

Peace Education as a Missing Piece in Early Years Education in Ethiopia: Evidence from a Critical Analysis of 1st and 2nd Grades Environmental Science Textbooks

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It is not enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it is not enough to believe in it. One must work at it (E. Roosevelt, Psychology Today, 2017:2).

Abstract: *Peace education (PE) is the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioral and personality changes that will enable children and others to prevent conflicts and violence, resolve conflicts peacefully and develop respect for self and others, appreciate diversity, have sense of fairness and justice, respect basic human rights, and be aware of universal interconnectedness. UNESCO, UNICEF and other competent authorities have recommended that PE, sometimes also called human rights education, values education, or citizenship education should start at early childhood stage.*

The objective of this study was to make a critical thematic analysis of the contents of grades One and Two Akababi (Environmental) Science textbooks (Addis Ababa Education Bureau, 2006 E.C.). The thematic content analysis shows that the books focus on the composition of human body (body parts, basic human needs, diseases), the family (members and household utensils), school (compound, environment, rules and regulations, social interaction, not playing on asphalt roads and care in crossing roads, cleanliness and community environment), we/man and healthy living (food, being healthy, personal hygiene), Kebele (location, addresses, environment) and woreda or sub-city (location, historical places/institutions and socio-economic institutions). Only about 3 pages are given to Tiru ginignunet, mainly polite greetings. About 13 pages are given to child rights issues in the Second grade textbooks. I have not come across mention of peace/selam, culture of peace (selamawi baahil) or other relevant topics or concepts related to the development of peaceful behavior, personality, and culture. Concerted efforts have to be made starting from the early years of education to work towards the development of peaceful personality and culture of peace. As Blumberg, Hare and Costin (2006) state, 'peace does not come with our DNA—to reach peace we need to teach peace.'

Introduction

Peace is often defined as the prevalence of harmony and tranquility, concord, serenity, state of justice, cooperation and mutual understanding, and respect for each other. It is also the 'absence of conflicts, violence or war' (Habtamu, 2008 & 2016). Some others define it as the eradication of poverty, economic wellbeing, absence of violence and war, prevalence of law and order, prevalence of social harmony, health and social justice (e.g., UNESCO, 2005). Though there are some agreements on the basic elements, peace is a very complex, and also culture and context bound concept that operates at various levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group, etc. levels). Casual observations and several studies indicate that there is some amount of violence in the Ethiopian society, respect of some rights at

interpersonal levels are low, some amount of ethnocentrism exists, etc. (Habtamu, 2005, 2008, & 2016 ; Alagaw, 2012;

IPSS,2012/13/14; Abebe, 2015). Hence, there is a need for peace education and the development of culture of peace in Ethiopia. Promoting tolerance, integration and inclusion; elimination of "tribalism" (chauvinism and narrow ethnicism); encouraging appreciation for diversity; teaching the skills, values and attributes of peace and peaceful persons, and promoting the respect for human rights are called for. Blumberg, Hare and Costin (2006) clearly state and argue that peace does not come with our DNA, and human beings have the tendency to devalue the out-groups and have the tendency to

use destructive means to resolve conflicts and resort to aggression when frustrated. Hence, they argue that PE is beneficial to children at KG and above levels as it could play some roles in the prevention of violent behaviors, reducing aggressive behaviors, and in the transformation of the thinking and values of children/students. Besides, Ethiopia is a signatory of the UN Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1966), The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, etc. which encourage the respect for human rights, peace and nonviolence in all walks of life.

The UN (1999) Program of Action on a Culture of Peace encourages member states to take action for promoting a culture of peace at national, regional and international levels. It states that the aims of education should be to promote the development of the culture of peace and children are to be taught attitudes, values, modes of behavior and ways of life free of violence and in respect of human dignity, and of tolerance and non-discrimination. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states the following (Article 29):

“1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.”

We can easily note that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples.

