

Peace and Values Education as a Cross-Cutting Issue in Rwandan Schools: Teachers and Classroom-Based Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Peace and values is one of the cross-cutting issues in the Rwandan primary and secondary school curriculum. Different organizations such as the Aegis Trust have trained teachers in integrating peace and values in the various subjects, they teach by training learners on how to build a culture of peace. This is very important to Rwanda as a post genocide. However, no research (at the best of our knowledge) has been conducted to investigate how and to what extent teachers integrate peace and values in various school subjects. This article reports on empirical research conducted in five primary schools in four provinces of Rwanda plus Kigali City to examine the teaching of peace and values in Rwandan schools. A qualitative approach was adopted for this research. Classroom observations, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings show that peace values are not part of teachers' planning and are not explicitly referred to in classroom practices. This is mainly because teachers lack skills and knowledge to do so. However, some peace related messages are shared in extracurricular activities but these are counteracted by violent practices such as corporal punishment and bullying. This article concludes that teachers' limited understanding of peace impedes the integration of peace culture in schools. Thus, it suggests that peace values should be explicitly and systematically integrated in the teaching of all subjects. It also calls for strong measures to end school violence in Rwandan schools by equipping teachers for positive management of learners' behaviours.

Keywords: Competence Based Curriculum, Peace and Values Education, Peace Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda took many innocent lives and left a lot of wounds in the hearts of many Rwandans, especially the genocide survivors, and tore the social fabric of the Rwandan society into pieces (Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide [CNLG], 2011; Ngabonziza, 2020; Sibomana, 2019). The post-genocide Rwanda is striving to build a culture of peace by educating its citizens on the importance of, and ways to build, peace for the Rwandan society. As Wahyudin (2018) puts it, peace education becomes important and urgent after a social, political or even religious conflict. It is why peacebuilding has become a central focus for the Government of Rwanda in its efforts to rebuild the country and education has been identified as one instrument to achieve this. Indeed, the post-genocide Rwandan education policy “promoted national unity and reconciliation, prioritizing equity of provision and access, and encouraging a humanitarian culture of inclusion and mutual respect” (Obura, 2003, p.18). Indeed, educating children for peace is one of the key components of a sustainable peacebuilding process and it brings them hope for the future (Basabose, 2015; Never Again Rwanda & Interpeace, 2015).

Peacebuilding through education was done indirectly, by making education a basic right for all children and accessible to all Rwandan children, irrespective of their social, economic, religious and so-called 'ethnic' backgrounds (Sibomana, 2019). The recent curriculum, the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC), emphasizes competences which are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Rwanda Education Board [REB], 2015). In the same line, the current CBC has incorporated elements known as cross-cutting issues which are "important for students to learn about, but they are not confined to one subject" (REB, 2015, p.4).

Cross-cutting issues include peace and values education, inclusive education, gender education, environment and sustainability, genocide studies and financial literacy. The inclusion of peace and values education aims at promoting social cohesion, positive values including pluralism and personal responsibility, empathy, critical thinking and action in order to build a more peaceful society. It also aims at developing attitudes, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment (REB, 2015). Thus, teaching peace and for peace is part and parcel of the current curriculum implementation and is a responsibility of every teacher.

In spite of the CBC having been there for almost nine years, recent research on the teachers' ability to teach the curriculum shows that very few teachers are able to integrate cross-cutting issues (including peace and values education) in their lessons. For example, a study conducted by Ndiokubwayo and Habiyaemye (2019), revealed that only 27.3% of the Sector-Based Trainers who participated in their study understand the importance and purpose of cross cutting issues while 60.1% were able to just list (not to teach) cross-cutting issues. With this being the case with teacher trainers, one can imagine how worse the situation may be when it comes to the actual teaching.

