

# VIABLE LIFELONG EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR CULTURE OF PEACE IN NIGERIA

*A. G. Ossai, Ph.D*  
*Faculty of Education*  
*University of Delta, Agbor*

And

*Helen Ihieonyemolor Ajudeonu, Ph.D*  
*Faculty of Education*  
*University of Delta, Agbor*

## **Abstract**

*The variables that went into the making of Nigeria are not the types that could naturally promise peace. Successive governments have tried various strategies aimed at fostering peace in Nigeria, but all to no avail. For instance, a lot of political restructurings of the country have taken place since 1960 and many political settlements have equally been reached between government and warring parties on the one hand and among feuding communities themselves, on the other, yet peace continuous to be a mirage in the country. This ugly situation persists because lifelong education is yet to be adopted as a panacea for establishing a culture of peace in the country. Lifelong education which enables lifelong learning and bridges the gap between hitherto uneducated and the educated persons in the society is unfortunately yet to be promoted by Nigeria. Efforts were made to align lifelong education as a vital tool for achieving the much desired culture of peace in Nigeria. The paper recommended amongst others that lifelong education should henceforth be treated as national educational need through the establishment of viable lifelong education infrastructures, through the promotion of tours that seek to bring peace, knowledge of Nigeria to other Nigerians and ensure adequate funding for lifelong education. All these will bring a culture of peace in Nigeria.*

**Keyword:** Peace, peace education, lifelong education; culture of peace.

It is pertinent to state that education has transcended the popular triangles of education, namely primary, secondary and tertiary education. As the world undergoes the global dynamic changes, peace in the social institutions are not left out. As such, the education industry has undergone serious structural changes in order to keep pace with global trends. The idea of lifelong education also known as lifelong learning was first articulated by Basil Yeaxlee and Edward Lindeman in 1929 (Smith, 2001). They came up

with a research that provided an intellectual basis for its comprehensive understanding of education as a continuing part of everyday life. In fact, education exists beyond the organized type of learning to include all learning in the home, society, work place and so on.

Advancement in technology and the emergence of knowledge based economy have resulted in the evolution of new dimensions as human capital training and development, one of which is lifelong education. The extent to which viable education is made accessible to all categories of Nigerian, determine how far the society can go in the culture of peace and technological development.

Nigeria came into being in 1914 after the British Colonial Government amalgamated the Southern and Northern protectorates and the Lagos colony under a single administration. From this period on, Nigeria has traversed many social crisis and numerous traumatic upheavals. Although, these crises are many, they however, can be grouped into two categories.

The first major source of social crisis in Nigeria is the struggle for the control of power at the federal level of governance. With the assumption that the control of the federal Government is synonymous with control over the country's natural and financial resources, each ethnic group, since independence, engaged other ethnic groups in fierce battles with the aim of producing the president or Head of states. The second source of crises in the country is the desire and attempt of the dominant ethnic groups to monopolize certain economic interest which they presumed come under their own direct control by virtue of the location of the said economic interest (Yahaya, 2000).

Over the years, no genuine attempts have been made to address these social crises through education. Neither concerted educational approach nor visible educational structure exists as evidence that the government of Nigeria has any faith in education as a viable instrument for resolving social crisis and for the establishment of a culture of peace in the country. However, rather than adopting education, Nigeria has usually had recourse to military intervention into the realm of governance.

However, after about forty years of military adventurism in power in Nigeria, it became obvious to most Nigerians that military rule cannot bring peace to the country, as all the military governments have usually been identified with only one of the many ethnic groups in the country, thereby fueling the ethnic factor as source of national social crises.

Based on the foregoing background, it has become necessary to examine viable lifelong education as a panacea for culture of peace in Nigeria. In fact, through lifelong education the whole societies may be made to prepare for changes and to adopt steps capable of bringing lasting peace to Nigeria.