Children are to learn (to be educated) the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes required to be able to survive, to develop full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning (Fountain, 1999; UNESCO, 2001; Arigatou, 2008; Habtamu, 2008; Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2008;). The skills of communication, negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking and listening are to be learned. Children learn what they experience and live. This requires the existence of the curriculum for “peace education”. Textbooks, with the relevant contents are critical elements in the teaching learning processes of any subject matter.

Though there are “civics and ethical education” curricula and textbooks for the senior high schools, the primary and KG curricula seem to lack the key aspects or elements of peace education. Though this is not the place to comment on the civic education curricula of secondary education, there is a lot to be desired in those levels too. Some of the core elements for peace or human rights education are missing, most topics are redundant and the learning objectives are mostly irrelevant or inappropriate (Habtamu, 2017).

In this paper, efforts are made to critically review the literature related to PE in schools, particularly

at early stages of primary education; to point out the key elements/topics often covered in PE sessions/lessons; to assess the contents of the Addis Ababa Administration Education Bureau's First and Second grade students' *Akababi Science* (Environmental science) textbooks; indicate the problems with the expected learning outcomes/objectives listed in the text books, and suggest the way forward.

Review of Related Literature

The key program and focus areas specified by the UN Declaration on Culture of Peace (1999) are: Non-violent resolution of conflicts, gender equality and empowerment, social justice and social cohesion, democratic participation, open and free information, respect for females rights, understanding, tolerance and solidarity and international peace and security (UN, 1989, 1995 & 1999; UNESCO, 1995a & 1995b; Danish, 2011; UNICEF, 2014; de Rivera, 2015). Some of the broad international indicators have included the prevalence of the following in a specific society or country (de Rivera, 2015; GPI, 2014).

1. Education for conflict resolution – directed to non-violent solutions for conflicts (education expenditure and homicide rates could be used as the indicators);
2. Sustainable development – GDP per capita, life expectancy at birth (GDP per capita, life expectancy, Gini index of income inequality are the main indicators);
3. Respect of human rights – imprisonment, torture, murder, etc (HR index);
4. Gender equality – percentage of seats in parliament held by women (percentage of women);
5. Democratic participation – degree of elections contested, voting (Democracy index);
6. Understanding, tolerance and solidarity – absence of internal turmoil, number of

refugees generated and internally displaced persons (tolerance for refugees);

7. Free flow of information – restrictive laws and regulations, repressive actions against journalists, press freedom (press freedom index);
8. International peace and security – relations with neighbors, military expenditure (military expenditure as percentage of GDP).

Assessing the prevalence of culture of peace, using the above and other dimensions (economic, violence, security, and etc. indicators) would be a major/huge study that would require vast resources. One also has to be selective and skeptical in the usage of the indicators developed by the West (question of cross-cultural relevance) and the notion that the North is more peaceful than the South (Habtamu, 2016). As the concepts of peace and culture of peace are complex and perceived differently in different cultures and even within a given society, one has to be limited to some aspects of these concepts (Adams, 2014; UNESCO, 2001; Habtamu, 2008).

Habtamu Wondimu (2005 & 2008), Ephraim Isaac (2008), Alagaw Ababu (2012), Abebe Mulat (2015) and other researchers have reported that the Ethiopian dominant culture (widely prevalent, in vogue throughout the country) reflects both peaceful (e.g., hospitality, mutual cooperation, humility and tolerance) and violent (e.g., aggression, patriarchy, distrust, domination, and ethnocentrism) values and characteristics.

Those major elements which are mainly social, cultural and psychological tend to revolve around peaceful societal/communal norms and values (cooperation, dialogue, negotiation, fairness/social justice), respect for human rights (equal treatment, inclusiveness, prevalence of freedom of expression), gender equality where women and children are valued, tolerance and solidarity (social cohesion, trust, understanding, accommodating diversity), democratic participation and communication (involving,

listening to all, people having voice, sharing information and knowledge), feelings of security and safety (levels of security, press freedom, free flow of information), and culture of violence (domination, force, prejudice and discrimination, exclusion) (de Rivera, 2004; Habtamu, 2016). Since our focus is on peace education, particularly at early stage of primary education, we will limit ourselves to those directly related issues.

