

# **Towards A Comprehensive Primary School Curriculum for Conflict Transformation and Conflict Management**

By

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was aimed at analysing the current Zimbabwean primary school curriculum content and policy with a view to examine its relevance in laying a foundation for the acquisition of the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for conflict transformation, conflict management and peace-building. The need for the inclusion of conflict resolution and peace education in the school curriculum has been highlighted at a number of international fora especially in Africa. The study was deliberately delimited to the primary school level on the basis that any long lasting cultural practice begins at childhood. The study carried out document analysis on nine selected primary school syllabi from Grade One up to Grade Seven level. The study also examined administration policies and documents. The study found out that most of the syllabi contained valuable aspects that could be utilised to introduce conflict transformation, conflict management and peace education. However issues such as human rights and gender education were not well articulated in the syllabi. Methodologies were found to be relevant for peace education. The study found out that assessment methods were not relevant to assess behavioural changes.*

**Keywords:** *Peace education, conflict management, conflict transformation*

## **1. Introduction**

The main purpose of education is to address societal needs (Walker 1990, Schubert 1986, Mampuru and Spoelstra 1994). Education can be utilised as a powerful vehicle for addressing issues of conflict. In the last four decades, Africa has experienced conflicts which have led to serious violence resulting in loss of life. For example, there has been ethnic genocide in Rwanda and Burundi; inter-clan violence in Somalia and religious conflict in Sudan (Kaiser 2001). Zimbabwe has also experienced political inter-party violence during the general elections of 2000, 2005 and 2008 (Freedom House, 2012).

The violence and resultant conflict that prevails in the wider society could likely manifest itself in the schools. It might be because of the above state of affairs that the Zimbabwean Government in general, and the Ministry of Education Sport, Arts and Culture in particular together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embarked on workshops on Conflict Transformation, beginning in 2002 (Conflict Resolution Manual, 2000). The Conflict Resolution Manual (ibid) particularly stated that the purpose of these workshops was to explore ways of reducing tension in the country. These workshops were attended by high level personnel in the Ministry of Education Sport, Arts and Culture with the intention of cascading the training to the school system. With due regard to the pervasive characteristic of conflict the Ministry was concerned with transforming conflict to productive and manageable levels. The cascading did not however take place up to now because of financial constraints. An analysis of the materials delivered at the workshop reveal that they did not centre on school related strategies but were rather general strategies. The materials also do not have issues to be included in the school curriculum.

In 2006, a working committee of the University of Peace held a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to take stock of the status of peace education in African education systems. No report on the status of peace education in Zimbabwe was given. Furthermore, the meeting recommended that more research was needed to establish the status of conflict resolution and peace education issues in the school curriculum in Africa.

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It would appear, however, that not much has been done in Zimbabwe concerning the implementation of conflict transformation and peace education in Zimbabwean primary schools. It would appear no research has been carried out to try and establish to what extent peace education and conflict resolution issues have been included in the primary school curriculum. The purpose of this study was undertaken to explore how primary schools were addressing the issue of conflict transformation, management and peace building. This exploration was targeted at primary school syllabi, educational documents, and various literature on how schools are run.

### *Statement of the Problem*

There is a problem of inadequate coverage of conflict transformation, conflict management and peace building in the primary school curriculum of Zimbabwe. This is reflected in the lack of such materials in the training materials which were presented at workshops. Furthermore, if this material was available a report on the status of peace education in Zimbabwe could have been given at the University of Peace meeting. Conflict in Zimbabwe is multi-faceted ranging from violence during general elections to domestic violence. In schools, according to observations made by the researchers in their experience as teachers and heads of schools, there was a lot of bullying. There were also conflicts brought about by gender and tribal differences in the school setting. It was also observed that the influence of television violence spilled into the school environment. Management of conflict in the schools seemed to be handled by short fix solutions. This study was a baseline study aimed at analysing the current Zimbabwean primary school curriculum content and policy with a view to examine its relevance in laying a foundation for the acquisition of the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for conflict transformation, management and peace-building.