Some other studies have been conducted on peace education in Rwandan schools. These include Hilker (2012) who described the role of education in dividing the Rwandan society and tackles the efforts made by the Government of Rwanda to achieve gender parity in primary education. However, she deplors the prevalence of teacher centredness in classroom teaching, which reinforces the official narrative in schools and thereby limiting critical thinking. Other scholars have focused on teachers' crucial role in peacebuilding and social cohesion in the post-genocide Rwanda (Basabose & Habyalimana, 2019; Rubagiza et al., 2016). The novelty of this research is the focus on peace education as a cross-cutting issue in the Rwandan classroom. It shows teachers' pedagogical challenges and identifies key aspects which require continuous professional development for effective and sustainable peace and values education. The study has been guided by the following questions:

- i) How Rwandan teachers understand and integrate peace and values in teaching and learning?
- ii) How do Rwandan teachers integrate peace and values in teaching and learning and its implications to peace culture?
- iii) What are the challenges of the above two for peacebuilding in schools?

The research was conducted in rural and urban primary and secondary schools from the four provinces of Rwanda plus the City of Kigali. It has adopted a qualitative approach with the intention not to generalize the findings but to understand teachers' views about this phenomenon, which could provide a lens through which the aspect under investigation can be looked at.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on the conceptualization of peace education, peace education in the curriculum and peace and values education pedagogy.

2.1 Conceptualization of Peace Education

Different authors have conceptualized peace education in terms of content and pedagogy. The commonly known United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s definition underlines the promotion of knowledge, aptitudes and values so that the youths can change their behaviours and resolve conflicts peacefully (UNESCO, 1999). Other scholars concur with UNESCO's definition in various ways such as behaviour change, having skills in conflict resolution. They also highlight harmonious relationships (Fisk, 2000; Mishra, 2015). For change aspect, the critical peace education theory raised by Christoph Wulf and Paul Freire (Bajaj, 2008; Bartlett, 2008) go further because the theory aims at identifying social injustices and working for their eradication. However, some educators doubt the role of education in transforming all cases of conflicts and prefer to talk about a possibility of change as a result of education (Bajaj, 2008).

2.2 Peace Education in the Curriculum

Concerning peace and values education in the curriculum, children learn from both overt and hidden curriculum (Aderonmu et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2013). This study looks at the concept of peace and values education from a relatively broader perspective as “an integral part of the school curriculum” (Wahyudin, 2018, p.22), covering both covert and hidden curriculum. One important aspect of the curriculum is learning outcomes. The aim of peace education is not just educating for peace but educating for a ‘peace capacity’ (Oshita, 2006). Thus, school children need to be ‘caught young’ to build this capacity as they are future leaders and champions of peace (Odejobi & Adesina, 2009).

Peace education is not a stand-alone school subject in Rwandan primary and secondary schools curricula but is considered as a cross-cutting issue referred to as ‘peace and values education’ to be integrated in other school subjects (REB, 2015). The consulted literature posits that certain subjects such as History, Social Studies, Geography, Governance and Religious Studies are more permeable by peace concepts than others (Odejobi & Adesina, 2009).

Studies on Rwandan history curriculum, learners’ textbooks and teachers’ guides show that values formation is part of stated and intended curriculum with a specific priority on social cohesion and fraternity of Rwandans (Basabose & Habyalimana, 2019; Buhigiro 2022). Some values such as love, patriotism, respect of others are mentioned more than fifteen times each in the curriculum. Other values such as self-reliance, unity, fraternity, tolerance and justice are mentioned fewer times. All these are coupled with some skills such as conflict management, prevention of human rights abuse, inclusiveness and advocating for democracy or equality (Fried, 2017).

2.3 Peace and Values Education Pedagogy

Given that peace education aims at developing learners’ competences or, in other words, a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, it presupposes both propositional and procedural types of knowledge (Fantl, 2012). However, the latter seems to be more important than the former given that having theoretical knowledge about how something is done does not necessarily translate into the ability to do it (Eraut, 2001; Fantl, 2012).

