Introducing Peace Education in Cameroon Schools: A Blueprint for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The history of contemporary Africa is characterized by endemic conflict situations caused predominantly by various diversities. The results have been the vicious cycle of instability, abuse of human freedoms, inadequate foreign investments, unemployment and the poverty situation in the entire continent. The Republic of Cameroon is Africa in miniature and consequently, a complex juxtaposition of the various diversities. With over 250 ethnic groups, about 268 local languages; three colonial experiences; two official languages and with the already conflicting Anglo-Saxon and French legacies in the country since 1961, there is need to develop peace-building strategies to pre-empt any overt conflicts in the country. This is especially so because of the emergence of micro-nationalisms, inter-ethnic and regional conflicts among the various cleavages with even threats of secession, shaking the very foundation of the country's unity. The situation became more worrisome with the reopening of political space in the early 1990s, when political parties in the country were ethnically based and ethnic rather than national loyalties prevailed. Despite government intension to maintain internal cohesion among the diverse peoples of Cameroon through her internal policy options of national unity and national integration, the increasing inter-ethnic and regional conflicts in the country are not going away. Interestingly, there is the quest for sustainable development in order to reduce the unemployment and poverty situation in the country. This paper argues that in order to reduce conflicts, improve on internal cohesion and stability; improve on the human rights situation, encourage investments, sustainable development and reduce the poverty situation in the country, there is dire need to introduce peace and tolerance education in Cameroon schools and colleges.

Key Words: Peace Education and Sustainable Development

Résume

L'histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique est caractérisée par des conflits endémiques causés particulièrement par des diversités variées. Les résultats ont été le cycle vicieux de l'instabilité, l'abus des libertés humaines, l'investissement étranger inadéquat, le chômage et la pauvreté dans le continent. La République du

Cameroun est une Afrique en miniature et par conséquent, une juxtaposition complexe de ces diversités variées. Avec plus de 250 groupes ethniques, environ 268 langues nationales, trois expériences coloniales et aussi les conflits idéologiques entre les Anglophones et les Francophones depuis 1961, il est urgent de mettre sur pied des stratégies pour une paix durable afin d'éviter d'autres conflits dans le pays. Ceci se manifeste par l'émergence des micros nationalismes, les conflits inter ethniques et régionaux parmi les différents clivages, et même les tentatives de sécession, ébranlant le socle de l'unité du pays. La situation devint plus ennuyeuse avec la réintroduction du multipartisme au début des années 1990, lorsque les partis politiques furent fondés sur les bases ethniques plutôt que sur les bases nationales.

Malgré l'intention du gouvernement à maintenir la cohésion interne parmi les différents peuples du Cameroun a travers ses slogans politiques d'unité et d'intégration nationale, les conflits inter ethniques et régionaux ne disparurent pas. Par conséquent, il devient nécessaire de mettre sur pied un développement durable afin de réduire le chômage et la pauvreté dans le pays. Dans cet article, nous voulons montrer que pour réduire les conflits, assurer la cohésion interne et la stabilité, respecter les droits de l'homme et encourager les investissements, un développement durable et la réduction de la pauvreté dans le pays, il est d'une nécessité absolue d'introduire une éducation a la paix et la tolérance dans les écoles et collèges du Cameroun.

Mots clés ; Paix, Education et Développement durable

Introduction
The history of contemporary Africa is characterized by endemic inter-state and intra-state conflict situations caused predominantly by various religious, linguistic and colonial diversities. The results have been the vicious cycle of permanent instability, human rights violation, inadequate foreign investments, unemployment and the persistent poverty situation in the entire continent. This conflict situation has been compounded by inertia, corruption, favouritism, nepotism, negative ethnicities and the increasing spirit of micro-nationalisms and ethnic loyalties within the African states. The Republic of Cameroon is Africa in miniature and consequently, a complex juxtaposition of the various diversities. With over 250 ethnic groups and their independent traditions and customs; about 268 local languages; three colonial experiences under the Germans, the British and the French; two official languages (English and French) and with the already conflicting Anglo-Saxon and French legacies in the country since 1961, there is need to develop peace-building strategies to pre-empt any overt conflicts in the country which could even affect the entire Central African sub-region.