The study sought to explore the following sub problems:

- What content in the syllabi and policies addresses conflict transformation, management and peace building in the primary school?
- To what extent are the methodologies in the syllabi relevant for conflict transformation, management and peace education in the primary school?
- How do evaluation strategies address conflict transformation, management and peace building education?
- In what ways are primary school administrative procedures promotive of conflict transformation, management and peace building?

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### *Conceptual Framework*

From a sociological paradigm, the functionalist perspective of conflict has been that it is dysfunctional and hence it must be eliminated. Sellman (2003), however, views conflict as an inevitable aspect of organisational life. Such a view is in sync with those who believe that conflict should be managed prudently in order to achieve organisational goals. A definition by the Foundation Coalition (2003) sees conflict as “a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals.” In this case, conflict emanates from incompatibility over something between individuals or groups. Whatever paradigm is considered on the conceptualisation of conflict, what is perhaps pertinent is how conflict is managed. Conflict can either be destructive or constructive for the organisation depending on how it is resolved or managed. The various strategies adopted in conflict transformation and conflict management in any particular school will underpin efforts designed at peace building.

The conceptual framework of this paper recognised the multifarious interpretations of what conflict transformation and management and peace education entail. Lederach (1989) cited in Sadomba and Hlatshwayo (2012:58) views conflict transformation as a process “to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflicts as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in

human relations.”In this dimension, conflict transformation is aimed at managing the conflict situation to produce peaceful coexistence. Relations between staff members, between staff and administration as well as between students and staff should be guided by an appreciation that while conflict is inevitable, however it is within the means of everyone in the school to arrive at mutually beneficial solutions. The Dual Concerns theory espoused by Sellman (2003) buys into the above perception. In this theory, where both goals and relationships are highly regarded, conflict can be managed with resultant win-win outcomes for all parties involved. In this case, school management needs to play a delicate and complex role of ensuring that interpersonal relationships are compatible with institutional goals.

While the thrust of the paper was concerned with conflict transformation, however, peace education was tackled as a necessity for proactive framework for dealing with conflicts. Sellman (2003) posits that peace education programmes concerned with conflict resolution focus on social-behavioural symptoms of conflict as well as training people to resolve disputes through negotiation and mediation. This view finds relevance in the study. The paper also noted and acknowledged Danesh (2006) who visualises an integrative theory of peace in which peace is viewed as a psychological, social, political, ethical and spiritual state. This holistic view is in agreement with the idea of infusing peace education curriculum into various subjects of the primary school curriculum and in the process enhancing a universal approach to conflict resolution at a tender age (Stevahn, Kealy and Munger 2005). It is worth noting the preamble to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) constitution which states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed.” Consequently the study was carried out within a paradigm which espoused that peace could be cultivated through training the mind to respect differences and prioritise the concern for others over the concern for self. Goleman (1996) believes that if destructive tendencies can be learnt through socialisation then it was possible that constructive conflict resolution could be learnt as well.

### ***Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education Curriculum***

Curriculum is viewed in its broadest sense. This includes the content, methodologies employed, evaluation strategies and the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum deserves special consideration in view of the fact that the unwritten social relations between students in the school would appear critical when laying the foundation for peace education and conflict transformation.

The curriculum for conflict transformation, management and peace education has attracted diverse and interesting discourse by both theorists and practitioners. It must be realised that profound debate has emanated from the varied approaches peace education should utilise. Coleman and Deutsch (2007) see the approaches at five levels namely: the disciplinary, the curricular, the pedagogical, the cultural and the community. Townley (1999) believes conflict transformation programmes can utilise the following three approaches: skills training, curriculum integration and infusing the principles of conflict resolution into the school culture.

Cromwell’s (1999) four approaches appear to summarise the approaches commonly discussed in various literature on conflict and peace education. The first approach is the process curriculum which characterises conflict resolution as separate subject. The second is mediation programme in which mediators (whether adults or students) are trained to resolve conflicts as third party intermediaries. In the third approach, termed peaceable classrooms, conflict transformation is infused across all subjects taught in the classroom. Peaceable schools is the fourth approach which is built upon peaceable classrooms but extends to include everyone who constitutes the school community such as management, teachers, parents and other relevant stakeholders.