Different authors put forward the use of a cooperative approach and the use of the environment to acquire procedural knowledge (Wahyudin, 2018; Yilmaz & Yalcin, 2012). Associated strategies include role-playing, storytelling, game playing, humour, mnemonics and metaphors (Nair & Nath, 2009). In the same perspective, Mishra (2015) advocates for experience-based learning, group work, discussion methods, and interactive and reflective learning strategies. In addition, gender sensitive pedagogy requires equal participation of both male and female learners and a gender sensitive curriculum (Karlson & Simonsson, 2011; Shrewsbury, 1993). Thus, the effectiveness of peace education largely depends on the skills of peace and conflict resolution being learned actively and modelled by the school and classroom environment (Baldo & Fumiss, 1998). Teachers need to model peace and values through listening, the humility to acknowledge and correct one’s mistakes, assuming responsibility for one’s actions, and helping each other to solve problems transcending differences (Nair & Nath, 2009).

From these strategies and methods, one can deduce that learners need to be actively engaged in learning activities whose purpose is to develop their capacity for a peaceful life, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This gives them an opportunity to do things and reflect on various scenarios and possibilities. Indeed, what learners learn in the classroom through direct teaching can easily be unlearned if contextual realities do not align with it (Wahyudin, 2018).

Theoretically this research was informed by Wahyudin (2018) who indicates that peace education can be approached through three main approaches: (i) the knowledge-based approach in which peace education is interpreted as a type of knowledge that can be taught in the school curriculum; (ii) an approach through which peace education is seen as a set of skills and attitudes that can be explored or taught or more subtly infused in a variety of educational contexts, and (iii) an approach which considers peace education as a join between the first two approaches aiming for “a harmonious and quite dominant combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in interpreting and following up the importance of peace education (pp. 21-22). This article addresses peace education from the third perspective looking at it through the written and enacted curricula as well as the implicit and/or hidden ways teachers use to develop a culture of peace among learners.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a qualitative approach with an interpretivist paradigm. We have chosen a qualitative research approach to understand Rwandan teachers’ views about peace and values education as a cross-cutting issue in their respective schools. This approach promotes greater understanding of the way things are and the reasons behind

that situation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Combined with interpretivism, we wanted to know how our participants interpret their experiences and the meaning they attribute to the latter. Like interpretivist researchers, we bore in mind that there is not one but multiple realities about the phenomenon under study (Kelliher, 2011).

The purposive sampling coupled with snowball sampling methods were used. For the latter, head teachers selected the participants following our instructions (Patton, 2002). The sample consisted of fifteen male and female teachers with different educational backgrounds. For each school, three teachers were selected from three school subject clusters: Languages, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Sciences. It was assumed that some subjects may be more amenable to integrating peace and values education than others. The sample also comprised 50 learners. The data from learners will be reported in a book chapter on learners' perceptions of the state of peace and peace and values education in their schools. In some instances, however, we refer to this data for triangulation purposes. This study covered all the four provinces of Rwanda plus the City of Kigali and schools from both urban (2) and rural (3) areas were involved.

Data was collected between June 2022 and February 2023 through lesson observations, semi-structured individual interviews with the teachers whose lessons were observed and focus groups with learners. An observation checklist was developed to serve as a guide when observing how primary and secondary school teachers integrate peace and values education in their lessons, how they address conflicts, how they interact with learners in classrooms and in the school compound.

Primary data were composed of transcribed interviews from teachers and learners. Inspired by an inductive approach, we used to open-code to engage with the data. The codes helped us to find out the complexity of the data because data interpretation and analysis does not happen via mechanical coding. It requires the taking into consideration of the context and other texts or theoretical concepts (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). Thus, open-coding gave an opportunity to compare and contrast similar events in our data by looking at intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, environmental levels of peace and values education. Codes were clustered into categories which led to themes which were used in our research and analysed using thematic content analysis.

In compliance with ethical consideration (Flick, 2007), an ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Rwanda-College of Education. In addition, participants were requested to voluntarily sign a consent form and agree to be recorded and use their data. In order to protect the identity of our participants, pseudonyms were used to refer to them, and the names of the schools are not mentioned in this article.

