. Differences in program design, length, and delivery quality at the regional level also complicate comparisons across and within regions. “Therefore, while the current evidence suggests that peace education initiatives are likely to bring about positive changes, there is still a need for more rigorous, longitudinal, mixed methods research that fully captures the potential impact of these initiatives.”

In sum, the African case exemplifies that short- and long-term results, such as reducing violence and improving interpersonal relations, as well as building a culture of peace and democratic participation, can be achieved through peace education. But how well it works depends on curriculum and pedagogy, as well as broader socio-political contexts and evaluation regimes that measure its effectiveness.

7. Challenges Faced

7.1 Political Instability and Weak Governance

The peacebuilding education project in Africa is conducted in a complex socio-political environment. In the case of South Sudan and Somalia, being at the mercy of world politics, endless war, and weak state institutions, shifting political realities destroy the viability of education systems, making peace education a constant challenge. Schools may be destroyed, or out of reach, teachers scattered, curricula unevenly enforced. Even in relatively stable countries such as Ethiopia, ethnic strife and political transitions can affect how peace education is conceptualised and practised, perhaps limiting its neutrality and effectiveness. In addition, weak policy enforcement mechanisms widen the gap between national aspirations and local realities.

7.2 Resource limitations and infrastructure deficits

Another significant challenge is low income, especially in rural areas. In countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger, the effective teaching of peace education is impeded by overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of trained teachers, and a lack of teaching and learning materials. Several schools lack even the essentials — safe buildings, electricity, or the ability to connect to digital resources —

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hindering their ability to apply the interactive and participatory methods of instruction that peace education calls for. Even when curriculum guidelines are in place, a lack of funds to train teachers and monitor the process often results in token or patchy interventions. These limitations demonstrate that peace education cannot be separated from broader efforts to strengthen the education system.

7.3 Cultural and linguistic diversity

The cultural and linguistic diversity, which is a strength of the African continent, can also complicate the design and organisation of peace education. Countries such as Nigeria, with hundreds of ethnic groups and languages, and Cameroon, which is divided into Anglophone and Francophone portions, struggle to develop curricula that are inclusive, context-sensitive, and linguistically accessible. Themes of peace education can be interpreted differently across cultural contexts, and, indeed, in some contexts, local histories of conflict or identity politics can render certain issues sensitive or contested. Ensuring that peace education is both a vehicle for unity and not one that erases cultural identities requires a delicate balance within curriculum design and community consultation. This balance is not always fully met.

7.4 Resistance to change in the curriculum

Resistance to change in the curriculum is also a significant barrier, stemming from a combination of institutional inertia and social factors. For instance, in South Africa, although post-apartheid reforms introduced strong components of human rights and social cohesion into the curriculum, teachers and communities at times voiced concerns about curriculum overload and the feasibility of new methodologies. In Kenya, too, attempts to mainstream peace education have met with resistance in an education system that is examination-driven and places a higher premium on academic excellence than on value-based learning. Peace education may be regarded as politically contentious or ideologically biased by some stakeholders, thereby compromising enthusiasm for it.

7.5 Persistent policy-practice gap

Persistent policy-practice gap continues to be a key constraint across numerous African settings. Although countries such as Rwanda and Ghana have established comprehensive policy frameworks that support peace education, the implementation of these policies in classrooms remains patchy. Teachers may not be sufficiently trained, monitoring systems may be unreliable, and local interpretations of national policies may compromise expected results. In Uganda, for example, peace education is officially included in curricula; nonetheless, its delivery often relies on an individual teacher's enthusiasm or NGO support rather than on a systematic institutional commitment. This gap underscores the need for better coordination among policy formulation, teacher education, resource provision, and delivery to maximise the impact of peace education.

8. Peace Education and Sustainable Development

Peace education in Africa is closely aligned with sustainable development in a broad sense, as seen, for example, in Goal 4.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which addresses global citizenship, human rights, cultural diversity, and a culture of peace. Several African nations are beginning to weave these imperatives into their education systems, seeking ways to address the causes of conflict, such as inequality and social exclusion. For example, Ghana has integrated citizenship and values education. At the same time, Kenya has made peace education an integral part of its competency-based curriculum by tying it to life skills and environmental issues.

