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PROMOTING PEACE AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT: *It is an increasingly acknowledged fact that one of the most effective ways universities in war-affected countries can be functionally relevant to the everyday needs and challenges of their immediate environment is by promoting peacebuilding through peace education. This paper explores the role of universities in fostering peace education in diverse post-conflict and conflict-prone countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the research investigates the contending models and strategies (notably the Bradford Model and the Centralized Unitary Model) of conflict-sensitive peace education in the context of universities in post-conflict and volatile societies in Africa. The study also analyses the problems and challenges associated with promoting peace education in Sub-Saharan Africa and recommends policy-relevant intervention measures designed to strengthen the process. Data for the study have been generated from secondary sources, as well as a raft of conflict intervention, regional security and peacebuilding projects the researcher has taken part in across a number of conflict-prone and war-affected African countries (notably, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and South Sudan).*

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities have traditionally been concerned with imparting specialized knowledge and skills in various fields of study capable of helping beneficiaries to make useful contributions to societal development and also earn meaningful livelihood from a legitimate occupation. There is increasing interest in the role of higher education in post-conflict societies, and the potential contribution it can make to long-term peacebuilding (British Council 2013: 37).

From the experience of diverse research and capacity-building projects completed in recent years in a number of post-conflict countries in Africa like Liberia (2005 - 2008), Sierra Leone (2003 – 2008), DRC (2006 – 2012), northern Uganda (2005 – 2012), Burundi (2010 – 2012), and South Sudan (2011 – 2013), it is apparent that key stakeholders such as the state, society and the private and voluntary sectors have a twofold expectation about the role of universities, namely that universities should: a) provide employment-relevant education and training and (b) shed part of their ivory tower detachment and aloofness to reach out, and be functionally relevant to the everyday challenges and needs of their host communities (Omeje 2009; *LUGUSI Network Newsletter* 2010-2012; Ewusi 2014).

The conventional approach in many post-conflict societies like Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Northern Uganda, where the idea of universities playing a role in peacebuilding has been embraced, is to confine such a role to the social sciences and humanities, faculties where new courses such as peace and conflict studies are offered. Consequently and too often, the idea of conflict-sensitive education and peacebuilding is further limited to students enrolled in some of the new emerging courses like peace studies, conflict resolution, security studies,

governance and leadership studies, and so forth. This restrictive approach ostensibly misses the mark as it tends to exclude the vast majority of university students enrolled in mainstream social sciences (e.g. sociology, political science and economics) and the considerably non-cognate courses such as the natural and applied sciences, from the vital knowledge and skills of conflict-sensitive education and peacebuilding.

Research has shown that transitional societies and countries emerging from war have strong likelihood of relapsing to armed conflicts within the first five to ten years, and the youth, including jobless graduates of tertiary education are usually the core conflict drivers or protagonists (Collier 2008; Francis 2012). This is why it is eminently important that higher education institutions in post-conflict countries play deliberate and significant roles in promoting conflict-sensitive education, which broadly is the type of education aimed to understand, deconstruct and transform deep-rooted structures of prejudice, suspicion and hostilities in a society, as well as attitudes that tend to perceive a recourse to violence as legitimate and to maximize the possibilities for peace (ESU 2011; Brown 2012). This paper explores the contending models and strategies of conflict-sensitive higher education (notably the Bradford Model and the Centralized Unitary Model) in the context of post-conflict and volatile conflict-prone societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the problems and challenges associated with promoting peace education in the region. Based on an analytical reflection on the experiences of trying to rebuild many fractured societies educationally, the paper posits that in volatile regions and countries emerging from war, donor-interests need to go beyond funding the development and mainstreaming of new university programs in peace and conflict studies to include robustly investing in need assessment for local educational and training priorities, program assessment, staff training and capacitation of higher education regulatory bodies.

II. PEACE EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Peace education has been defined as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youths and adults to prevent conflict and violence (both overt and structural), resolve conflict peacefully, and create the conditions conducive to peace at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national, international levels (Fountain 1999: 1; UNESCO 2002). Training people about various aspects of peace and the strategies for peacebuilding is one of the key ways of rebuilding, stabilizing, and transforming a society that has been through devastating conflict.