IV. FINDINGS

The research data revolves around different themes such as (i) teachers' understanding of peace, (ii) the way teachers actually integrate peace and values in teaching and learning, (iii) the challenges faced in peace education in Rwandan schools and their implications for PVE.

4.1 Teachers' Understanding of Peace

The Rwandan teachers interviewed during our field research generally expressed their understanding of peace as the absence of war while a few of them equated peace with "living in harmony with neighbours". In teachers elaborate explanations, the concepts of patriotism and tolerance came to the forefront. Teachers also related their understanding of peace with learners' behaviours, which refers to peace as relational and/or reciprocal. For example, while giving an example of a case which illustrates the absence of peace, Teacher Sangwa said, "*When you look at my physical appearance, a learner can extremely scorn me and disrespect me as a teacher. Without tolerance nothing is possible.*" Danny opined that resolving conflicts without resorting to violence is an indicator of peace. Some teachers also pointed to dialogue coupled with tolerance as another indicator of peace. One of them indicated that:

"The curriculum itself gives room to learners to be able to challenge their teachers. Without tolerance (ubworoherane) on the teachers' side you can react negatively" (Teacher Sangwa).

The teachers' narratives also associate peace with the respect for human rights. Philip, a teacher from a school in a rural district, indicates that "*living in peace means that your rights are observed*" while another one added that *there is peace "when someone has freedom to do things."* A more nuanced response was given by Teacher Ange who correlated human rights and societal norms: "*an individual is free to do whatever he or she wants to do without any obstacle when he or she is in alignment with societal norms.*" In this regard, she has an understanding of cases of human rights derogation. Some teachers also indicated that a peaceful society may be characterized by the rule of law which rules out impunity as implied in one teacher's reflection: "*learners will learn from that story (...) how wrong doers were punished so that the society can leave in a peaceful way.*" It means that Rwandan teachers find a close link

between peace and the respect of democratic principles. It should be noted that no teacher equated peace with absence of social justice and satisfaction of basic needs which, however, are essential for inner peace (Redekop, 2014, Esmaeili et al., 2020). This narrow understanding of peace education by Rwandan teachers has a consequence on the way they integrate peace and values in their lessons as later explained.

4.2 Integration of Peace and Values in Teaching and Learning

4.2.1 Peace and Values in Pedagogical Documents

As a cross-cutting issue in Rwandan education system, peace and values education content does not belong to any one subject exclusively but it is integrated in the various school subjects taught in Rwanda schools. These cross-cutting issues are supposed to be integrated in lesson plans, lesson delivery and assessment. The findings of this study indicate that peace and values education is hardly integrated in the observed lessons.

In lesson plans where peace and values education as a cross-cutting issue is scarcely mentioned. In science, for example, only one teacher included this cross-cutting issue in the observed lesson. For social sciences, peace and values education was included only in two lessons from January to June 2022, while others such as gender, environmental education which are also related to peace and values education and generic competences (critical thinking) are included more frequently. Thus, peace and values education is the least mentioned cross-cutting issue. One teacher in a rural school, indicated that they just write peace and values education in the lesson plan because there is space for it.

This limited integration of peace and value education in lesson plans and absence in actual teaching could serve as evidence that teachers lack the capacity to integrate this issue in their lessons as will be elaborated on later.

4.2.2 Teaching Methods and Implications for Peace and Values Education

Data from lesson observation indicated that peace and values education is not sufficiently and adequately integrated in classroom teaching. In actual fact, some teachers often do not even mention or refer to it even when it is included in lesson plans. However, some aspects and methods implicitly associated with peace education were observed though to a very limited extent as will be discussed below around two subthemes: (i) lesson delivery and (ii) school setting and culture.