### **The Concept of Lifelong Education**

Scholars and researchers in lifelong education have not differed substantially in their views of the subject matter. Aspin and Chapman (2001) opined that, lifelong

### ***Viabile Lifelong Education: A Panacea for Culture of Peace in Nigeria***

---

education is concerned with promoting skills and competences necessary for developing general capabilities and specific performance in work situation. This implies that the more lifelong educated and skilled a workforce, the more it contributes to an advanced and competitive economy. It does not only enhance economic skills but also develops rational mind that enable sound judgment, self assertion and sense of responsibility that culminate in the culture peace in the society (Veronica 2012). Again, Peter in Aspin and Chapman (2001) claims that lifelong learning is good in and for itself. The implication is that lifelong education provides citizens with broader, richer and more resourceful perspectives to life challenges and situations.

Consequently, the whole concept of lifelong education is hinged on the promise that lifelong education enables lifelong learning, voluntary and self motivated pursuit of knowledge with the attendant objective to achieve social inclusiveness, active democratic citizens, as well as the attainment of work place competitiveness and employability (Field, 2006). In fact, lifelong education is an exercise that takes place in everyday life as we interact. It runs through our one life cycle. It includes formal education in schools, tertiary institutions and universities; non formal education which includes on the job training and the informal education which we acquire from childhood throughout life, within our family and environment (World Bank 2003).

Also Umaro (2010) asserted that lifelong education is a tool that gives older people and those in the labour force, the window for self enhancement that enables them to remain competitive in a knowledge driven economy. It does not only make people functional entities in their communities, it brings about social equilibrium, gainful engagement that enable individuals to support the social system, reduction in crime rate and improved individual earnings (Nabots, 2012).

It is the view of the proponent of lifelong education that through viable education, the whole society may be made to prepare for changes and to adopt steps capable of enabling them to adjust very quickly to the changes when they eventually come. It is that education that provides continuous skills and knowledge to the workforce that will drive the economy of the nation and instill in the citizens the culture of peace.

### **The Concept of Peace and Peace Education**

Consequently, the word peace connotes calmness of mind, tranquility, amity, concord, wholeness, well-being and security harmony in personal, national or international relations, and public order (Charming 2004). Peace is the concord of all melodious sound. In short, it is the conscious harmony with God and the creation, an alliance of love with all beings, a sympathy with one that is pure and happy, a surrender of every separate will and interest, a participation of the concord of purpose with the infinitive original. Peace is the freedom from civil disorder and obeying the laws. It is often synonym of concord tranquility, friendliness or satisfaction. As Nigeria is a large country with people's of diverse cultures, many languages and myriads of dialects, there are numerous societies within the area known as Nigeria, just as the Nigerian society is

only part of the global society. From village to city, town, state, zone, country, nation, region, continent and the whole world, there are different systems, ideologies and cultures regulating the affairs of different societies of the various layers. Different government and powers control different segment of the world. The jurisdiction of each government is limited and in many cases defined.

Therefore, peace is essential to the survival and harmonies co-existence of all countries as it could not be attained without justice and control. This is in line with the United Nation concepts of peace as an integral approach to presenting violence and violent conflict and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, violence's free flow of information and disarmament.

Equally, peace education is a philosophical concept that is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about different manifestations of peace and violence as well as peacemaking skills. According to Akunole (2010), It is a process of inculcating elements of peace education in the learner's to enable them developed ability to manifest tolerance, the skills for non-violent conflict resolution and the culture of peace.

Again, Olomo (2016) referred to peace education as the process of equipping learners with tools for developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for resolving differences and conflicts in non-violent ways and in living peacefully with oneself, others, and the environment. It is concerned with resolving conflict of intra passing interpersonal and intergroup levels without violence. It also has to do with conflict resolution at local, national and international levels. Again, this backdrop, peace education has place in all societies. This is so because lasting behaviour change in children and adults only occurs overtime, effective peace education is necessarily a long term process. In facts, viable lifelong education is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for creating atmosphere of peace within the individual or for achieving inner peace.

### **Ways for Promoting Peace Education**

There are certain strategies for promoting peace education. Biao and Biao (2000) suggested the following strategies.