A wide array of content is built into peace education depending on the thrust each particular country or state wishes to take. Cromwell (1999) says that peace education should be made up of the following areas: community building; understanding conflict; perception (understanding different viewpoints); anger management and rules for fighting fair.

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Adebe, Gbesso and Nyawalo (2006) see the following areas as relevant for inclusion in a curriculum for conflict transformation, management and peace education: human rights education; education for nonviolent conflict transformation; education for social justice; multicultural education; education for sustainable development; governance and leadership education; personal and inner peace education as well as gender education. These topics are quite comprehensive and make up much of the curriculum content suggested in various literature on peace education.

Besides the above-stated areas, the United Nations (UN) includes the following as relevant for any curriculum content for peace education: poverty, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, culture and the role of the UN.

A United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) paper posits that the following values should be addressed in conflict resolution and peace education: building peace in the community; thinking critically and non-violently; respecting human dignity; discovering inner peace; thinking positively; caring for the planet; resolving conflict; being true to oneself; learning to live together and being compassionate and causing no harm.

Besides the content dimension, what is also pertinent is the appropriate methodology for handling conflict transformation, management and peace education curriculum in the classroom. In their analysis of the Zimbabwe Curriculum Policy of 2002 Chirimuuta and Chirimuuta (2012) observed that there was need for vibrant methodology. Abebe, Gbesso and Nyawalo (2006) observe that traditional passive lecture methodologies used in classrooms are in contradiction with the requirements of learner-centred (participatory, interactive and cooperative learning) approaches for peace education. Fountain (1999) concedes that learner friendly methods promote values and behaviours conducive to peace. She points out that participatory approaches build up cohesion, reduce bias and leads to the development of problem-solving skills among students. Amatruda (2006) notes that action techniques and psychodrama were quite effective in improving interactions among elementary pupils.

Fountain (1999) outlines the following as some of the participatory methodologies used by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in peace education programmes: cooperative group work; peer teaching; small group discussions; decision-making and consensus building exercises; negotiation; role play and simulations. The Austrian Centre for Citizenship in Education in Schools (2012) also see designing songs and collage art work as relevant for conflict transformation and conflict management. Such methods provide students with experiential learning necessary for utilisation in practical situations. Furthermore, Kang (2006) contends that methodology needs to be creative in order to develop a culture of peace among learners and in the process ensuring that children develop into adults with appropriate capacity to resolve conflict at all levels.

Assessment in peace education is a critical component of conflict transformation, management and peace education curriculum. In assessing peace education it is worth noting Harris's (2003) observation that peace educators should avoid extravagant claims that their efforts stop violence but rather should assess the effects of peace education on learners' attitudes, thought patterns, behaviours and knowledge gained. Fountain (1999) cites the following assessment methods as appropriate for peace education: interviews; focus groups; review of school records, observation, rating scales, questionnaires and surveys. These were found to link well with assessing changes in behaviour and attitudes. It would appear that formal examination methods used in primary schools are not favourable since these were mostly interested in written assessment.

With regards to classroom management and school administration, the researchers take a cue from Cromwell's (1999) fourth approach alluded to above. This approach entails building peaceable classrooms and peaceable schools where everyone who constitutes the school community are given a say in the what takes place within the classroom and within the school and hence creating democratic structures.

### **3. Methodology**

The study used a research design in the qualitative research paradigm. Documentary analysis was used to content review syllabi, policy documents and relevant literature. This was done by the researchers who were practitioners in the primary school environment for a long time. The choice of the methodology was premised on interrogating the content of primary school curriculum as a precursor to field based research. The results of the analysis were descriptive.

### **4. Findings of the study**

As pointed out earlier, issues to do with the curriculum were viewed taking a holistic view of the curriculum. It was against this background that selected syllabi from the primary school were reviewed. Selected administration documents like the gender resource book; the Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999; training manuals for School Development Committees (SDCs, 2010) and other relevant literature were analysed. The findings were organised following the sub problems that is content, methodology, assessment and administration.

#### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the HIV/AIDS Education Curriculum***

The HIV/AIDS programme runs from Grades 4 to 7. It does not have a syllabus document but a scope and sequence chart. This is what was analysed. One of the topics that was found to be relevant to peace and conflict resolution education was “Self-esteem” which covered Grades 4 to 6. Some of the sub topics under this theme were: “People are different.” The topic “Relationships” for Grades 4 and 5 covered sub topics such as “What are friends for?” and “What is my role?” The topic “Values” for Grades 4 to7 covered sub topics such as “What is good neighbourliness?” and “Everyone is important.” The topic “Decision-making” for Grades 4 to7 covered sub topics like “When and how to say no.” and “What activities put my life in danger?” Other topics covered included substance abuse, facts and attitudes about HIV/AIDS as well as sexual abuse. These areas were found to tie in neatly with themes covered in conflict resolution and peace education.

#### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the Social Studies Curriculum***

The aims of the syllabus were found to be relevant for peace education. Some of the topics included the following: focus upon the child; development of spirit of national consciousness and patriotism; gaining insight into the organisation; origins and culture; interdependence of one’s community; developing responsible attitudes towards citizenship; knowing about life in selected communities and countries; comparing and contrasting with one’s own and relating the past to the present.

The scope of the syllabus covers issues such as: developing children mentally, spiritually, and physically; bringing awareness of the interdependence of man to the natural and man-made environment; bringing awareness for respect of the worth of an individual and an awareness that personal welfare can best be realised through the welfare of society as a whole.

The Social Studies syllabus is intended to develop the following attitudes and values: commitment to hard work; desire to be self-reliant; pride and love for one’s country and placing interest of the community first before self.

#### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the Mathematics Curriculum***

The following aims seem to relate to issues of conflict transformation, management and peace building: to think and express oneself clearly and logically; developing attributes of cooperation, confidence,

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honesty, neatness and self-reliance; developing an inquiring mind through experimentation and enabling children to interact more meaningfully with their environment.

### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the English Curriculum***

The English syllabus had components such as relating, classifying, describing and expressing needs and desires. Skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing were found to be relevant communication skills needed in any peace and conflict transformation education programme.

### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, management and Peace Education in the Religious and Moral Education Curriculum***

The Religious and Moral Education syllabus contains the following areas believed to be relevant for peace education: understanding their own religion and traditions; developing their own belief systems; knowing about religions they are likely to encounter in Zimbabwe so that they understand their differences and appreciate their similarities; seeing the relationship between religion and morals so that they are not understood in isolation; respecting people whose beliefs differ from theirs; develop a spirit of tolerance and cooperation among the various religious groups and work out their belief systems and moral behaviour so that they translate religious and moral principles into positive actions which will help them build a harmonious Zimbabwean society. The Grade 1 and 2 themes relevant to peace education include the following: living and growing; belonging and relating; discovering and appreciating; working and praying; forgiving and reconciling; listening and communicating as well as believing and doing.

The syllabus also shows the content and moral values to be developed. As an example, under the theme, forgiving and reconciling, content is provided as: why, when, how often we should forgive; God is forgiving us as we forgive others; saying sorry and meaning it as well as being forgiven and being reconciled. The moral values were stated as forgiveness, reconciliation and friendliness.

From Grade 3 to 6 the thematic approach is not used instead opting for an objectives approach. The thematic approach is resumed in Grade 7 and it was gratifying to note that most of the themes were quite relevant for conflict resolution and peace education. Such themes include the following: me; me and my family; me and my friends; me and my standards as well as me and my time. (Religious and Moral Education Syllabus, Grades 4 to 7, 1987)

### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, management and Peace Education in the Shona Syllabus Curriculum***

Like the English syllabus, the Shona syllabus emphasizes the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing all relevant for communication during conflict resolution. In Grade 7 the skill of speaking is developed using such themes like giving advice on problems people are facing; giving advice in a good manner; asking questions about different issues and for Grade 6 debating on topical issues. (Bumbiro Rezvidzidzo ZveChishona RePuraimari 2006)

### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the Music Syllabus***

In Music, the aims that were consistent with conflict resolution and peace education were noted as follows: developing a well balanced social, emotional, artistic, intellectual, physical, moral and personal qualities; experiencing music as an expression of daily life and culture by placing Zimbabwean music in its socio-cultural context; developing socialist values through music and promoting a world-consciousness as well as respect for other countries and their cultures through music. (Music Syllabus, 1989)

### ***Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the Environmental Science Syllabus***

In Environmental Science, the aims that foster conflict resolution and peace-building were as follows: developing an awareness of the scientific relationship between people and the environment as well as developing an inquiring mind and the ability to solve problems. (Environmental Science Syllabus, 1994)

### *Aspects of Conflict Transformation, Management and Peace Education in the Physical Education Syllabus*

The aims of the Physical Education Syllabus which were found to promote conflict resolution and peace education were: learning how to cooperate with each other and working in groups; developing self control and confidence; developing an awareness and appreciation of the differences among people and the development of moral values and positive attitudes.

Relevant objectives include the following: becoming independent learners by problem solving, evaluating, modifying and consolidating through experience; acquiring social skills by participating in activities as an individual and in small groups as well as observing the conventions of fair play, honesty, competition and good sporting behaviour.

In the actual content, there were such issues as developing work in cooperation with a partner in body management (Grade 3); evaluating own and others performance and suggesting ways of improving (Grade 7). In game skills, one is expected to carry out different roles as a member of a team and applying principles of good sporting behaviour to all activities, practising group cooperation through playing various traditional games (Primary School Physical Education Syllabus, 1997).

## 4. Findings on Assessment

To best analyse assessment, there is need to view the specification grids of the various areas taught in the primary school. The specification grids are used in coming up with items for test set every term and at year-end for each grade level. The Mathematics specification grid is shown below:

**Table 1: Mathematics Specification Grid**

<b>DOMAINS</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Problem Solving</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>TOPICS</b>					
<b>Number</b>	2	3	2	0	7
<b>Measurement and Shapes</b>	4	6	6	2	18
<b>Operations</b>	2	9	9	2	22
<b>Relationships</b>	0	1	1	1	3
<b>Totals</b>	8	19	18	5	50

For English, the grid is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: English Specification Grid**

	<b>Easy</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Vocabulary	7	8	7	22
Sentence structure	2	4	2	8
Language use	2	10	2	14
Punctuation and spelling		1	1	2
<b>Totals</b>	11	23	12	46

In addition to the above grid, there is Paper 2 consisting of Section A containing compositions of 20 marks and Section B with 10 marks for a comprehension passage.

Shona, like English, is assessed in two papers. Paper one, composed of multiple choice questions, is made up of comprehension (60%), language use (20%) and language register (20%). Paper two, with essay type questions, consists of compositions (60%) and comprehension (40%).

For English and Shona, Paper two questions require self expression by pupils and so have the potential to assess knowledge, skills and attitudes on peace education and conflict transformation and management.

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The General Paper examination also has two papers. Both papers are assessed in the following manner: 28% for Religious and Moral Education; 32% for Social Studies and 40% for Environmental Science. The assessment of subjects such as Physical Education, Music and Art is continuous assessment based on achieving learning outcomes. Comments on pupil performance normally consist of general comments made on end of term reports. No formal examination of the above mentioned subjects is made in the Zimbabwean Primary School examination system.

### ***Findings on Primary School Administration***

Authorities on peaceable schools indicate that it is necessary to create a democratic atmosphere in schools for conflict transformation and management to thrive (Sharra, 2006). It has been found out that the communities should embrace democracy in its operations. The Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999) saw the need for decentralisation in order to provide space for greater grassroots decision making with immediate relevance at the point of service delivery. Zvobgo (1997) also acknowledged the bureaucratic climates that pervaded school environments and noted that such climates do not maximise the full potential of school personnel but actually lead to frustrations. In fact a baseline study carried out by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (1996) in conjunction with UNICEF to determine the status of managerial skills of primary school heads found out that there was a widely held perception that a culture of dictatorial tendency existed in the Zimbabwean primary school system. Zvobgo (1997) contends that this scenario is reinforced by top-down chain of command and system of administration by inflexible mandates from the higher levels of authority enforced with harsh consequences for any form of dissent.