Lesson Delivery and Classroom Practices

Lesson observations revealed that the sitting arrangement in the ten observed classes is generally favourable to peace building: girls and boys sit together in a round setting. This sitting plan facilitates collaboration and discussions between them and learners are able to look at each other's faces. Nevertheless, in one specific class, girls and boys were sitting at different desks and boys worked with boys and girls with girls in different learning activities. Some learners forced through for the front seats and some shorter learners ended up occupying the seats at the back. Sometimes they had to stand to be able to see the blackboard and the teacher did nothing about this.

Group work was the teaching approach commonly used by all the observed teachers as one of the approaches to engage learners actively, as recommended by the curriculum. However, only two teachers used this approach in a way that facilitates the acquisition of a peace culture. They formed mixed groups in terms of gender, abilities and personalities (extroverts and introverts). Teachers provided them with clear instructions on expected behaviours in the groups: respecting one another and one another's ideas, taking turns to speak, listening to one another and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. During the group work, the teachers moved around to ensure that these principles are respected. The two teachers also exemplified peaceful behaviours by using a friendly tone and a positive language while talking to learners, including those who failed to answer questions. In these classes we observed fruitful collaboration and mutual respect and encouragement.

On the other hand, group work was not effectively handled in the other four classes where it was used. First, the teacher did not give clear instructions on how to do the work and learners did as they pleased. In an interview, this teacher explained that”

“There is so much noise during group work that it is not easy to control learners”. The chaos referred to by the teacher could be a result of the inability to handle group work. In other classes, groups are fixed and each student knows his or her group. This could be a limitation to peacebuilding because of the limited opportunities to work and interact with various classmates on class work and can lead to competition (rather than complementarity) between the groups, which can be a threat to peace. In one other class, groups were so big that some learners had to stand during group work and, therefore, collaboration was

limited. Another teacher used a stigmatizing language while giving instructions to learners: “when selecting a group secretary, do not choose someone who does not know how to write.”

This statement categorizes learners and already eliminates a category of learners from certain roles.

The four remaining lessons were teacher-centred and the attention was focused on teaching and content with little attention to learners’ individual needs and behaviours. In such classes, it was not easy to assess the extent to which teachers understood how to approach peace education. This approach was also reflected in teachers’ responses during interviews as can be seen in this answer:

“I teach peace as a cross-cutting issue by telling learners to avoid confrontation and keep tolerance. I tell them to live together in peace, to avoid fighting between them.”

In one class, the teacher spoke and asked questions to learners who mostly gave choral answers. Thus, the teacher could not know who had understood and who had not. So, some learners were completely ignored.

While the classroom observation did not provide much information about the handling of learners’ behaviours by the observed teachers, what was observed ranged from a ‘laissez-faire’ approach to positive discipline. In three classes, the teachers did not really care about learners’ negative behaviours. For instance, one teacher woke up one of the sleeping learners but did not take advantage of this to teach some peace values such as the respect for work and time. This carelessness suggests that these teachers are less concerned about learners’ behaviours while effective management of these is key to peace education (Mishra, 2015). In two other classes, the teachers used positive behaviour management strategies by talking gently to the misbehaving learners and showing them the negative consequences of their actions. Learners always apologized and promised to change.

Apart from these indirect approaches to peace education, we also investigated the explicit integration of peace and values education as a crosscutting issue in the CBC. In all the ten lessons which were observed, we did not notice any explicit and deliberate reference to peace and values education, even if the teachers knew in advance that our research would focus on these. Even those who had it in their lesson plans did not do differently in the actual practice. It appears that what matters for them (and what they are responsible for) is the content of their school subject. Indeed, the science teachers who were observed indicated that they do not think that it is their responsibility to teach about peace because there is a subject that focuses on this: Social and Religious Studies.

It should be noted that even when the lesson topic offered an opportunity to talk about peace, teachers did not do it as the following examples illustrate. When teaching about population growth, one teacher explained how overpopulation can generate conflicts, but did not help learners to explore how such conflicts can be avoided especially in the context of Rwanda of which the population density is among the highest in Africa. He could also have taken advantage of this to teach about conflict resolution. Another teacher who was teaching about inequalities in Mathematics was expected (like any other teacher) to link the content to learners’ real life. Thus, it could have been a good opportunity to explain how social inequalities are a threat to peace and peacebuilding.