As indicated earlier, PE mainly refers to the process of imparting the knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes necessary for enhancing peace. Fountain (1999) defined PE as, “ the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structured; to resolve conflicts peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intra-personal, interpersonal, inter-group, national and international level” (p.1). The Hague Appeal had defined it as, ”a participatory holistic process that includes teaching for and about democracy and human rights, non-violence, social and economic justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, traditional peace practices, international law and human security” (Cited in Wilson, 2007:87). Quite a large number of studies and reports indicate that PE promotes alternatives to violence, creates safe schools and promotes social cohesion and accommodation of differences (De Leo, 2010). Terminologies used for PE include Education for peace, Human rights education, Values education, Life skills education, Global citizenship education, Multicultural education, and Citizenship or Civic Education (Harris, 2004; UNESCO, 2015).

The learning-teaching is to start as early as possible and continue throughout life (KG to universities and later). Of course the contents, complexity, approaches, processes of facilitation, etc. differ with the age, level of education, experience, etc.

Alfonso (2014: 168) indicates that the “curricular framework for early childhood” should rest on “four pillars: value and respect for self, appreciation of diversity, sense of fairness and justice, and awareness of interconnectedness”. In agreement with others, such as B. Reardon (2009) she states that inclusion of PE in the curriculum, “can be extremely influential in building a child’s later capacities for peace such as empathy, emotional regulations, and behavioral control which will prove to be important pieces” (Ibid.:170). Early years (including KG) education must recognize the importance of creating a positive self-image built on love and respect for oneself. From this, the love and respect for others starts developing. The belief and striving that they deserve a just and peaceful society starts from this stage. If fostered properly, the social interaction at early stage can help in the development of peaceful relationships, cooperation, empathy, caring, and respect. Children also learn appreciation of diversity in language, religion, skin color and gender. Hence cultivation of the understanding, awareness, respect and appreciation for difference can easily take place at early stages. Creating settings where equal opportunities are provided to girls and boys, to those from different cultures and ethnic groups, etc. will send the message of equality, fair treatment and respect for rights (Ibid.).

“What can we do to create a peaceful world, to make our relationships peaceful and to find inner peace? An important part of the answer to this question is that we should learn how to foster the development of peaceful personality. The concept of ‘peaceful personality’ is defined here as a characteristic of an individual involving the consistent manifestation of peaceful states/feelings, attitudes, and behaviors over time and across relevant contextual domains” (Sims, Nelson & Puopolo, 2014:8).

Peace is defined by Anderson, Nelson and others as, "a condition in which individuals, families, groups, communities, and/or nations experience low levels of violence and engage in mutually harmonious relationships" (Nelson, 2014:8). Nelson has provided simple definitions of peaceful behaviors, emotions and attitudes: Peaceful behavior is defined as actions that create and maintain nonviolent and harmonious relationships. Cooperation and kindness are examples of peaceful behavior. Peaceful states include emotions such as calmness, serenity, and security as well as conditions of inner harmony between aspects of self. Peaceful attitudes are defined as beliefs and values that facilitate the creation and maintenance of nonviolent and harmonious relationships.

The relevant domains where peaceful behavior, states/feelings, and attitudes may occur involve a wide range of relationships within individuals, between groups, and between individuals and other persons, groups, and entities. All of these relationships have potentials for conflict, violence, and harmony. Anderson (2004) identified seven specific contexts where a condition of peace could be experienced. These contexts are within individuals (intrapersonal peace), among individuals (interpersonal peace), among social groups (social peace), within the community (civil peace), within the nation (national peace), among nations (international peace), and with the natural world (ecological peace). Each of these contexts can be seen as domains in which individuals may behave peacefully, hold peaceful attitudes, and/or experience peaceful states. One can easily put these into Bloom's domains of learning objectives (cognitive/knowledge, psychomotor/skills, and affect/attitudes) (Armstrong, 2016).