- **Through All School Subjects:** Peace education could be achieved through the teaching of all school subjects. Through this medium, pupils and students would understand what peace education has to offer without the feeling of the burden of an additional school subject. For instance, English language should be taught with comprehensive passages, essay writing exercises and oral drills that are centered around peace and peace education. Social studies and history classes should be offer opportunity to pupils and students to learn how peace may be established and advanced in human societies. Infact, all schools learning and instructional materials should be written in such

***Viable Lifelong Education: A Panacea for Culture of Peace in Nigeria***

---

a way as to emphasize the positive aspects of life and the positive sides of humanly unavoidable situations.

- **Through Adult and Non-Formal Education:** Peace education should be extended to the non-formal sector of education. It should be made to permeate the educational activities carried out within this education subsystem. For instance, literacy education meetings should consider texts on peace education or should organize short talks on peace issues. Basic education programmes should provide for discussions on peace within each of their educational activities. Business and engineering skills trainings should emphasize practices to promote peaceful coexistence. In fact, all learning and instructional materials should employ such positive idea of peace (Harris & Morison 2008).
- **Through Teacher Training Programmes:** The responsibility of teaching peace education rests on the shoulders of teachers and facilitators of educational activities. It is therefore pertinent that teachers and facilitators should be instructed in the principles and method of peace education during their training period. For example, the would-be-teacher need to know this methods to employ during peace education classes and how to select materials to use during peace education lesson.
- **Through Festivals:** Festivals, ceremonies and dramas are excellent learners centre that could be employed to promote peace and peace education. All these ceremonies, festivals and dramas in all societies portray peace. Infact, they are expected to be pro-peace education.
- **Making Peace Education a Distinct Subject:** To establish peace education as a discipline, curricula would need to be built up as a guide for teaching peace education at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal). These curricula would need to be built by persons who show keen interest in peace issues. After curricula has been built, learning and instructional materials would need to be developed along the curricula.

**Lifelong Education and Peace in Nigeria**

Although lifelong education is mentioned in the National policy on Education, no structure or framework or clear policy currently exists in the country, on how to operationalise lifelong education. Perhaps, this situation is not only peculiar to Nigeria; most developing countries are yet to view lifelong education as important, this form of education is being actively embraced by the countries of the northern hemisphere (Torres, 2002).

Lifelong education has great potentials for countries. It can bring the citizens of countries to appreciate their own strength and their own worth and it can lead them to create an environment of peace through leading them to understand the sheer wealth which their multiple ethnicities represents and through enlightening citizens to a point where suspicion and mistrust are drastically reduced or completely eliminated.

In Nigeria, there exists more than 250 groups of these, three are largest and most dominant; they are the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa speaking groups. As a result of the age-long struggle against what is perceived among Nigerian ethnic groups as ethnic domination and ethnic exploitation, the country was in the mid 1990s broken down into six geo-political zones. This arrangement was believed would ease ethnic tension as ethnic minorities in the country would now be able to identify with a few geo-political spatial zones which they can call their own and which would increase their sense of belonging (Mala, 2000).

Yet, ethnic tension persists, suspicion among ethnic group is rife and misunderstanding and misrepresentation still exist; the seizing and commandeering of economic interests viewed as being strategic to ethnic groups still go on unabated. All these happenings only point to the fact that in addition to political settlements, other strategies need to be employed for the purpose of establishing a culture of peace in Nigeria. The most dependable and enduring strategy is education and more specifically viable lifelong education that would bring peace in Nigeria needs to be tailored around the peculiar problems of Nigeria.

### **Strategies of Lifelong Education for Peace in Nigeria**

There are certain strategies to be adopted to enable lifelong education achieve sustainable peace in Nigeria.

Firstly, the Federal Government should begin by acknowledging lifelong education as a national need by infusing lifelong education into the present national educational system. This implies altering the present national system in a way as to provide for lifelong education (Biao and Biao, 2000).

Again, an educational plan should be urgently developed to enable Nigerians to continually have opportunity to learn about one another. This is because Nigerians do not know themselves and so they suspect and misunderstand one another. It is very common to see Nigerians who are born within their political and ethnic community, grow and die within that community, without ever having the opportunity to visit a locality or community within the country that is different from theirs. Indeed, this know-ourselves educational plan should touch on all existing school curricula with the view of introducing to young Nigerians all the people, languages and cultures existing in Nigeria during their school days. It should also include youth and adult excursions which would enable Nigerians visit communities different from theirs many times in their life time.