However, only one teacher explicitly integrated peace and values education fairly well, even if his lesson was also teacher-centred and teaching methods did not foster collaboration. Nevertheless, he provided an example of how peace and values education (or any other cross-cutting issue) can be integrated in a lesson even when the topic is not directly connected. He was teaching English and the topic was ‘past tense’. He chose a text about a conflict that took place in a certain place, its impact and how it was resolved. The sentences in the text, which were in the past tense (as the conflict was), were used to explain how the past tenses are used but also to help learners (through questions to all learners) to understand the harmful impact of conflicts in society, why and how they should be avoided or prevented. Even in assessment, the questions reflected the two aspects which had been taught: past tense and peace and values education.

Most of participants’ answers suggest that they do not usually plan to integrate this cross-cutting issue, but encourage learners for peace when an occasion arises. During our interviews, some teachers of Social Studies, Literature, Biology and General Studies indicated that they teach about peace when the topic of the lesson specifically addresses it. For instance, the data from this research revealed that in Social Studies, there are texts on peace culture. In Biology, they deal with peace values while discussing about environmental sustainability. This means that they do not integrate it as a cross-cutting issue but as content, which reinforces the understanding that the teaching of this issue is a responsibility of some teachers.

Failure to integrate peace and values in assessment was identified as another major finding in this research: most of the interviewed teachers affirmed that they do not include peace and values education in assessment. One of them said, “*Reka reka! (Not at all!) We do not really include it in our assessment tasks*” (Teacher Emmanuel). Another one explained, “*Assessing PVE in my subject is new information for me. As an expert, you will also help me to know how I can do that*” (Teacher Diane). This finding is not surprising, owing to the fact that most of the teachers

do not integrate it in their lessons and, therefore, one cannot assess something unless they have taught it. Yet, only one language teacher explained how he addresses peace and values in assessments:

“Last time I was teaching one play in S6 and I gave them a quiz. In the play, princes wanted to kill a governor, and this led the whole country into a big conflict. In the quiz there was a question to explain the reasons that led to these problems and explain how this conflict could have been avoided.”

The proposed questions were inventive and evaluative. They did not enhance learners' critical thinking which is also needed for PVE. Therefore, the questions had some limitations because they were not interpretative. What emerged is that teachers' questions helped to enhance certain skills such as writing and developing an argument. It was also an opportunity to internalise some values in line with conflict prevention such as peaceful resolution of conflicts.

These various levels and types of understanding regarding PVE, most of which are not in line with what the curriculum recommends points to limitations in the way teachers have been helped to approach PVE. This was confirmed by some teachers when we asked them about the challenges, they face in integrating PVE in their lessons. Their answers generally refer to the lack of, limited or ineffective training. Some of them indicated that they had not received enough training on the integration of all cross-cutting issues, not just PVE. One teacher actually indicated that he does not even know what PVE really is.

“The first problem is that we teachers who are supposed to teach it (PVE), we don't know what it means, or when to integrate it in the lesson. For instance, at what point do I need to talk about peace education while I am teaching a lesson?” (Teacher Emmanuel).

Another teacher explained his limited understanding of the way PVE should be approached by saying that *“Peace is not a concrete object! It is abstract. It is difficult to teach it to young ones!”* (Teacher Peter). Apparently, the teacher has Piagetian misconceptions that young people cannot grasp abstract concepts. Based on these answers, it can be argued that the training and support which some of the teachers have received has not been effective for them. Limited proficiency in English by learners was pointed out as another challenge to the integration of PVE in lessons because it prevents teachers from engaging learners meaningfully, which is essential for effective PVE (Mishra, 2015). In order to address all the challenges faced in PVE, all the teachers requested relevant and meaningful training that empowers them effectively.