Despite government intension to maintain internal cohesion among the diverse peoples of Cameroon through her internal policy options of national unity and national integration, the increasing inter-ethnic and regional conflicts in the country are not going away. Interestingly, there is the quest for sustainable development in order to reduce the unemployment and poverty situation in the country. This paper argues that in order to reduce conflicts, improve on internal cohesion and stability; improve on the human rights situation, encourage investments, sustainable development and reduce the poverty situation in the country, there is dire need to introduce peace and tolerance education in Cameroon schools and colleges. Cameroon in particular and Africa in general need peace and internal cohesion which are sine qua non for development. But then, what is peace education and to what extent is it taught in Cameroon? How can effective peace-building strategies be enhanced in Cameroon to attain sustainable development?

1– Conceptual Framework

Before delving into any analysis of our paper, it is appropriate to attempt working definitions of the concepts of Peace, education, peace-education and sustainable development as used in this paper. To define Peace Education, the words peace and education have to be made clear. Although there is a general quest for world peace, the word "peace" does not have any universal and consensus definition. In the Jewish and Christian culture the common way of greeting is "Peace be is unto you." In the Muslim culture the expression "*Asalaam Aleikum*" is used to mean the same thing. These are just wishes or a way of greeting and not a permanent condition. This holds true to all Cameroonian and African languages.

According to Hizkias Assefa, "Peace is a philosophy and in fact a paradigm, with its own values and precepts, which provides a framework to discern, understand, analyze, and regulate all human relationships in order to create an integrated, holistic, and humane social order."[1] Considering that there is also non-physical (covert or structural) violence which stems from "social and personal violence arising from unjust, repressive, and oppressive national or international political and social structures"[2] peace cannot only be limited to the absence of violence and war. Conflicts cannot be totally avoided because conflicts (overt and covert) are just part of life and need the right mechanisms to deal with them promptly.

Peace can also be considered to mean, "the transformation of conflictual and destructive interactions into more co-operative and constructive relationships."[3] To Gilbert Mboubou, peace is "a precarious victory of the forces of cooperation and *entente* over those of aggression and domination. It is movement, not immobility…. For peace to reign, the forces of peace within and around us must oppose and overcome the forces of aggression."[4]

Yet, to A. M. Yinda Yinda, "… peace is a vehicle of rule, order, discipline, equilibrium and above all of harmony depending on the nature and aspirations of each one and on the available resources and potentials."[5]

To Yves Alexandre Chouala, "peace is neither an illusion nor a utopia: it is the control lever of social dynamics."[6] To him, peace must be "realistic". Realistic peace "is a cardinal and omnipotent element of social dynamics, a setting for socio-political action, a norm of social behaviour and above all a pattern for building society around a certain number of states and power struggles."[7]

With all of these definitions considered, it is clear that there is no unanimous definition for peace. Peace need to be incessantly cultivated through education (formal and informal). According to Fabien Eboussi Boulaga:

> Peace has to be established. It is not a natural or transhistorical process. It is never achieved in advance or forever. It falls within the realm of action and behaviour. It is said to be the silence of order. Order to be maintained, but also order to be made, invented, order achieved precisely for and by all people. Peace is a sign, the proof and vector of order. Peace is order, achieved by man, for man, through human means.[8]

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[1] Hizkias Assefa*, Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A philosophy of Peace and its Implications on Conflict, Governance, and Economic Growth in Africa,* NPI Monograph series; no. 1, 1993, pp. 4-5.

[2] ibid. p.3.

[3] ibid. p.4.

[4] Gilbert Mboubou, "Peace, A Controversial Concept", in Dialogue and Reconciliation, Review of the Ecumenical Service for Peace No. 001, 2nd Semester 2000, What *is Peace?: Presuppositions, Stakes and Implications* (Yaounde: The Ecumenical Service for Peace, 2000), p.62.

[5] A. M. Yinda Yinda, "Between Peace and War(s) Today: Subversive Ambivalence of Post Modern and Political Exercises" in *Dialogue and Reconciliation*, p.83.

[6] Yves Alexandre Chouala,"Realistic Peace, Ideology, Political Edifice and Transcendental Normativeness, Going beyond the Anthropological/Philosophical Illusion", in *Dialogue and Reconciliation*, p.100.

[7] ibid.

[8] Fabien Ebousssi Boulaga,"In Favour of the Emergence of a Culture of Peace", in *Dialogue and Reconciliation*", p.23.

Since conflicts are unavoidable in human interaction, peace should be understood in this project to mean effective co-existence, concord and harmony among diverse interests, peoples and their cultures. This takes us to the notion of peace education.

On its part, education is defined here as " the deliberate and systematic influence of the mature upon the immature, through instructions, discipline and the harmonious development of all the faculties of the human being with his end to ensure, but of course, to philosophize" and improve on the wellbeing of self and others .[9] What then is peace education?