Whilst modern peace education emerged in the west as a consequence of World War II and the correlated events of the Cold War, proactive peace education in Sub-Saharan Africa began in the 1990s following the end of the Cold War and what was popularly known as "the African crisis" (Arrighi 2002: 5). The African crisis was a term coined in the 1980s for describing the series of convoluted developmental disaster that beset many African economies in the 1980s and 1990s, aggravated by the World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), and culminating in the breakdown of state authorities and armed conflicts. Prior to the end of the Cold War, a limited number of studies of African conflicts were undertaken by different policy think tanks (mostly development studies-oriented e.g. CODESRIA), academic researchers within the various mainstream social sciences and allied disciplines, as well as area studies research centers and departments in the west. Like in most other fields of study offered in the continent, the vast majority of the subject specialists that pioneered African peace and conflict research were Africans and Africanists of expatriate origin who were mainly trained in the west. The fact that these pioneers were mainly trained in the west meant that they were imbued with non-African (western) conceptual tools, imaginations of reality, outlooks, and research methodologies, a

phenomenon that has continued to vitiate the development of a regional pool of expertise and indigenous capacity for research (Brock-Utne 1998). Significantly, this epistemological and methodological limitation is not exclusive to peace research; it is a challenge that cuts across the entire spectrum of higher education in Africa and partly linked to the [neo]colonial foundation and heritage of African educational systems.

There are a number of challenges to peace education in African higher education such as the general suspicion associated with the western origin and push for peace education (i.e. that peace education is subtly designed to foist western cultures and ideologies on Africa), inadequate and weak curriculum, paucity of requisite expertise, and weak capacity amongst available scholars. Other challenges include shortage of research and teaching materials (relevant books, journals, libraries, etc.), and limited employment and career development opportunities for subject-area graduates and practitioners – a problem that is clearly linked to the weak absorptive capacities of African economies and the short-term nature of many donor-driven projects that create jobs in the peace and conflict industry (Francis 2008; Alimba 2013).

For peace education to be effective, experts argue that it has to be comprehensively planned, embedded and implemented both within and outside the different levels of the educational sector. Hence, whilst the formal educational sector comprising the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels are recognized as key to a vibrant peace education, many experts further recognize that in order to register the maximum impact in society, peace education should also integrate the informal and semi-formal training sectors. The informal sectors would, for instance, comprise the role of institutions like the family, religious bodies, mass media, and community-based agencies as channels and networks of political socialization and, by deliberate design, education-for-peace. The semi-formal sector would include the role of special short-term training and capacity-building programs such as workshops and seminars in generating, spreading, and strengthening a peace culture.

To a large extent, peace education in Africa seems to be focused on the formal education sector, especially the level of tertiary education. At other levels of formal education, traditional citizenship or civic education tends to be more prevalent, although in many post-conflict societies like Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Liberia, and Uganda citizenship education (sometimes structured as part of Social Studies) at primary and post-primary levels have significant lessons in non-violent methods of dispute settlement and peacebuilding (*LUGUSI Network Newsletter* 2010-2012; WANEP 2012).

Given the proliferation of structures of conflict in Africa (both structural and active violence), the limitations of peace education must be clearly underscored. It will be practically misleading and futile to hinge the solution to African conflicts on peace education which seems to be one of the common mistakes made by some experts and practitioners. As important as it is, well-structured and effectively delivered comprehensive peace education cannot be a substitute for political and economic reforms, democratization and good governance. Many independent and authoritative research studies have demonstrated that effective political, constitutional, and economic reforms – including the skills and motivation to take advantage of the benefits of reforms - are some of the indispensable conditions to sustainable peace, stability, and development on the continent (Moyo 2009; Ascher & Mirovitskaya 2013).

III. THE STRUCTURAL IMPEDIMENTS TO PEACE AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE EDUCATION

One of the strongest impediments to peace in many African countries, especially in volatile conflict-prone states and countries emerging from armed conflicts is the legacy of violence, which actively feeds a deep-rooted perception among antagonistic communities and large sections of the populations that violence is a legitimate instrument for conducting public affairs and pursuit of goals. Social psychologists have shown that when people are exposed to a prolonged culture of violence and armed conflict, they are left with a twisted worldview that tends to perceive use of violence, aggressive behavior and resort to disorder as a normal way of life (Kelman 2010). Many studies have shown how virulent patterns of neopatrimonial politics have at different conjunctures produced or reinforced the culture of political violence in the African fragile, weak, failed and collapsed states (Rotberg 2004; Bach 2011; Ewusi 2014). Abu Bakarr Bah (2011) has specifically used the example of Sierra Leone to show how the processes of state decay, marked by the systematic deterioration of the state's capacity to deliver positive political goods, could precipitate a descent to war and feed a culture of violence. "State decay in Sierra Leone," according to Bah (2011: 200), "was manifested in economic decline, corruption, dilapidation of state institutions and infrastructure, and breakdown of the rule of law." The consequences of perpetuating a culture of violence in society are more blatant for children and people who have lived all the cognitive stages of their lives under conditions of embedded hostilities, abuse and armed violence.