Peace education, too, plays a key role in wealth-building and social integration in multi-racial and post-conflict societies. Education has been utilised to reconstruct national identity and foster reconciliation in genocide-stricken Rwanda. Also, human rights and democratic principles are taught in curricula in South Africa to confront the legacy of apartheid, and peace education is applied in Nigeria as an instrument for national cohesions in an ethnically and religiously fractured country.

Peace education has been linked to aspects of socio-emotional learning, life skills learning, and civic education. Nations such as Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia include elements of conflict resolution, empathy, and civic values in their national curricula. In general terms, peace education promotes both personal development and societal change towards a fair, peaceful, and sustainable society.

Peace education in Africa is increasingly shaped by innovations and new trends, notably digital technologies that facilitate access, participation, and collaboration. As penetration increases, peacemaking narratives are disseminated through tools such as mobile learning, educational radio, and social media and used to challenge competing narratives and disinformation. A good example of this is Kenya, where SMS-based platforms have been used to foster civic education and defuse election tensions, and Nigeria, where digital storytelling and youth-led media campaigns are countering extremist ideologies and promoting tolerance. In South Africa, advocates of social justice must log on to virtual learning sessions on human rights, diversity, and social justice.

Other important developments include growing synergy among peace, climate, and resilience education. As climate change exacerbates resource-based conflict, countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya are linking environmental protection to conflict resolution. Projects in Niger and Mali that integrate climate resilience and peacebuilding to address desertification and migration demonstrate the enduring linkage between environmental sustainability and peace.

Youth initiatives are also innovating, with peace clubs and community groups nurturing dialogue and social cohesion in Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. At the same time, regional and global partnerships, supported by organisations such as the African Union, UNESCO, and UNICEF, are strengthening peace education through shared policies, training, and resources, thereby promoting more cohesive, global approaches.

9. Lessons for Learning

From diverse experiences, several best practices can be identified in relatively successful models.

- a. *Phased Integration of Peace*: One can observe the benefits of a phased, systematic integration of peace education into national curricula rather than treating it as an add-on. In Kenya, peace education was integrated into the mainstream in the wake of the 2007–2008 Kenyan post-election crisis. It provides a good example of how integrating peace education across the curriculum and co-curricular activities can increase both reach and sustainability. Another lesson is from Rwanda, where political will and consistency between policy, curriculum, and community-based initiatives have enabled a national framework for reconciliation and unity in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide. Similarly, the incorporation of human rights and citizenship education into the Life Orientation syllabus in South Africa illustrates the need to situate peace education within broader discourses of democratic citizenship and social justice. Throughout these examples, high-quality teacher education, active pedagogies, and community participation are consistently identified as essential components of success.