Conflicts and peace are present within the different political, economic and social divide and within "the whole ecology of social relationship: the family, the school and the neighbourhood, as well as within and between nations,"[10] hence the need for durable peace through sustained peace-building efforts. These efforts could be better expressed through education. Peace education and Peace-building will be used interchangeably in this paper to mean the same thing. According to S. Fountain, peace education can be defined as:

> …the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions, conducive to peace whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level.[11]

To Sanaa Osseiran and Betty Reardon;

> …peace education is learning to become aware of and to act within the context of "the unity of being", by which we mean essentially the oneness of humanity and its symbiotic relation to our planet. Peace education… is a means of consciously participating in the unity of being. It is finding a common ground for comprehending unity in the diversity of humankind manifested in different cultural contexts.[12]

Peace education in this paper should be understood to mean, the permanent struggle to minimize, transform and resolve conflicts, be it overt or covert, in order to guarantee effective co-existence, concord and harmony among diverse interests, peoples and their cultures through formal and informal peace-building efforts. Such education should be aimed at developing all the faculties of a human being in order to promote the basic principles of good human relations as world citizens. There is, therefore, dire need for a strong commitment to establish a solid foundation for a reliable peaceful society through instructions, discipline and training. Peace education will provide the capacity for peace-building and making peace –builders.

Sustainable development in the context of this paper should refer to the long-term development or development for the future, which takes into consideration, education, training and positive investments for the good of the greatest majority of the people. Such development can better be achieved where there is stability, concord and harmony and when the diverse cleavages within multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies like Cameroon are reconciled by acceptable governance policies.[13]

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[9] Interview with Cardinal Wiyghan Christian Tumi (77) n 30/07/08 in Douala.

[10] Diane Bretherton (Dr), "Peace and Peace Education" in *Peace Education curriculum Development in post-conflict Context*s :Sierra Leone. By Dr. Diane Bretherton, Jane Weston and Vic Zbar. August 2002, p.2.

[11] Cited in *Community Building Through Peace Education*: Sierra. By Weston J., Bretherton D and Zbar V.p.2.

[12] Sanaa Osseiran and Betty Reardon, "The United Nations role in Peace Education "in *Developing the Foundations*. P.388.

[13] Dze-Ngwa, "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon, 1961-2000", pp. 256-308.

2: Objectives, Scope, Significance and Methods

The general objective of the study was to investigate the necessity for the introduction of Peace Education in Cameroon schools and colleges in order to guaranty the respect of human freedoms, greater internal cohesion and sustainable development in the country.

In order to guide this study, our specific objectives were transformed into research questions as follows:

- What is the extent to which peace education is taught in Cameroon schools and colleges?
- What are the curriculum contents, their implementation, available human resources and legislative dispositions that facilitate the teaching of peace education?
- To what extent is there peace and internal cohesion in Cameroon?
- How should greater cohesion enhance sustainable development in the country?

In order to answer these research questions, five Divisional or Regional headquarters were selected including Maroua; Kousseri; Bamenda; Yaoundé and Douala. Being an English-French bilingual country, Douala, Kousseri, Maroua and Yaoundé represented Francophone Cameroon while Bamenda represented Anglophone Cameroon. This ratio of 1: 4 is justified because there are two Anglophone regions and eight Francophone regions. These areas were also selected because they have all experienced overt conflict situations.

The significance of the study is to influence policy makers in general and those within the education sector in Cameroon in particular, on the need to introduce peace education in Cameroon schools and colleges. This will significantly reduce the conflict situations within the country's diversities, reduce human rights abuse, ensure internal cohesion, attract investment, ensure development and reduce the poverty situation in the country. The study will also add to the existing literature of the subject and encourage more research work on other aspects of peace and conflict studies in Cameroon and beyond.

The analysis in this study was essentially qualitative. The instruments used for the study were Interview Guides (IG) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and informants included teachers of Peace and Citizenship education, students, associations involved in peace activities, school administrators (Public and Private), Curriculum developers and Teacher Trainers, Policy makers, traditional authorities, and people who have been affected by conflict situations.

In the research methodology and procedure, the analysis in this study was essentially qualitative. Two research designs were used for this study. These are the **Ex-post Facto** and the **survey research** designs. Micro-nationalism also emerged among the various cleavages in the country and has led to inter-ethnic conflicts. This situation deteriorated with the opening of political space in the early 1990s. All these phenomena that occurred encouraged policy makers to carry out some basic policies to promote greater internal cohesion in the country. This resulted in the inclusion of the Notion of Peace in the development of a curriculum on Citizenship education in Cameroon. Hence the justification for the Ex-Post Facto research design.