An analysis of the embedded culture of violence in many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa certainly makes greater sense against the backdrop of Africa's population dynamics. In terms geo-demographic base factor, Africa's population has witnessed a rapid increase since the 1970s. Africa's population has grown from about 221 million in 1950 to 408 million in 1975, 796 million in 2000 and 1.1 billion in 2013 (UNFPA 2010; World Bank 2013). Among the many factors that have contributed to Africa's population growth rate (e.g. decreasing infant and maternal mortality, gains made in combating infectious diseases and HIV, etc.), the most significant is the fact that there is a large number of women who, under circumstances of rapid cultural, socio-demographic and economic change, have no access to and opportunities for family planning (UNFPA 2010; Zinkina & Korotayev 2014). Under conditions of extreme poverty and prolonged conflict as is the case in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, high population growth rate has been tempered with low life expectancy at birth (the average in Sub-Saharan Africa being about 55 years in 2012) and a worrying youth bulge as there is a large percentage of unemployed young people in the population (BBC 2009; World Bank 2013). In most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, at least 50% of the population is below the age of 25 years, and a further 43% of the population is below the age of 15 (UNFPA 2010; PRB 2013).

The implication of the rapid demographic change in Sub-Saharan Africa for the embedded culture of violence profile is that in most volatile conflict-prone and war-affected countries and regions such as South Sudan, Darfur (western Sudan), northern Uganda, Eastern DRC, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Nigeria and, to a lesser extent, post-war Sierra Leone and Liberia, well over half of the population of people in these countries or sub-national regions have more or less lived their entire lives under a highly dysfunctional culture of violence. The rebel war waged by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda lasted for 20 years (1986 – 2006). The liberation war in South Sudan lasted for nearly 40 years (1955 – 1972 and 1983 – 2005), and the country has once more relapsed to armed conflict since December 2013. The civil war in Darfur has been fought since 2003. The civil war in Liberia lasted for 14 years (1989 – 2003). The war in Eastern DRC has gone

on since 1996. The political histories of Chad and CAR have been characterized by violent military coups and repeated relapse to armed conflict since independence. Similarly, since the end of the Biafra civil war in 1970, Nigeria's history has been marred by repeated military coups, prolonged dictatorship, as well as endemic structures of communal violence and militia insurgencies in different sub-national regions leading to a prolonged state of "no war, no peace" in the country (Obi 2009: 132).

A major aggravating structural factor is the proliferation of micro-communal conflicts within and between states, most of which have a protracted history that dates back to (pre-)colonial times. A large number of the micro-communal conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa are linked to ambiguities surrounding the issue of land tenure in many states (notably issues about who has the right to own, use, and expropriate lands); the age-old tradition of cattle raiding and blood feuding between the youth of various affected tribes and communities (notably in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa). The cattle-raiding tradition is, among other things, sometimes linked to the customary requirement of large number of cattle from a potential bridegroom as payment for bride price in traditional marriage ceremonies among some local communities (Omeje & Hepner 2013). The fact that many feuding ethnic communities straddle between national borders occasionally leads to cross-border mobilization of ethnic combatants and retreating and arming of fighting forces. Other micro-communal conflict factors include the high incidence of cattle rustling and destruction of farm crops associated with pastoralists' herding of their livestock into sedentary farming communities, as well as the rapid proliferation of small arms and light weapons among hostile communities. It suffices to say that when violence becomes entrenched as a means of conducting and settling political affairs, it inadvertently robs off on the dominant culture of politics, leaving behind a convoluted culture in which resort to armed conflict becomes an acceptable framework for political action and behavior (Jackson & Jackson 1997).

Both within and in the aftermath of the conflict life span, the observed embedded culture of violence is what largely shapes the mentality, attitudes, temperament, behavioral patterns and idiosyncrasies of large sections of the populations. It is further solidified and perpetuated by (in)formal processes of political socialization such as the family, religious and cultural institutions, mass media, political parties, etc. The practical challenge of peace education in these circumstances is how to foremost deconstruct the endemic culture of violence and in its place construct and embed a culture of peace. It is apparent that peace education planners in most of these countries do not appreciate the deep-rootedness of a virulent violence culture among their populace and communities, a foundational knowledge considered prerequisitial for designing a comprehensive strategy for cultural transformation through education-for-peace.