### ***Viable Lifelong Education: A Panacea for Culture of Peace in Nigeria***

---

Also, states in Nigeria should be encouraged to organize on an annual basis, culture fairs, aimed at attracting Nigerians who would learn much through these fairs about their country in the long run (Deutsen, 2003).

Equally, Nigerians are by nature, hospitable people and no Nigerian would seize economic interest with the view of preventing others from benefiting. However, military rulers, in their almost 40 years rule showed palpable corruption and selfishness in the management of national resources to the extent that they succeeded in corrupting the minds of, otherwise, peaceful and hospitable people. Therefore, a process of re-education of the people is now needed to restore the confidence of the new managers of national resources. An educational programme which seeks to democratise the minds of Nigerians and which seeks to propagate the culture of peace as a solution to past wrong deeds of the military in the management of national resources should be mounted.

In short, for lifelong education system to thrive and achieve its purpose as it is done in countries like Hungary, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, among others, government should;

- Create a legal/policy framework on which it is to operate.
- Ensure adequate funding for the project
- Strengthen the links between education, training systems and the culture of peace.
- Encourage the practice of professional guidance and counseling.
- Expand adult continuing education, among others.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria is the most populous and complex country in Africa. There are about 250 ethnic nationalities and groups in the country. Therefore, peace is essentially imperative to the survival and harmonious co-existence of all Nigerians. There is no price too great to pay for the restoration of peace because peace is a sine qua non for all forms of development. All that it would take to bring peace in Nigeria is to promote lifelong education in addition to all earlier attempts at establishing a culture of peace. As an innovation to education, lifelong education bridges the gap between hitherto uneducated and the educated person in the society. It is an education that enables lifelong learning and self motivated pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, the adoption and promotion of lifelong education would signal the process of the establishment of the culture of peace in Nigeria.

### **References**

- Akunole, B. (2010). *Education for peace*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.
- Aspin, F. & Chapman, S. (2001). *Lifelong learning at fifty*. Retrieved: <http://www.eof.org./LLL/ed htm 31/1/2022>.
- Biao I. & Biao EP (2000). "Women as peace agents in the 21st century". JOWICE, 4 (2) 122 -126.

- Charming, P. (2004). *Promoting Education for Peace*. In .P. Cremin (Eds), Education for peace. Ireland: Educational Studies Association of Ireland and the Irish Peace Institution.
- Deutsen, .M. (2003). *Educating for a Peaceful World*. American Psychologist, 48 (6), 510-517.
- Field, P. (2006). *Adult and Lifelong Education*. Retrieved: <http://www.mfed.com/fedd.hof/psf 21/1/2022>.
- Harris, .I. & Morison, .M. (2008). *Peace education*. North Carolina: Mcfarland and company Inc.
- Mala, S.A. (2000). *Religious pluralism in Nigeria: The way out and factors favouring it*. In S.A. mala & 2.1 Oseni (Eds), Religion, peace and unit in Nigeria. Ibadan, Nigeria: NASR.
- Nabots, H. A-N (2012). *Peace Education and journal of Economic and sustainable Development* 3 (11), 6-11.
- Olomo, O.O (2016). *Effects of Integrating Peace Education in Nigeria education system*. Journal of Education and practice, 7 (18) 9-14.
- Smith, M.C. (2001). *Lifelong Learning: The encyclopedic of Informal Education*. Retrieved: <http://www.infed.org/lifelonglearning/b - life htm>.
- Torres R.M (2002). *Lifelong Education: A new momentum and a new opportunity*. Buenos Aireo: 112PDVV.
- Umaru, S. (2010). *Peace, security, good governance*. Maidugun: Set publisher.
- Veronica, G. (2012). *Peace Education and pear mediation, in introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa, University for Peace*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- World Bank (2003). *Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy: challenges for developing countries*, Washington, D.C. USA word
- Yahaya, M.T (2000). *Jihad and Peaceful Co-existence: contrasts or causalities*. In S.A. Mala & 2.1. Oseni (Eds) Religion, Peace and Varity in Nigeria. Ibadan, Nigeria: NASR