As Arigatou (2008) and others indicate the objectives of PE should be to strengthen the capacity of children to make ethical decisions, to promote respect for other cultures and beliefs, to encourage them to engage in dialogue(listening,

talking to each other),to be committed to social justice and the respect for human rights.

Objectives and Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to assess the level of inclusion of peace related topics in the First and Second grade textbooks in Addis Ababa Administration's primary schools. The specific objectives include:

1. Identification of peace related topics included and excluded in the text books;
2. Analysis of the domains of learning/education emphasized by the textbooks;
3. Suggesting measures to take to improve the situation.

The main research questions are:

1. Which peace related topics are included in the text books under consideration? What topics are missing?
2. Which domains of learning/education are emphasized in the textbooks?
3. What can be done to improve the situation in the preparation of the textbooks for the better coverage of peace education elements?

Method of Study

The method of study is a mixed method where both qualitative and quantitative approaches are blended (identification, categorization by themes, counting and calculation of percentages have taken place). The Addis Ababa Education Bureau and the schools in the city use Environmental/*Akababi* Science textbooks for the teaching learning facilitation of various social science issues including peace and human rights topics. The First and Second grades' text books Peace Education as a Missing Piece in... /71

are in Amharic and have four topics each and 114 and 154 pages, respectively. The list of the topics covered is provided in Table 1 below. The books are mainly for 7 and 8 years old children.

The contents of the chapters/units in each book and the learning objectives of each chapter are thematically analyzed. Efforts are also made to

put the learning objectives in the Bloomian learning categories or domains of knowledge, psychomotor skills and attitudes/affect. The author put the stated learning objectives into one of the categories/classification. The translation of the verbs was done by a PhD student in the English language teaching program, at the AAU.

Critical Content Analysis of Environmental Science Textbooks and Discussion

The topics covered by the textbooks are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Major Topics /Themes Covered in Grades 1&2 Akababi Science Text Books (AA)

Sr. No.	Title – Grade 1 & 2 Respectively	No. of Page	Key Subtopics	Peace related Sub-topics
1	Egnanetachin (us, our being)	38	Naming of body parts, our needs, senses and common diseases	--
2	Betesebachin (Our family)	26	Naming family members and their roles, household utensils, sources of food.	--
3	Timhired betachin (Our school)	19	Units and activates in schools, traffic rules, good relationships	Rules of School (1 page) Positive relationship (3 pages)
4	Woredachine (Our district)	31	Natural resources, names of animals and plants, types of transportation, types of work.	--
(114)				
1	Egna (us)	32	Food, nutrition, health and sanitation	--
2	Mahiberesebachin (Our community)	49	Members of the community, roles played, some child rights, planning daily work, uses of labor and making artifacts	Child rights (13 pages)
3	Yetefetro Akababiyachin (our natural environment)	43	Natural resource, animals and plants, land, etc. taking care of the environment, naming & classification	Protection of the environment (1 page)

4	Kifle ketemachin (our sub-city)	30	Directions, naming sub cities and institutions in AA, names of government structure, types of transportation , etc.	Relevance of work (1 page)
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(154)

As could be observed from the table, only one chapter on First Grade textbook has rules related to the school and on positive relationships (4 pages long). In the Second Grade text book, three chapters have some topics related to peace/human rights. The chapter on Our Community discusses child rights (13 pages), the chapter on Our Natural Environment has a unit on the protection of the environment (6 pages), and the Chapter on Our Sub-city has a unit on the relevance of work(1 page). Hence we can calculate that the share of topics directly related to peace/human rights is only about 9% of the pages. One can argue that it is only child rights that have taken the lion's share, though other remaining topics could also be grouped as related to peace.

The descriptor words used for the listing of the learning objectives are the following: List, state, name, identify, demonstrate/show, explain, describe, demonstrate and differentiate. Out of the 89 learning objectives listed in the books, 90% are in the knowledge domain with listing and explaining taking the lead. Activities of demonstrating and evaluating are indicated in three units only.