IV. THE "BRADFORD MODEL" OF PEACE AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

It will suffice to use this section to reflect on what I have for, analytical convenience, called the "Bradford Model of Peace Education."[1] I will define the Bradford Model of Peace Education as a substantially consultative, flexible, integrative, participatory, context-specific, and stakeholder-centered model of curriculum planning and implementation in peace education at tertiary school levels. The model has been developed from a raft of externally-funded education-for-peace projects I have taken part in developing and implementing since 2004 at both the Africa Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (later renamed the John & Elnora Ferguson Centre for African Studies), University of Bradford in the UK and the United States International University in Nairobi, Kenya. A few of the projects had already

been initiated before I joined the Africa Centre at Bradford University. The core of these peace education-related projects has taken place in war-affected and volatile conflict-prone countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, DRC, Nigeria and Kenya. The projects have been variously-funded by the DFID/British Council, the West Minster Foundation for Democracy, and the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Trust. I have also been part of similar practical peacebuilding capacity-building projects (as opposed to university-based peace education-related projects) in Nigeria, Burundi, South Sudan and Rwanda. Based on my involvement in various peace education capacity-building program development and implementation, the Bradford model of peace education can be summarized as distinguished by certain systematic operational and practical rubrics outlined in the Table below:

Table 1: Activity Features of the Bradford Model of Peace Education Implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa since 2002

1	Stakeholder consultation and project development.
2	Developing new study and training programs in peace education-related fields through curriculum development and review workshops.
3	Strengthening existing course provisions in cognate disciplines such as Political Science, Sociology and History/African Studies for the teaching of peace education-centered topics.
4	Training-of-trainers' workshops.
5	Provision of resource materials, mostly relevant textbooks.
6	Short-term staff development visits between the University of Bradford and the African partner institutions, as well as exchange visits between African partner Universities.
7	Capacity-building in research/publication and promoting of collaborative research and publications among lecturers in participating universities.

The intellectual and epistemological foundation of the model is the principle that peace is knowable (literally "discernible" by subject experts through research), teachable (through knowledge, values and skills impartation), and learnable (internalization of what is imparted), which can ultimately change the attitudes and behaviors of people in a desired non-violent direction and impacting the entire social structure, cultural norms, and institutions of society. Having been through years of turbulent conflict, many paradigm proponents and sympathizers argue, war-affected and volatile conflict-prone countries such as those of Sub-Saharan Africa ostensibly have the greatest need for peace and human rights education (Francis 2009; Alimba 2013). These philosophical principles are more or less at the heart of modern peace education, and it is a position that many structuralist and post-structuralist intellectuals have problem with[2] – a debate I do not intend to pursue in this paper. Below is a discussion of some of the elements of the Bradford Model as implemented in the case countries. In post-war Sierra Leone, the Bradford model of capacity-building project we executed aimed to promote peace education in universities; and peace education, human rights and democratic governance community policing in the security sector (2003 – 2008). In post-war Liberia, on the other hand, we worked on a different project aimed to re-invent higher education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding (2005 – 2008). The rationale was that in the post-war dispensation, Sierra Leone and Liberian universities and security forces (mostly the police) should be enabled to play functional roles in "building the peace by initiating or participating in various national and community-based peacebuilding projects, e.g. security sector reforms (SSR), disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of rebels, child soldiers and ex-combatants; confidence-building measures

between the civilian populations and security forces, etc." (*University of Bradford Peace Studies News,* 2005 & 2007: 4-5).

Hence, besides universities, the police forces were specifically targeted for these capacity-building projects because of their record of systematic violations of human rights, their apparent lack of knowledge of basic human rights principles, the history of their involvement in anti-democratic activities, and their destructive roles in civil wars and violent conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia (*University of Bradford Peace Studies News,* 2005 & 2007:4-5).

Using the Bradford Model of peace education, we sought to achieve the capacity-building project goals in the two West African countries between 2003 and 2008 by undertaking the following activities:

1) Convening a number of curriculum development and review workshops (CDRWs) to develop new study programs in two Liberian universities - University of Liberia in Monrovia and Cuttington University in Gbanga (Diploma and BA degree programs in Peace and Conflict resolution) and three Sierra Leonean universities - Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone (Diploma/BA degree courses in Peace & Conflict Studies); Njala University College (Diploma & MA degrees in Peace and Development Studies) and Milton Maggai College of Education & Technology (Diploma/BA degree in Peace Education). The CDRWs emphasized in their pedagogical contents an integrative blend of the global/international and the local/regional realities, as well as the "theory – praxis" nexus.