Through the Survey research design data was collected to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena as they manifest during the time of investigation. During the time of this research the curriculum for Peace Education had been developed and is supposed to be implemented in many schools nationwide. Despite this, there was still serious human rights abuse and conflicts, hence, national unity and internal cohesion are still illusions. This situation was experienced during the time of this investigation, and therefore validates the need to introduce Peace Education. This gives a justification for the use of a survey research design.

The respondents were randomly selected using appropriate sampling procedures in order to eliminate bias and inequalities. Two sampling techniques were used in this study. These were the stratified random

sampling and the purposive sampling. The stratified random sampling technique is used here because it identifies and addresses heterogeneity in the population and thus reduces sampling error. The population under study consists of a number of distinct subgroups that are inherently heterogeneous, hence, need to be adequately represented in the sample. In the study, such distinct sub-groups as Anglophones, Francophones, Christians, Muslims, minority groups, indigenous and settler populations, were taken into consideration. After the stratification of the population a purposive sampling procedure was now used. The sampling techniques were considered appropriate for this study.

3: Evaluating Peace Education in Cameroon Schools and Colleges

After field work and experience, the following results were found, depending on each of the research questions. The first research question was:

3.1. What is the extent to which peace education is taught in Cameroon?

In the preamble of the ministerial decision N° 30 / 05 / MINESEC / IGE / IGP / SH that defines the citizenship education curriculum in Cameroon secondary schools (both general and technical), reference is made to Circular No. 53/D/64/MINEDUC/IGP/ESG/IPN-HG of 15 November 1990 changing "the subject referred to as Civics to Citizenship." Going through the curriculum content that was developed by the Pedagogical Support Unit of the Ministry of Secondary Education, it is clear that Lesson 2 of Part I in the Form 5 programme is entitled ''THE NOTION OF PEACE''. The objectives of this lesson are stated as follows:

At the end of the lesson, the student should be capable of:
- Defining the notions: peace, war, peace treaty, aggression, civil war, armistice, ultimatum, diktat, dictatorship, tyranny, imperialism, terrorism;
- Knowing the different bodies set up in Cameroon and the world at large to preserve peace such as the Forces of Law and Order, national defence, religious denominations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the UN and its specialised agencies, among others.
- Knowing all the good that peace does for community life and development
- Knowing the threats to peace in the country like poverty, misery, ignorance, absence of dialogue, sectarianism, disrespect of Human Rights and all forms of imperialism, and
- Knowing the benefits of peace in Cameroon and the world at large.[14]

Concerning the civic and moral aspects of this course, the teachers are expected to lay emphases on: the right to education, all the good that peace brings, all the dangers that threaten peace, the structures that work to maintain peace, the contribution of each citizen to the maintenance of peace, the right to employment as an element that contributes to the maintenance of peace and, the right to decent remunerations[15]. Teachers of the subject are supposed to use the following methodology:
- Use various teaching Aids on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant documents.
- For pedagogical activities, teachers are expected to:
- Ask the students to identify areas of tension in Cameroon and in the world
- Ask the students to write down actions and attitudes that threaten peace in the classroom and elsewhere
- Help the students to become aware of the obligations they have as citizens, to defend their fatherland and peace in the world.

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[14] Ministry of Secondary Education, Inspectorate General of Pedagogy in Charge Social Sciences (Cameroon), *Citizenship: Civics and Moral Education Syllabus, General and Technical Education.* Pp. 59-60.

[15] Ibid, p.p.60.

- Asking the students to identify the ways in which the UN and its various agencies work in favour of peace in the world.[16]

From the above excerpts, one can be tempted to conclude that peace education is a reality in Cameroon schools and colleges, but that is not the case. There is therefore, a clear-cut dichotomy between the document and the effective application of peace education in the field. This assertion is evident if one considers that:

- In the first place, the programme on peace education is supposed to begin only in Form 5 (general education) and 5th year (technical schools). Students from Forms 1-4 therefore, do not benefit from the programme (even if the programme was taught at all).

- More so, Cameroon has two educational sub-systems; the Francophone and Anglophone sub-systems. The two sub-systems do not lay the same emphasis on the subject. In the Anglophone sub-system, the "Notion of Peace" is just one chapter in the whole citizenship education programme. In most of the schools within this sub-system, the subject is taught only from Forms 1 – 3. This implies that the subject is not taught at all, even in the Form Five class which is supposed to do the subject.