School and Community Culture

Our interview data revealed that in all selected schools, peace education is implicitly integrated in extracurricular activities. This integration was evidenced through messages shared via other materials such as posters. At the school entrance, values to uphold such as teamwork and mutual respect, and taboos to avoid such as disobedience, drug abuse, selfishness can be read on outside walls. Due to PVE, there are also peace and reconciliation clubs that are working in almost all schools and constitute a platform to discuss about and learn values such as unity, tolerance, kindness, forgiving, altruism, and positive behaviours in society.

In addition to these clubs, teachers' behaviours and role modelling were identified as key in promoting peace in schools. As educators, “we have to be role models, we have to live in harmony with our colleagues by respecting them, supporting each other and helping learners even in their social life, and not just in teaching and learning”, articulated Teacher Emmanuel. Nair and Nath (2009) recommend the incorporation of the importance of positive role models in peace education and the above teacher has understood this principle.

4.3 Hindrances to PVE in Rwandan Schools

Even though most teachers' behaviours are irreproachable, the study identified some behavioural challenges on the side of both teachers and learners. Some teachers may not adhere to the role-modelling principle and, according to one science teacher, such *“tough teachers do not know what learners think because learners are not open to them”*. The same comment applies to other community members whom learners see as role models such as parents, neighbours and older siblings. In actual fact, life in some families has negative effects on learners' behaviours because they do not find any link between what is taught at school and what they see at home: *“some parents fight or abuse each other (and abuse children) in the presence of their children”*, said one learner. A good number of teachers still use corporal punishment to manage learners' behaviours in class as extensively discussed in another article (see Sibomana et al., in press).

Data from this study revealed that drug abuse is as another hindrance to PVE. This misbehaviour is especially the case for the learners who do not stay in boarding and who *“come to schools after taking alcohol or drugs and it is difficult to control them in class”* (Fabiola, Emmanuel, Diane). Some learners living outside the school have been

associated with practices which are a threat against peace and related values and spreading these into the school community. In some other cases, very few girls in the boarding section go outside the school without any authorization and there is suspicion that they go to engage in illicit activities. This misbehaviour suggests that the communities around the schools and those which learners come from do not usually facilitate the acquisition of peace and related values by learners. On the contrary, the communities may be bringing the learners to unlearn these.

V. DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING

Education is one of the most important tools for peace and peacebuilding in view of sustainable societies (Rubagiza et al. 2016). It provides required social and cultural values and contributes to socialization and identity formation which, according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2011, p. 7), “are vital for economic growth and individual and national advancement and can act as an important vehicle for social cohesion”. Thus, peace education has a central role in both written and enacted curriculum and this is especially the case for Rwanda as a post genocide society.

In spite of the central place of peace education in curriculum, however, the findings of this study have indicated that teachers have a narrow understanding of the concept of peace; they understand it simply as the absence of war. This also shapes the way they understand their role in peace building: to ensure that learners live with one another in harmony, avoiding torturing or abusing others and address arising conflicts. This understanding leaves aside other aspects of peace education raised by Harris (2002) such environmental education, international education, social justice and development education. With Bar-Tal's (2002) argument that peace education varies from country to country in terms of ideology, objectives, emphasis, curricula and practices. This emphasis on the absence of war and conflict by Rwandan teachers could result in the history of the country. In fact, most of Rwandan teachers directly experienced the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 and its awful consequences and wars have been rampant in the region; thus, the absence of war is key for them. They understand their role in peace education in the sense of *'Never Again'*. While this is good and laudable, Rwandan teachers need to understand that peace education leads to the eradication of injustice, discrimination, poverty and ignorance (Naik & Behera, 2013). In a similar vein, they should not only establish a conducive learning environment but also inculcate into learners the principles of positive peace (Harris, 2002) so that they are aware that sustainable peace goes beyond the absence of war and embraces dignity and decent living conditions for all.