2) Strengthening existing course provisions in cognate disciplines (like Political Science, Sociology, History/African Studies, Psychology and Law) to teach practical modules and topics in peace, conflict, security and conflict resolution. We had to develop a number of stand-alone undergraduate and MA degree courses in peace and conflict studies which we mainstreamed into the existing curricula in the cognate disciplines. Some of the course modules we developed had such titles as: The Sociology of Peace & Conflict in International Relations, The African Practices and Mechanisms of Conflict Management, Methods of Conflict Analysis, Peace and Security Issues in Africa, Leadership and the Culture of Peace; Conflict Prevention, Peacekeeping and Peace Consolidation; Humanitarian Interventions and Conflicts in Africa, and Conflict Resolution and Development: Applied Skills.

3) Involvement of the West Yorkshire Police in England in the development/review of community policing strategies in the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and Liberian National Police (LNP). In addition, we facilitated the establishment of a staff development visit of selected SLP and LNP officers to the Bishopgarth West Yorkshire Police Training and Development Centre in Wakefield. The focus of the training programs in Wakefield and similar capacity-building workshops we organized in Freetown and Monrovia was mainly on strengthening "Community Policing" and "Police – Public relations."

4) Training of Trainers' Workshops: Organizing specialized training workshops on the core values and pedagogy of education-for-peace for lecturers in the Social Sciences, Law other related disciplines crucial to peace education. In Liberia, instructors and senior officers of the LNP were invited to these workshops while in Sierra Leone we organized series of parallel workshops for instructors in the SLP training school.

5) Provision of resource materials, mostly relevant textbooks to support teaching, research and learning in the beneficiary institutions and police academies. To each of the participating universities and police academies, we bought and supplied between 40 and 60 relevant textbooks. In each occasion, we generated a list of books from the local project co-ordinators in the Sub-Saharan Africa institutions and using the

resources of Bradford University were able to mutually amend the lists and provide more up-to-date books than they had requested.

6) Short-term staff development visits between the University of Bradford and the Sierra Leonean and Liberian partner institutions to promote curriculum participation and learning. Two persons from each African partner institution were usually invited to Bradford for staff development capacity-building opportunity for periods of less than two weeks in each project year to help them acquire a first-hand exposure to the Bradford University program, consult with relevant experts, audit lectures of interest to them, use library resources and photocopy relevant materials, and also to present public seminars to students/lectures broadly on the war-to-peace transition and educational conditions in their country.

7) Promoting collaborative research and publications amongst lecturers in participating universities. A number of university-level readers were published through these various projects, the most notable perhaps being *War to Peace Transition: Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding in Liberia* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2009). Newsletters and periodicals were also published to document and disseminate the achievements, best practices and challenges of the projects (*Department of Peace Studies Annual Reports*, 2004 – 2008).

Elsewhere in Uganda and Nigeria, the Africa Centre executed some more or less similar projects in partnership with different local universities and other stakeholders. In Uganda, for instance, we developed a triangular partnership for capacity-building in peace education involving the University of Bradford (Africa Center), two Ugandan-based universities (Makerere University and Mbarara University for Science and technology [MUST]), and a Kampala-based NGO – Advocate Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE). The project was originally funded by the British Council/DFID in 2003/2004 to help strengthen the African partner universities' capacity for postgraduate degree training programs in Human Rights, Peace and Conflict Studies and Peace and Development Studies (*Department of Peace Studies Annual Report* 2004: 7). This triangular network, originally known by the acronym MACOMBA Link, was later expanded in 2006 (courtesy of the Ferguson Trust grant) to include five additional Ugandan universities (Nkozi Catholic University, Islamic University, Gulu University, Mbale University, and Kampala University) to help them develop or strengthen their capacities for different aspects of peace education, the notable additional area of thematic focus being Religion and Peace Studies (*University of Bradford Peace Studies News* 2006: 14). In Nigeria, we worked closely with the Centre for Peace and conflict Management (CECOMPS) at the University of Jos between 2004 and 2005 to develop a new Postgraduate Diploma program in Peace Studies and Conflict Management, which became the foundation for a Master's degree program in Conflict and Peace Studies later to be introduced by CECOMPS in 2008 (*Department of Peace Studies Annual Report* 2004: 6; CECOMPS 2007: 1).