- Again, many secondary school authorities only include the subject to please education authorities. This is so because Cameroonian schools and college gain much reputation based on their results in public examinations. Since citizenship as a whole is not tested in public examinations, school authorities consider including the subject in examination classes as sheer waste of time for the students and teachers.

- In the Francophone educational sub-system, peace and citizenship education are taken more serious than in the Anglophone sub-system. In this wise, peace education is handled as a branch in citizenship otherwise known as *l'éducation a la citoyenneté*. The subject is being taught from *6eme to premiere*, (Forms One up to Lower Sixth which is the 6th class in secondary school).

- Despite the numerous teacher-training colleges in the country, peace education is not being considered as an important option. Even state universities in Cameroon are still reluctant to introduce programmes on peace studies. There are therefore, no trained teachers to carry on the teaching of peace education.

- However, we also found out that, there are many Private Higher Institutions of learning and NGOs are involved in peace education.

3:2. What is the curriculum content, its implementation, available human resources and legislative dispositions that facilitates the teaching of peace education?

The curriculum content of Peace and citizenship education, as stated above, contain some key elements that should help students master the different concepts and issues raised. But there are some shortcomings in the curriculum content in the ministerial decision presented above.

It is worth-noting that the lesson on ''THE NOTION OF PEACE'' is taught only in one form (Form 5) out of the seven Forms that make up a secondary and high school (called ''Lycée'' in French). Even in that form, it is just one lesson out of 14 lessons for the whole year. Given the endemic conflict situation in the entire continent of Africa, peace education becomes very important in community life and development. It would appear necessary to insist a lot more on peace education by introducing more lessons on it in all the classes, with some practical activities on peace and conflicts. In this endeavour, the class could focus on how the right to inclusive education is conducive for peace. Formal and informal education on peace issues will, according to Cardinal Tumi, "develop all the faculties of a human being in order to promote the basic principles of good human relations as world citizens."

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[16] ibid.

However, with the Arab Choa-Kotoko conflict and the silent tension between the Muslims and non-Muslims in the Extreme North Region (Maroua and Kousseri); the Anglophone-Francophone dichotomy, the constant land conflicts in the North West Region (Bamenda) and the constant civil tensions in Douala, it is clear that peace in Cameroon is threatened by increasing inter-ethnic and regional conflicts in the country, especially from the early 1990s. This conflict situation is further compounded by corruption, favouritism, negative ethnicity and nepotism. Yet, there is no lesson where students are taught that the different ethnic groups all stem from a few phylums, namely the bantou and the soudano-sahelian families. This will help the students understand that they all stem from the same human group and therefore, they will "see" less difference among themselves, and better accept those differences when these are obvious.

The programme for Form Four warrants the teaching of national symbols, the Constitutional changes in the country, major innovations of the 18 January 1996 Constitution, the executive, legislative and judicial powers of the state, and relations between the various powers. However, the enormous powers of the executive over the legislative and judiciary; the manner in which the various constitutional changes took place in the country and the questionable way elections have been conducted in the country does not inspire effective tolerance, recognition and protection of all and sundry. This gives an impression that there are some people who are more Cameroonians than others. This situation has trickled down to the students and has seriously shaken the foundation of effective peace in the country. There is great need therefore for students and teachers to be groomed on social justice.

Again, in the development of the curriculum content of peace and citizenship education in general, some historical facts and figures are distorted for political and personal reasons. Such distortions when unveiled only lead to conflicts.

3:3. Evaluating the degree of internal cohesion

Cameroon is often described as a haven of peace when compared to some neighbouring countries. However, the peace is just relative. It is worth-noting that the present-day Republic of Cameroon is a union of two former UN trust territories, one under French administration and another under the British administration. French Cameroon achieved independence on January 1st 1960 with the name *La Republique du Cameroun* under President Ahmadou Ahidjo. On her part, the British Southern Cameroons achieved independence by first seceding from Nigeria through a UN organised plebiscite on February 11th 1961 and negotiating independence through reunification with *La Republique du Cameroun.* Effective reunification between the two political entities and the independence of British Southern Cameroons was on October 1st 1961. Reunification was based on pre-plebiscite, plebiscite and post-plebiscite accords which were finalised at the Foumban Conference with the adoption of a Federal Constitution. In the new dispensation, former British Southern Cameroons became West Cameroon while former French Cameroon became East Cameroon. However, political evolution in the country saw the disrespect of the union accords by the Francophone-dominated governments under Ahidjo and Paul Biya respectively. This paved the way to claims by Anglophone (former West Cameroonians) that they have been dominated, discriminated and marginalised politically, economically and socio-culturally.[17] Some Anglophone activists under the canopy of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) even returned to the UN to seek for the independence of "their" territory. Yet others have been making secessionist attempts. The Anglophone-Francophone dichotomy since reunification and independence was further compounded with the opening of political