- b. *Adaptation to Local Circumstances:* Because of variations in culture, language, political systems, and conflict dynamics, successful approaches in one place are unlikely to be exactly replicable in another. For instance, the robust state-led model of reconciliation, such as in Rwanda, may not be easily replicable in Nigeria, where federal structures and multi-ethnic local identities dictate more decentralised, community-based modalities of practice. In the same way, young people's peace programs that have been successful in Uganda or Liberia may need to be modified to be effective in areas with different social mores or levels of institutional backing. Yet some fundamental principles – including inclusiveness, participatory learning, local ownership, and coherence between policy and practice – are applicable and can inform adaptation across diverse contexts. In general, comparative pan-African findings highlight that, though Peace Education models should be sensitive to context, common challenges, and practical approaches to peace, social cohesion, and resilience across Africa, they should also be sensitive to the specificities of each context.
- c. *Mainstreaming Peace Education across Disciplines:* Governments, in collaboration with organisations such as UNESCO and the African Union, must ensure that peace education is mainstreamed across all disciplines and at all levels of education, with defined learning outcomes, evaluation methods, and relevance to the local context. For instance, Kenya's competency-based curriculum demonstrates how peace-related competencies — including collaboration, critical thinking, and citizenship — can be addressed holistically, rather than relegated to a single subject. Rwanda similarly offers a case of matching curriculum content to national imperatives of unity and reconciliation and ensuring coherence among policy, textbooks, and classroom practice. The way forward could include more inclusive, culturally responsive curricula and do-it-yourself approaches to address emerging issues such as digital citizenship and climate-related conflict.
- d. *Preservice and Inservice Training Programmes:* Teacher training programmes need to provide educators with a conceptual framework and concrete pedagogical tools for use with participatory methodologies, such as dialogue, mediation, or experiential learning. Countries such as Uganda and Ghana have introduced teacher training workshops and modules on peace education; however, these need to be scaled up and integrated into national teacher education programs. In volatile environments, such as South Sudan, it is even more important to focus investments on building teacher capacity when considering the added burden of trauma, displacement, and scarcity of resources. Future policy should also prioritise the implementation of ongoing professional development, mentoring programs, and teacher support groups.
- e. *The scaling of successful approaches* is another major policy challenge, especially for pilot projects aiming at system-wide adoption. Countless peace education programs throughout Africa (many funded by NGOs or international donors) have achieved outstanding results at the local level but are increasingly isolated from one another. For example, community-level peace clubs in Sierra Leone and school-based mediation programs in Nigeria have been effective in promoting dialogue and mitigating tension. Yet, their growth depends on ongoing resources, policy incorporation, and institutional backing. Governments need to focus on scale mechanisms — including institutionalising successful models in national curricula, earmarking budgets, and building partnerships between government agencies and civil society. In parallel with scale, contextualization should be pursued to ensure relevance across regions and communities.
- f. *Robust Research-Based Policy:* Although many programs claim success, systematic, long-term research is scarce, especially in low-resource and conflict-affected environments. Building research capacity in universities and research institutions in countries such as South Africa and Ethiopia could also lead to stronger impact evaluations and evidence-based

policymaking. Partnerships with global agencies such as UNICEF can also enhance data collection, monitoring, and evaluation. Future directions should focus on mixed-methods approaches (quantitative indicators and qualitative data) to adequately reflect the complex, long-term effects of peace education. By enhancing the evidence base, policy-makers will be able to design, adjust, and sustain interventions that have proven to promote sustainable peace and social transformation on the continent.

10. Conclusion and Way Forward

The survey of peace education development across African realities reveals a complex and dynamic process, mediated by historical experiences, sociopolitical contexts, and global discourses. In countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, peace education has become both a policy issue and a practical response to conflict, inequality, and social disintegration. The discussion so far points out that transformative peace education cannot be limited to a subject or a particular intervention; rather, it resides at all levels within curricula, pedagogy, community-based activities, and national development policies. The indicator of its success is the extent of compatibility among policy frameworks, teacher capabilities, participatory learning methods, and community involvement. Yet challenges that persist, namely limited resources, political instability, and a disconnect between policy and practice, continue to undergird the sporadic application of peace education in many countries across the continent.

In terms of its transformative stance, peace education in Africa transcends conflict resolution to serve broader ends, such as nation-building, social cohesion, and sustainable development. In post-conflict societies such as Rwanda, it primarily serves to achieve reconciliation and identity reconstruction, while in more heterogeneous and vibrant societies such as South Africa and Nigeria, it promotes democratic principles, tolerance, and intercultural dialogue. In its holistic approach, peace education addresses the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours needed for peaceful living through convergence with related areas such as citizenship education/ life skills/moral education. The connection with global frameworks, as encouraged by organisations such as UNESCO, underscores their importance in achieving the goals of fairness, justice, and environmental preservation. It is worth mentioning here that new trends, such as digital innovation, youth engagement, and the integration of climate resilience, further expand its scope and relevance in addressing contemporary challenges.

The future for peace calls for concerted multi-level efforts. There is a need to enhance curriculum frameworks and teacher education and to scale up what works; this must remain a central focus, underpinned by strong research and evidence-informed policy. Close collaboration with governments, civil society, and international bodies, including the African Union and UNICEF, will also be crucial to ensure coherence and sustainability. It is also necessary to localise peace education across different local contexts while maintaining universal features such as inclusion, participation, and social justice. In the final analysis, peace education has great potential to serve as a transformative catalyst in Africa – one that not only confronts the legacies of conflict but also empowers present and future generations to embrace the values, competencies, and vision needed to forge more just, resilient, and peaceful societies.

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