In the DRC, our emphasis was on strengthening the capacity of universities for peacebuilding and conflict transformation, notably the University of Kinshasa (2006 - 2008) and University of Lubumbashi (2006 - 2012) where we implemented two related project. In a particular three-year peace education-related capacity-building project for the Great Lakes region involving three partner universities based in Kenya, Northern Uganda, and DRC, and working in partnership with the University of Bradford (2009 – 2012), we focused on two key practical objectives to: a t develop the institutional and collaborative capacities of the partner Universities to play applied functional roles in conflict and development intervention and b) expand and strengthen the employability skills and opportunities of undergraduate

and graduate students in some cognate fields of study (*LUGUSI Network Newsletters* 2010-2012).

Funded by the British Council England-Africa Partnership EAP/DelPHE grant schemes, the above projects we implemented in Kenya, Northern Uganda, and DRC were developed against the background of: (a) Multi-faceted and interlocking conflicts and wars that have blighted the African Great Lakes region for over the past two decades. (b) Poor capacity for practical conflict and development intervention in existing higher education curricula. (c) Traditional inclination of higher education partnerships in Africa towards vertical cooperation with western institutions, with the result that collaboration within the region is highly limited (*LUGUSI Network Newsletters* 2010-2012; Omeje & Hepner 2013: 1-2).

To help address some of the capacity needs identified by the collaborating African universities, various project activities were developed and implemented in the three countries between 2006 and 2012 in accordance with the evolving Bradford model. These include:

1) Review and strengthening of the Peace, Conflict and Development Studies curricula of the three partner universities using the operational frameworks of twelve different collaborative and individual university-based workshops. Some new practical modules and training programs (e.g. student work placement/internships, study visits to relevant organizations, and community service schemes) were developed or in some case strengthened at different levels (BA, MA and PhD). One of the major innovations we introduced in this curriculum review was the involvement of university students and representatives of the relevant employment sector (international organizations, government agencies and civil society) in the workshop, an initiative that had immense enriching value.

2) Regional cooperation and inter-university faculty (teaching staff) exchange visits between partner institutions to promote curriculum participation in teaching, research, students' counselling/thesis supervision, seminars, and publication. Under this collaborative initiative, lecturers were cross-posted between different partner universities over a limited period of one to two weeks in each project cycle of one year.

3) Research and publication opportunity/skill acquisition program for project partners, leading to production of a relevant edited book project useable in research/teaching in the area of peace, conflict and development studies in the African Great Lakes Region (AGLR) and beyond. The book is titled *Conflict and Peacebuilding in the African Great Lakes Region* (Indiana University Press, 2013).

4) Provision of a limited number of relevant textbooks (40 to 50 books) in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies for the comparatively under-resourced partner institutions (University of Lubumbashi and Gulu University).

5) Career counselling services for students using both internal and external professional counsellors. In Gulu University, career counselling was complemented by community outreach programs to, among other things, inspire war-affected school children and provide practical training in post-conflict counselling/victim rehabilitation for MA students of Development Studies and Conflict Transformation.

6) Production of an annual project newsletter for dissemination of information about project activities, challenges, and opportunities for higher education partnerships in the region. The annual newsletters were distributed in both hardcopy and electronic formats [using email and the project website:

Broadly, in the way it has progressively evolved, the Bradford Model is a substantially flexible, decentralized, integrative and participatory model of curriculum planning and implementation in peace education. There was some measure of consultation with local stakeholders before any of the programs were developed or sometimes in the process of developing them. Consultations took the form of electronic communication with identified stakeholders (mainly emails and telephones) and fact-finding consultation visits. It suffices to say that this model is not entirely fool-proof because its strengths and weaknesses have become more apparent to me over the years that I have been a key practitioner. Many curriculum developers and practitioners introducing peace education in Africa and perhaps elsewhere tend to wittingly or unwittingly operationalize the Bradford Model project activities either in isolation or combination. Is there a discernible alternative or parallel to the Bradford Model of peace education in African higher education? Apparently, the contrast to the Bradford Model would be the centralized unitary approach to curriculum planning in peace education which tends to be prevalent in many African universities, especially (but not exclusively) in the Francophone countries like the DRC, Congo and Rwanda. Under the centralized unitary paradigm, a uniform curriculum is centrally developed, oftentimes by the relevant government agency, and introduced across the entire spectrum of university education within the jurisdiction of the authorities. In some versions of centralized curriculum planning, the task of developing a new curriculum could be outsourced to some expert consultants or executed by a college of technical experts, who develop all aspects of the curriculum, including goals, content, learning experiences/outcomes, and evaluation strategies. A number of British, German, and Belgian universities engaged in the enterprise of introducing peace education in war-affected and volatile conflict-prone African countries adopt this version of centralized model by which they often interpose a draft curriculum they have developed abroad to the beneficiary universities for adoption *mutatis mutandis.* Centralized curriculum planning is most prevalent in lower levels of education (primary and post-primary) in different parts of the world where educational curriculum is seen as a vehicle for transmitting national ideology and fostering or preserving a cherished national culture (Makaye *et al* 2013: 42). Under a centralized curriculum model, the classroom instructor, teacher, or lecturer is tasked with mainly implementing the curriculum, albeit in practice the room for flexibility in curriculum interpretation and delivery is not completely taken away from the implementer, particularly at the university level. The centralized model of peace education curriculum planning has its recognized strengths and weaknesses (Makaye *et al* 3013).