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[17] D. W. Ngwa, "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon: A Historical Perspective, 1916 to 1961." (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Yaounde I, 1996), pp.88-113.

space in the early 1990s with greater freedoms in the country.[18] This situation is shaking the very foundation of the country's unity and needs the introduction of peace education in Cameroon schools and colleges.

Apart from the Anglophone-Francophone dichotomy, many other inter-ethnic conflicts surfaced with the advent of multiparty politics in the early 1990s. These include the Arab Choa/ Kotoko armed conflicts in the Logone –Chari Division in the Far Northern Region of the country, the Bamileke problem and the Mbororo Problem. While the Bamilekes were treated as invaders wherever they settled in the country and sometimes attacked, the Mbororo were considered as a "flying people" with no definite homes to call theirs. They are in constant battle with earlier (indigenous) settlers over land, hence the persistent farmer-grazier problem in some parts of the country.[19] Even political parties have ethnic colorations.

Other conflicts include the North-West South-West divide and the *come-no-go* phenomenon, the Bali-Bawock conflicts, the *ennemies dans la maison* and *renter chez vous* syndrome alongside the serious crisis of February 2008 which affected some major cities in the country causing heavy destruction of lives and properties. This conflict situation is further compounded by unemployment, poverty, ethnic and regional loyalties, corruption, favouritism, nepotism and constant election manipulation and rigging. All these killed the spirit of love of nation and effective citizenship. Such a situation could further escalate into outright conflicts. Internal cohesion in Cameroon is threatened and the peace situation in the country is just relative. To pre-empt this, peace education should be introduced in Secondary schools and colleges with the aim of training peace-builders. The country is badly in need not just of peace, but sustainable peace, peace which is not, as one of the respondents in Kousseri put it: ''Cold ash under which there is fire, but sincere and lasting peace in a situation where different tribes accept to live as brothers and sisters in the same economic and political space, knowing that all of them can have the same expectations from politicians, enjoy the same rights and are equal citizens of the beloved Cameroon''. This is where the issue of social justice came up very strongly in the perspectives, as the main factor which will truly unite Cameroonians.

3:4. How should internal cohesion be enhanced to guaranty Sustainable Development?
Beyond peace education in a classroom, informal education should be carried on in order to enhance peace-building. Many argue that peace education is part of citizenship education and should be a continuous process which needs to be constantly watered with goodwill. In his paper, Eboussi Boulaga supports this view when he argues that, "Peace has to be established. It is not a natural or transhistorical process. It is never achieved in advance or forever." It needs to be cultivated. This some respondents intimated could be achievable if there is recognition, acceptance, toleration and protection of differences within heterogeneous societies like Cameroon.

In Maroua and Kousseri, respondents posited that education for all (EFA), with specific attention on the girl child is much needed in the Far North Regions of Cameroon to promote the values of peace and the notion of citizenship among the population, starting with the youth. They argue that as long as the girls and women who outnumber their male counterparts in the overall population will remain illiterate, the values of peace and the notion of citizenship will be threatened. One lady respondent in the Far North Region of Cameroon states that:

> Education brings understanding, pulls people together both within the same community on the one hand, and between people from different communities on the other hand. Through education, everybody questions himself/herself and the whole community in a very sound way. We need education, especially that of the girl child, to enhance peace and citizenship, because being the source of life, women are more

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[18] Dze-Ngwa, "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon", pp.129-189.
[19] ibid.

sensitive to anything that can save life. Harmony and understanding in a family is the beginning of peace and citizenship.

4: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study was intended to investigate the necessity for the introduction of Peace Education in Cameroon schools and colleges in order to guarantee greater internal cohesion in a country which has experienced several conflict situations, shaking the foundation of her unity. As far as peace education is concerned, it was realised that the programme on peace education is supposed to begin in Form 5 (general education) and 5th year (technical schools). Therefore, students from Forms 1-4 do not benefit from the programme.