It could be with hindsight of the above situation that the Ministry of Education embarked on nation-wide staff development workshops for school heads and School Development Committee members (SDCs) in 2010. An analysis of the Handbook for School Development Committees (2010) produced for these workshops reveals a lot of potential for successful implementation of peace education in schools. Four of the chapters are devoted to the following topics: child friendly schools; managing conflict; team work and gender equity in schools. Unfortunately workshops of this nature were only carried out once and yet there was need for continuity when considering that SDC members are elected on an annual basis.

An analysis of the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) shows that aspects of peaceable schools were recommended. The report advocated issues such as unhu/ubuntu (humanism) , decentralisation, constructive conflict management, friendly school environments and the need for the curriculum to be relevant to the practical world.

On gender, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in conjunction with UNICEF produced a gender resource handbook for teachers. The handbook was produced after a study carried in 2005 had found out that primary school textbooks were not gender sensitive (Ministry of Education Gender Resource Book for Teachers, 2000). The handbook has six chapters devoted to topics such as work in and around the home; innate abilities; social behaviour characteristics; access, control and ownership; occupations, careers and professions; use of language. All these areas were found to be relevant for peace education and conflict resolution.

## **5. Discussion**

Discussion was tackled under five areas namely General Paper subjects, Languages, Mathematics, assessment and school administration.

### ***General Paper Subjects***

Subjects considered in this area were Social Studies, Environmental Science, Religious and Moral Education, HIV/AIDS Education, Music and Physical Education. Overall it was discovered that these subjects contained a wide variety of topics that were applicable to the integrated teaching of peace

education and conflict resolution. Social Studies appealed quite well to peace issues such as multicultural education, governance and leadership. An interesting observation is that in Nigeria peace education was actually a topic found in the Social Studies syllabus and hence was examinable (Akudolu, 2006). HIV/AIDS Education tackled some issues on human rights especially on child abuse. The topic “self esteem” was especially relevant for developing peace education topic on personal and inner peace. Religious and Moral Education topics were quite appropriate for including peace issues like social justice and nonviolent conflict transformation.

Environmental Science was found to be a better platform for handling education for sustainable development since there was encouragement for a useful relationship between man and his environment. The scientific method with its emphasis on problem solving approach would do well to develop skills for effective conflict resolution.

Physical Education could be relevant for multicultural education since teamwork and cooperation in team games were found to be paramount. However, due to the competitive nature of sporting activities the subject could provide a platform for developing conflict resolution skills. Music as an expressive discipline can be used to infuse personal and inner peace topics where students are encouraged to articulate peace education themes.

Overallly General Paper subjects provide the best platforms for utilising the integrative approach. Most of the methodologies stated in the syllabi are participatory and can be adapted to enhance the teaching and learning of peace and conflict resolution education. For Social Studies, a concentric approach was adopted which encouraged methods such as discovery, projects, drama and case studies. In Environmental Science, the pupil-centred approach with emphasis on hands-on activities was quite appropriate for articulating peace education skills and attitudes.

While most areas in conflict resolution and peace education were embedded in the General Paper subjects, however it would appear that the themes of gender and human rights education were not well covered. Hence peace education materials need to be developed in order to cover areas where syllabuses are not adequate. Utilisation could be made of efforts carried out by UNESCO (2003) which produced a peace education kit for Zimbabwean schools. However there would be need to harness the efforts of education stakeholders to ensure that materials produced are relevant for the varied groups of people in Zimbabwe.