This limited understanding of peace was also found to shape the objectives and activities of other school mechanisms aimed at promoting peace. For example, according to the information provided by teachers and learners, the Unity and Reconciliation Clubs in schools specifically aim at ensuring that Rwanda does not fall back into a dark history of wars and genocide. They do this by inculcating into learner's values such as unity, tolerance, kindness, forgiveness. In short, such clubs appear to be dealing with recent history and its aftermath and hardly tackle other issues such as the creation of a more just society and thereby achieving intrapersonal and interpersonal peace which are key to positive peace (Redekop, 2014; Esmaeili et al., 2020).

Furthermore, most of the teachers interviewed do not understand the implications of teaching methods for peace education and/or the best methods that can be used to approach peace education. Indeed, the use of inclusive, engaging and learner-centred teaching methods, which promote learners' critical thinking, collaborative skills, socialization and inclusion were found to be very limited. While gender equality is one of the areas emphasized by the curriculum (REB, 2015), gender responsive pedagogy was hardly seen in the observed classes. In actual fact, some teachers appeared not to be aware of the gender roles in their classes. However, most of the teachers used group works to foster collaboration amongst learners, which is a good approach because, as explained by Kester and Cremin (2017), through group works learners are able to identify various forms of injustices existing in society and work towards their eradication. The challenge with the way teachers used this approach is that the way the groups were organized did not really give room for learner engagement and collaboration because they did not give clear instructions and help learners to set ground rules for having a safe discussion. Teachers seem to lack skills to use active learning methods such as cooperative learning, creative reflection, role playing, and others. In short, teachers seem to lack the capacity to integrate peace and values education in their lessons.

It should be noted that teachers do not just lack the capacity to teach this cross-cutting issue; some of them (especially science teachers) do not understand that they have a role in explicitly teaching about peace. They think that it is the responsibility of the teachers of the subjects of which content directly addresses peace including social and religious studies, literature, languages, history, just to mention but a few. Again, this is a result of the understanding of peace in a narrow sense because if education in its entirety is expected to promote peace, it is the responsibility of

every educator, especially the teacher, is a peace educator (Balasooriya, 2001). In actual fact, this scholar suggests making peace education another school subject but making “every lesson a peace and every teacher a peace teacher” (p. xii). As he goes on to argue, the “inclusion of peace values and activities will make the subjects more meaningful and interesting to learners in many ways. It increases the quality of teaching as well as learning” (Balasooriya, 2001, p. xii). In order to address teachers’ limited capacity to teach values education, Balasooriya recommends the re-orientation of teacher education programmes “to ensure the professionalization of every teacher and teacher educator as a peace educator” (p. vii) and we concur with him.

VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

While peace and values education is a key component of the Rwandan school curriculum to ensure that education significantly contributes to building a peaceful Rwanda, the situation observed in the selected schools regarding the integration of PVE in lessons indicate that the schools may not succeed in inculcating a culture of peace amongst learners. This is mainly because of teachers' limited understanding of the concept of peace and professional capacity to do so. In addition, the prevalence of teacher-centred methods does not help learners to build their critical thinking and relationship building capabilities. This is in spite of some training having been offered to some of the observed teachers. Thus, a thorough investigation is needed to understand the limitations of these trainings and so that relevant support can be designed and provided to all teachers. Moreover, teachers should also have exemplary behaviours by avoiding corporal punishments which can contribute to learners’ fear and ‘school phobia’. Furthermore, schools alone will not succeed in building peaceful communities if the members of the latter are not educated about peace. Indeed, messages and behaviours from homes and communities have been found to work as obstacles to peacebuilding in schools. Indeed, as Prasard (n.d) stated, peace cannot just be taught rather can be acquired from different channels.

6.2 Recommendations

Given that teachers lack knowledge and skills to effectively integrate PVE in teaching and learning, REB in partnership with teaching colleges should reinforce continuous professional development to equip in-service teachers with competences on how to explicitly and systematically integrate PVE in all subjects. Strong measures should be taken by school leaders to end school violence by equipping teachers with skills for positive management of learners’ behaviours. Lastly, peace education should be reinforced for the adults who are out of schools to ensure sustainable peacebuilding.

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