It was also concluded that in the Anglophone education sub-system, the Notion of Peace is just one chapter in the whole citizenship education programme and it is only to Forms 1 – 3 students. This implies that the subject is not adequately taught at all, even in the Form Five class. Meanwhile, in the Francophone education sub-system, the subject is taken more seriously.

Despite the numerous teacher-training colleges in the country, peace education is not being considered as important options in the national education policy. With the exception of some few private universities, state universities in Cameroon are still reluctant to introduce programmes on peace studies. There are therefore, no trained teachers to carry on the teaching of peace education.[20]

In evaluating the degree of internal cohesion, it was realised that peace in Cameroon is only relative. There are many ethnic, linguistic, religious, ideological and regional conflicts in the country. The conflict situation in Cameroon is further compounded by unemployment, poverty, ethnic and regional loyalties, corruption, favouritism, nepotism and constant election manipulation and rigging. All these dampened the spirit of love of nation and effective citizenship and peace-building. Such a situation could further escalate into an outright conflict situation. Internal cohesion in Cameroon is threatened and the relative peace situation in the country needs to be more sustainable.

Recommendations

Peace education is absolutely necessary for all stakeholders interested in sustainable development in Cameroon and beyond. The government of Cameroon, educational authorities, NGOs, the national and international community as a whole, should be interested in effective peace and citizenship education.

Government and Education Authorities

As far as the government is concerned, she should provide effective legislative dispositions for the teaching of peace education in all secondary schools and colleges within the national territory with the aim of training peace-builders. This will serve as nursery for higher institutions in the country which are already interested in peace-building processes.

The government should also enhance the teaching of peace education by reviewing the present curriculum content of the subject to suit the realities of the country's diversities. Peace education could be achievable in Cameroon if there is recognition, acceptance, toleration and protection of differences, and if historical facts and figures are not distorted for selfish reasons.

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[20] Romanus Nkempu, age 56, P.P.I Citizenship, Bamenda, October 23, 2008.

More so, the government must make sure that such education is inclusive, with specific attention on the girl child especially in areas like the Northern Regions where cultural barriers limits the girl child's desires to go to school.

Furthermore, the government should harmonise the programmes of the Anglophone and Francophone sub-systems of education in order that the programmes for peace education should be treated with the same degree of seriousness throughout the national territory.

Education authorities and teacher-training institutes on their part should establish special faculties or departments for the training of specialised teachers on peace education. Teachers can hardly be effective in teaching what they are not trained for.

More so, students should be made to go out of the school premises and consider the issue of peace in the community in which they live. This may involve, among others things, visits to NGOs that works for the promotion of peace and visits to areas which have experienced conflicts. If such outings prove to be too expensive, protagonists of a conflict that was settled through dialogue may be invited to come to the class and talk to students, even in their mother tongues with translation provided into the official language or the *lingua franca*. Such activities will give students more insights into the issue of peace.

To check the problem of inadequate didactic material, teachers and researchers should be encouraged through research and publication allowances, to do keen research work and publish findings on peace education. This will go a long way to ease the work of teachers who will have ready textbooks from where to prepare lectures.

With readily available textbooks and trained teachers, students should be made to take the subjects more seriously by making the subject have the same coefficient with the other regular subjects. They should be taught from Forms One to Upper Sixth and evaluated in major public examinations like the General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) and the *Baccalauriat* for Francophone examination.

For greater internal cohesion and harmony in Cameroon several factors must be taken into consideration in the making of a new Cameroon. These include: genuine dialogue, parity of Anglo-Saxon and French legacies, unity in diversity, promotion of democracy based on Africa's realities, and effective decentralization of power. Although conflicts are unavoidable in human existence and interaction, it is usually regrettable when such conflicts are allowed to degenerate to permanent division. The rivalries in Cameroon, caused by its diversities, could be resolved or reduced.

Genuine dialogue free from emotions and obsessions could guarantee lasting peace,[21] especially if the outcome of such dialogue took into consideration the general will of Cameroonians of the various geographical, cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, political and educational backgrounds.[22] Such dialogue should be organized by unbiased, trustworthy and respected personalities from different religious, political, economic and social backgrounds. There is no practical human problem that cannot be resolved peacefully through dialogue. For effective dialogue, there is need for the diverse entities to be educated on the necessity for such dialogue.