V. CONCLUSION: SOME CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY PEACE EDUCATION IN AFRICA AND THE WAY FORWARD

For methodological and analytical convenience, I have limited this empirical reflection on peace and conflict-sensitive education in Sub-Saharan Africa to the practical projects I have directly taken part in since January 2004. Over the period I have been part of the Bradford model by directly working in the Bradford University's Africa Centre or been associated with its "brand", the center has implemented a considerable number of peace education projects in countries like Ethiopia, DRC, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe which I was not privileged to be part of. The center has also provided advisory services and related technical support to different international institutions and research/policy think tanks on peace and conflict intervention programs in Africa.

Assessing what we have done over the years in promoting the Bradford Model is somewhat problematic being that I could be easily charged with having a conflict of interest in the matter as I have been a longstanding actor and participant. However, from the standpoint of constructivist epistemology, social knowledge is not detached or disconnected from the epistemic worldview and actions of a researcher or practitioner (Breuer & Roth 2003: 1). I am therefore more methodologically inclined to the post-structuralist paradigm of personal reflexivity in research, which espouses an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of "meanings" throughout the research process; progressively reflecting upon and striving to manage the ways in which one's own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identity compete to shape the research and knowledge production processes (Willig 2001: 10). Furthermore, it is eminently timely that one reflects on the approach, strategies, and limitations of peace education in Sub-Saharan Africa because I am not aware of any scholarly works that have seriously reflected on the practical works we and other stakeholders have done in promoting peace education in Africa over the years.

One of the greatest challenges in the enterprise of peace education in Africa is that there has not been any rigorous external audit or evaluation of the large number of donor-driven peace education-related programs that have emerged in many African higher education institutions since the 1990s. None of the donor-driven peace education projects I have been part of has ever been subjected to an independent external evaluation with a view to determining their content-relevance and appropriateness, sensitivity to local conflicts, and related factors, local delivery capacity and strategies, quality assurance, sustainability plan, impact on the domestic environment, and so forth. For administrative convenience perhaps, most donors rely on the evaluation programs proposed by the grant recipients which in most cases are based on participants' internal evaluation of specific activities of the projects, such as capacity-building workshops. Grant recipients have great manoeuvreability in the way they report these self-evaluations and therefore would often present a supportive report to the donors. Consequently, most local workshop and project participants feel a sense of honor and privilege to be part of these donor projects that usually provide them with additional income (in terms of per diem, stipends, and travel allowances) and therefore would in most cases give a glowing evaluation feedback. The result is that in the end one does not really have a true picture about the desirability, operationality, and impact of these supposedly well-meaning donor-driven peace education projects, including the Bradford model. To a more or lesser extent, one could possibly make a similar remark about most other non-donor driven educational programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Reliable and independent evaluation of the higher education study programs is crucially important for progress assessment and development planning in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The second challenge, which seems related to the foregoing observation, has to do with the empirical relevance of many peace education curricula that have been developed and are being implemented in Africa. Having facilitated dozens of curriculum development workshops in Sub-Saharan Africa where we have produced many of these curricula, I have always felt a personal frustration in challenging and inspiring workshop participants (mostly African academics trained in western social science epistemologies) to think creatively in ways that could give us an authentic African peace education curriculum. Francis (2009: 1) has made a similar observation to substantiate this dilemma: "Most of the university programs and dominant philosophy and educational systems have been patterned on the Northern universities; so they do not reflect the actual needs and aspirations of African communities, African societies, especially in countries emerging from wars and armed conflict. So relevance and appropriateness are some of the critical challenges facing universities and the higher education sector across Africa."