### ***Languages***

The skills of listening, speaking, reading writing can all be used to express peace education issues. Communication skills are critical in peace education. The need to use the correct language register enables the effective resolution and management of conflicts. The use of interactive methodologies might very much depend on the quality of the teacher in terms of his/her ability to utilise methods to attain the desired effect. The teacher’s training background is of necessity if one considers that Zimbabwe has a mixed bag of teachers with some being highly qualified while others cannot cope with handling emerging issues such as peace education. Assessment of languages might fall short of requirements since in Zimbabwe writing skills are assessed more frequently at the expense of oral skills deemed necessary for assessing behaviour changes in peace education.

### ***Mathematics***

The Mathematics syllabus contains aims and skills relevant for problem solving and this has already been seen to be suitable for use in situations requiring conflict transformation. The utilisation of facts and figures for accuracy is also necessary since conflicts need to be resolved in the presence of adequate data.

### ***Assessment***

Findings on the specification grids appear to show that written assessment is given greater prominence over oral assessment especially in those areas already identified by the study as critical towards the development of conflict resolution and peace education skills. While acknowledging that written examinations have a role to play in any form of assessment, however the utilisation of participatory, experiential and interactive methodologies would seem to favour oral assessment with its potential for self expression.

Formal examination is nonexistent in practical subjects such as Physical Education, Music and Art and yet these subjects, as seen in the findings, are critical in provision of skills necessary for conflict resolution and peace education. In the normal practice of teaching and coupled with the preponderance of schools on higher pass rates, teachers develop attitudes and behaviours that seem to support the notion that what is not examined is not taught.

### ***Administration***

There was general perception that the administrative climates in primary schools did not provide sufficient space for self expression (Zvobgo 1997; Ministry of Education and UNICEF, 1996; Zimbabwe Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training, C.T.Nziramanga 1999). If these sentiments are correct, then it would be tough to launch successful teaching and learning of peace and conflict resolution education. There was recognition by the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (2010) of such gap hence the training of SDCs to ensure friendly schools.

## **6. Conclusions**

Generally most of the syllabi contained aspects of peace and conflict transformation and management education especially in the aims, objectives and content of the syllabi. Subjects that make up the General Paper had the most potential for infusing conflict resolution and peace education into the primary school curriculum. However most of the syllabi lacked a clear inclusion of human rights and gender education. Methodologies stated in all the syllabi reviewed were participatory, interactive and experiential and hence were quite relevant for the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of peace and conflict resolution.

Assessment and evaluation were found to be examination oriented to a large extent and this was not appropriate for conflict resolution and peace education where assessment was concerned with denoting changes in behaviour and attitudes. Even within the framework of written examinations, subjects such as Physical Education, Music, Art and Home Economics were not assessed in the terminal Grade Seven examinations and would receive scant attention in teaching and learning.

Content analysis of policies and literature showed that on the whole, the administrative environments of primary schools were generally bureaucratic and dictatorial and this did not augur well for the teaching and learning of conflict resolution and peace education which required democratic and accommodative climates.

There were no materials, either documents or policies, directly linked with the promotion of peace and conflict resolution education in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Overall, it must be recognised that any curriculum so chosen should appeal to the local conditions taking into consideration the cultural, religious, social, economic and political environment. Imposition of conflict resolution and peace education curriculum can lead to tissue rejection. Indeed Tyler cited in Sellman (2003) postulates that conflict manifests itself as a product of interdependent contextual forces hence the need to be aware of the cultural and historical context of the local environment when resolving conflict.

## 7. Recommendations

- There was need for clear public policies on the inclusion of peace education in the primary school curriculum. Consequently school administrators, teachers, pupils and communities would need training on the role of peace and conflict resolution education in schools.
- The integrative approach that utilises existing syllabi was recommended for the introduction of peace and conflict resolution education in the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum.
- Administrative procedures need to allow free flow of ideas and to promote communication channels through the institutionalisation of democratic principles.
- Gender and human rights issues need to be clearly articulated in all subjects.
- Peace education teaching and learning materials need to be developed for use in schools.
- Further research was needed to assess the extent to which aspects of peace education are delivered in schools and a content analysis of the extent to which conflict resolution and peace education is being attended to in early childhood development (ECD).

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