Another strategy to ensure internal cohesion in Cameroon is to guaranty parity between the Anglo-Saxon and French Legacies in Cameroon's dual cultural heritage of Anglo-Saxon and *Francophonie* values. According to Chem-Langhëë, the persistent Anglophone-Francophone divide was threatening a possible

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[21] UNESCO, Le Dialogue entre les Cilvlisations: Actes de la Conference Internationale sur le Dialogue intercultural et la culture de la Paix en Afrique Central et dans la regions des Grads Lacs, Libreville, Gabon 18, 19, et 20 novembre 2003 (Paris: UNESCO 2005).

[22] Dze-Ngwa, "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon", p.257.

disintegration of the reunified peoples of Cameroon into the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon.[23]

Evidently, the Anglo-Saxon and French legacies were already putting Anglophones and Francophones at daggers drawn with just relative peace and warning signals of disintegration. Besides, Anglophone nationalists were already threatening secession. This attitude of both the government and Anglophone nationalists was divisive and was continuously putting the internal cohesion in Cameroon on shaky grounds. The English and French legacies were certainly different but could co-exist with each other and not be integrated.

Unity in Diversity could also cement peace and internal cohesion. Unity in Diversity as used in this study means, the recognition and protection of diversity, ensuring equality, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence and, in fact, promoting the traditions and customs of the diverse cleavages, with a will to remain one, strong and united. This concept can be achieved through decentralization – whereby diverse cleavages within multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies are reconciled. .Unity in Diversity, therefore, would mean effective decentralization of power in diverse societies.

One of the causes of internal conflicts and political disintegration in Cameroon has been the disparities in regional development. Any genuine desire to foster internal cohesion should be centred on a balanced development policy for all the regions of the country. In this way, the country's national wealth, wherever it is found would be redistributed in such a manner as to also benefit the poorer regions. For this to be feasible, government and ministerial departments should submit to the National Assembly annual budgets with balanced regional development programmes, which would benefit the whole country.

Democracy based on Africa's realities could also bring about internal cohesion. The rebirth of multiparty democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s revived ethnic and regional loyalties. This gave rise to sub-nationalisms and to political parties that were based on ethnic or regional loyalties. Multiparty democracy to some extent has caused more harm than good in some African countries. Although democracy remains the popular universal concept, which guarantees greater freedom for peoples everywhere, there were clear-cut differences between Western and traditional African Democracies. While the application of Western democracy was strange to Africa, African democracy based on Africa's realities was not. A return to or a development of the traditional African democracy would be very contributory in establishing internal cohesion within African states generally, and Cameroon in particular.

NGOs, the National and International Communities

The introduction of peace education in Cameroon schools and colleges for effective internal cohesion in the country is largely dependent on the government. However, NGOs, the national and international community as a whole, should be interested in effective peace education. Beyond peace education in a classroom, informal peace education should be carried out within development associations and other social groups. Peace education should be a continuous process which needs to be constantly watered by the goodwill of the general citizenry. National and international Non-Governmental organisations dealing in peace education should be encouraged to protect minorities, encourage tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the diverse cleavages in the country.

The conflict situation in Cameroon as a whole has been reduced by the influence and actions of NGOs and other associations involved in peace operations like the Ecumenical Service for Peace (SEP), the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT), Community of Human Rights Advocates (CHRAC), Ecumenical Mission for Peace and Development Foundation (EMPED), Justice and Peace

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[23]Chem-Langhëë "Anglophone-Francophone Divide" in *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon,* edited by Nkwi and Nyamnjoh. p. 9.

Commission (JPC), *Ecole Instrument de paix,* Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOFOP), *l'Amour et la Justice (UNIJEAPAJ), Fondation Conseil Jeune, L'Association Camerounaise pour la Démocratie et la Paix* and *La Commission Justice et Paix* among others. However, these associations and NGOs have almost always been involved in conflict management operations when conflicts have already escalated, rather than in conflict prevention and peace-building mechanisms. The recommendation here is that peace should be built permanently through education in order to pre-empt conflicts.

From the above analysis, it is evident that the extent to which peace education is taught in Cameroon schools and colleges has not achieved the desired result. The implication is that being a highly diverse society with over 250 ethnic groups and 268 local languages with their independent traditions and customs; and compounded by a diverse colonial past, there are bound to be conflicts as already observed. This needs to be well handled, to pre-empt outright confrontation that will disrupt peace not only in Cameroon but in the entire Central African sub-region. Sustainable peace needs to be built permanently through peace-building mechanisms. Continuous peace education, either formal or informal is highly recommended. This, it is believed, will reduce conflicts, ensure stability, improve on human rights, and encourage investment and sustainable development; reduce unemployment and the poverty situation in the country.

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