It is to be noted that the cognitive domain itself moves from simple recall of facts (the lowest) to comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and then to evaluation (creating) (Armstrong, 2016). Listing, identifying, showing, defining, stating and explaining are in the recall and comprehension categories. Designing, estimating, justifying, evaluating and criticizing are in the higher categories of synthesis and evaluating. These latter higher levels of learning

are not the learning outcomes/objectives of the units.

Skills of communication such as listening and paraphrasing, assertiveness, problem solving, ability to cooperate and critical thinking can be categorized into skills domain. Self-respect, tolerance, acceptance of others, respect for differences, respect for rights and responsibilities, bias awareness, empathy and reconciliation can be categorized as attitudes domain which can be listed as learning objectives in PE sessions. Unfortunately, we do not find the higher level cognitive or the skills and affective domains descriptors in the text books. One needs to consider that Ethiopia and Addis Ababa in particular have diverse ethnic groups and religions. The Oromo, Amhara, Gurage, Tigre, Sidama, Wolaita, Hadiya, etc. ethnic groups and Orthodox Christians, Moslems, Protestants, and Catholics reside in AA and children of all these diverse groups attend schools together. Learning of the key elements of PE would be highly beneficial to the peaceful coexistence of these and other diverse groups.

With regards to the types of topics to be included, the following are often suggested: Communication, identity and culture, family and community, cooperation, problem solving, respect for differences, human rights, tolerance, democracy, gender equality, negotiation, dealing with peer pressure, coping with emotions, empathy, and conflict resolution in non-violent ways. Obviously, these are too many and too broad areas/issues to cover in the primary or even in the secondary levels' education at once. Some aspect and/or some topics can be addressed at lower primary level of schooling. As Fountain Peace Education as a Missing Piece in... /73

(1999), UNESCO (2001), UNICEF (2014) and many others have indicated, the teaching-learning should be active and child-centered, participatory and experiential. In general, the promotion of participation, cooperation, problem solving in non-violent ways, and respect for differences should dominate the teaching-learning activities. Quite a large number of teaching-learning techniques such as role playing, telling stories, making observations, experience based learning, team/group work, watching and discussing relevant videos, and playing relevant games are recommended for the younger ages.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Many international organizations such as the UN, UNICEF, UNESCO and several researchers argue that the aim of education should be to foster the development of a culture of peace and children are to be taught attitudes, values, modes of behavior and ways of life free from violence and in respect of human dignity and tolerance. The development of peaceful persons requires parental modeling, safe schools and communities, and well-structured peace education curriculum. Several studies and casual observations indicate that Ethiopia is far away from the development/production of a large pool of peaceful persons who accept and respect others, sympathize with the feelings of others, accept own weaknesses and failures, solve problems/conflicts in non-violent ways, are calm and secure, hardworking, who love justice and

fairness, are tolerant and cooperative, who take responsibility for one's actions, and with the attitude of reconciliation.

We can only expect peaceful personality (behavior, skills, attitudes and values) when family, community, educational and the general sociopolitical circumstances are conducive for the development and flourishing.

In this regard, the role that the education system plays is immense.

As indicated in the Findings/Critical Analysis section above, the textbooks being used by the Addis Ababa city schools to teach social sciences in general are inadequate. Peace related topics covered are very few, the space/time allotted is also very little, and the learning outcomes are of only simple cognitive level (mental skills, knowledge). The psychomotor (manual or physical skills) and the affective (feelings, attitudes) aspects are not addressed. As a matter of fact the learning outcomes expected are mainly the recall of facts, which is the lowest level of cognitive domain. As peace education mainly teaches compassion, cooperation, nonviolence, equity, love, trust and respect for humanity (Habtamu, 2006; Wilson, 2007; Alfonso, 2014; Nelson, 2014), it should get the due attention in the curricula of primary schools in Addis Ababa, and perhaps in Ethiopia. Also, the learning outcomes/objectives and the methods of teaching-learning (though not the focus of this study) should be appropriate to the age and the subject matter, which emphasizes affect and skills more than the knowledge aspect

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