The third and perhaps most compelling challenge to promoting peace education on the continent is the parlous state of the higher education sector in most war-affected and volatile conflict-prone states of Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the defining characteristics and features of the higher education sector in countries affected by war and armed conflicts in Africa include extreme funding shortage, poor remuneration of lecturers and university staff, brain-drain, heavy reliance on donor funding and technical support, frequent and prolonged strike actions by university lecturers often associated with abysmal conditions of service; extremely weak, inadequate and collapsed infrastructures (classrooms, offices, students' hostels, libraries, electricity, health clinics, water, ICT, etc.), large lecturer – students ratio (often in excess of 1 lecturer per 300 students); a preponderance of locally trained, poorly skilled, and demotivated lecturers; and perhaps most dismally extreme paucity of current literature. In fact, in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Northern Uganda, and South Sudan we repeatedly came across many bullet-riddled and partially collapsed university classrooms, including a number of temporarily displaced departments and faculties located in war-torn and derelict public or private properties. In the absence of a strong private sector, the state remains the chief provider of higher education in these countries but given the weak economic base of most states (especially Burundi, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC and, to a lesser extent Uganda and Rwanda), the state is for the most part in an extremely weak position to fund, regulate and meet the growing demands for higher education in their countries (*LUGUSI Network Newsletters* 2010-2012; Ewusi 2014). In terms of capacity, the states' higher education regulatory bodies are as weakly capacitated, poorly resourced, shambolic, and in most cases dysfunctional as the universities themselves. It is against this background that one needs to understand the predicament of peace education in volatile and war-affected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The fourth and final challenge to promoting peace education in Africa has to do with the bureaucratic bottlenecks and undue delay in policy mainstreaming and institutional buy-in at both the university and government higher education management levels, without which the new peace education-related study programs may not be officially accredited, recognized, or implemented. This problem however varies from one country to another. From my experience with those new peace education-related programs, which I took part in developing, the problem of internal approval of new programs by the university senate was a lot quicker and more straight-forward to handle in Sierra Leone and Liberia compared to countries like Uganda and Kenya. External accreditation by the government regulatory body is problematic in virtually all the countries and could literally go on forever, but the interesting thing is that most universities have the flexibility to introduce a new study program once they have been internally approved by the university authorities. The most frustrating example we came across under the Bradford Model was in DRC where an inflexibly centralized curriculum management system exists with the result that no university is allowed to introduce a new program or subject on its own that is not approved by the central government ministry of higher education and more or less uniformly introduced across all universities. We not only found this to be frustrating, but also rather contrary to the philosophy of peace education, a field of study that should be more sensitive to local contexts and needs.

Moving forward, the remedy for some of the identified key challenges could be easily inferred. There is the need for independent and periodic evaluation of existing study programs in Sub-Saharan Africa especially the new donor-driven peace education programs in order to make them more context-relevant and conflict-sensitive. In countries emerging from war, donor-interests need to go beyond funding the development and mainstreaming of new university programs in peace and conflict studies to include robustly investing in need assessment for local educational and training priorities, program assessment, staff training

and capacitation of higher education regulatory bodies, among others. Furthermore, research has shown that one of the major reasons why many poor developing countries emerging from war have a high risk of relapsing to armed conflict is because of the large number of unskilled and poorly skilled unemployed young people in these countries (Collier 2008; Brown 2012). It is therefore imperative that peace education-related study programs, as well as all other university and non-university based training programs be practically linked to entrepreneurship education and employability opportunities. Similarly, all other university and non-university level educational training programs should have key aspects of peace education mainstreamed into their curricula. To be comprehensive and effective, peace education curricula in most war-affected and volatile conflict-prone countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, among other things, should also aim to redress the embedded culture of violence in their respective countries as discussed in this paper.

ENDNOTES

1. For want of an appropriate terminology, I have called the paradigm of peace education discussed in this section "the Bradford Model," tribute to one of the world's largest and most famous centers of excellence in modern peace education. There is the need to caution that what I have described as the Bradford Model of peace education in this paper has not been essentially or entirely originated by Bradford University. I have attributed the model cautiously to Bradford University to underscore the influential and passionate contribution of the university in enriching and operationalizing the model over the years (especially in the past decade), not least in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Many proponents of neo-realism, frustration-aggression theory, post-Marxist theories of the state, critical security studies, post-modernism, among other structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives, are of the view that violence is endemically embedded in the structures of society and/or human nature. As such, some are at best sceptical of the relevance and efficacy of peace education (cf. Bandura, 1973; Giddens, 1991; Spruyt, 2014).

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