



## **The Importance of Peace Education for Successful Dialogue in Gombe Metropolis**

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### **Abstract**

Gombe metropolis in Gombe State, located in North-East Nigeria, is a diverse society. However, this diversity currently faces challenges that obstruct peaceful coexistence due to cultural differences and a lack of mutual understanding. This lack of understanding often results in strained relationships and occasional social instability. This study investigates peace education as a vital instrument for enabling effective dialogue between the various cultures in Gombe. The research argues that without peace education, the fundamental principles required for successful dialogue are absent, leading to community tension. Using Albert Bandura's (1969) Social Learning Theory as a framework and analysing qualitative data from interviews, the research suggests that peaceful coexistence is possible if peace education is integrated into the local socialization process. The study recommends that government should include Peace education in the school curriculum in the school system. The study concludes that peace education should be a core part of the educational curriculum from early childhood through university levels.

**Key Words: Peace Education, Co-existence, learning, Metropolis, Challenges**



## Introduction

Peace education is an intentional effort to teach children and adults how conflict works and how to promote peace-making at home, in schools, and throughout the community, (Loreta and Jasmin, 2019). It focuses on human security and preventing organized violence, such as armed conflict, by using modern theories of safety, (UNDP Report, 1994). This field of study addresses the social and human aspects of peace. It introduces concepts like human dignity and rights, focusing on values such as economic fairness, political inclusion, and international human rights standards, (Galtung 1996). Furthermore, peace education explores global ethics, gender issues, and cultural violence. It is a key part of the United Nations' efforts to teach society about the problems facing humanity, such as discrimination, poverty, prejudice, and war, (UNESCO, 2023). By applying ethical and scientific principles, peace education aims to replace "man's inhumanity to man" with a culture of peace (Anya & Onyeike 2019). Because each generation relies on its youth, students must be taught the path to love and harmony, as peace begins within each individual, (Hiang-Chu.2024).

## Theoretical Framework: Social Learning Theory

The study uses Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura (1969) to analyze how behaviour is acquired. Learning is defined by Woolfolk (2008) as a lasting change in a person's actions or knowledge resulting from their interaction with their environment. Bandura notes that individuals can acquire new behaviours not only through direct experience but also by watching others and seeing the consequences of their actions. Key aspects of this theory include: First, Albert Bandura (1969) identify Interaction and Observation as key ways through which People learn by interacting with others and imitating their behaviour. Secondly, Imitation and Modelling, Bandura identified these three core principles of learning: observation, imitation, and modelling, that individuals are more likely to copy a behaviour if they see it leads to positive results or rewards.

Learned Aggression vs. Peace Social learning theorists argue that aggression and violence are learned responses rather than natural instincts; therefore, peaceful attitudes can also be learned. In a series of innovative experiments, Bandura (1925–2021), showed that young children exposed to adults' aggression tend to behave aggressively, (Bandura 2022).

In the context of Gombe State, children learn how to behave by observing others. For example, children whose parents use physical force for discipline are more likely to use physical aggression when interacting with others.

## Types of Peace Education

Peace education teaches that harmony is a choice that requires active participation rather than passive waiting, (Martin, 2025). It can be delivered in two ways:

### Formal Peace Education

This involves including peace-related themes in school subjects like Religion, History, Science, and Mathematics, (Talluri 2025). Key components include:

- i. Knowledge: Students should understand global issues, the gap between the rich and the poor and environmental concerns.



- ii. Cultural Appreciation: People should learn about their own culture and others to avoid ignorance and appreciate diversity.
- iii. Attitudes: This focuses on human dignity and the "Golden Rule"—treating others as you want to be treated, (Matt. 7:12, Luke 6:31). It also encourages empathy and the ability to imagine the viewpoints of others.
- iv. Skills: Students must acquire tools for inquiry, critical thinking, and communication, such as active listening and the ability to paraphrase without changing facts, (Oyeronke, Adeoye & Yejide 2024).

### **Informal Peace Education**

Learning also happens in relaxed, non-traditional settings. This can include workshops, children's storybooks, posters, and even peace messages on t-shirts to help people recognize their own biases and prejudices, (UNGEI 2014).

### **Developing a Culture of Peace**

A culture of peace is built on values such as respect for life, liberty, justice, and equality, (UNESCO, 2023). In this culture, power is gained through dialogue and cooperation rather than violence or weapons. It protects the rights of vulnerable groups, including the elderly and the disadvantaged, and replaces exploitation with fairness, (UNESCO, 1997). Importantly, a culture of peace cannot be forced from the outside; it must grow naturally from the traditions, history, and beliefs of the local people.

### **Peer Group Mediation**

Peer mediation is a powerful tool because young people often prefer to confide in their peers rather than adults, (Sagkal, Turnuklu, & Totan, 2012). Therefore, training youth in conflict resolution skills, will enable them to resolve their own differences and these skills are taught in peace education. For this to work, there must be trust, open communication, and mutual respect. Zuure (2014) notes that successful mediation reduces anxiety and aggression while improving self-esteem and academic performance.

### **The Current Situation in Gombe State**

Currently, as I interact with twenty (15) teachers in an in-depth interview in some Primary and secondary schools in Gombe Metropolis to access the situation on ground this is their responses.

In an in depth interview with Principal J to find out whether he has been trained in peace education during his school days? He said over thirty years ago, he received his training as a grade II teacher and he further to do his College of education but he has not been trained in peace education. I further asked him whether in his school there is any teacher that is taking peace education as a subject but he said there is no subject like that in his school. So I asked, what he teach his students to do to live in peace among themselves. He said that he used to ask them to be patient with one another. So I further asked how they will develop that patient in their lives. He said well religion teaches people to be patient, (Interview 2025).

In another interview principal T, to find out whether his school is teaching peace education? He replied that his school is a science secondary school so they are not doing arts subjects. I further



asked him whether he knows of any secondary school in Gombe that is teaching peace education as a subject but he said he has not heard of it. I further asked him whether peace education is an art subject but he reply that in sciences there is no subject like that and more over the government has not introduce it in schools.

In an interview with Head Teacher P, I asked him whether their Nursery /Primary school had a subject on peace education or similar subject like that in her school. She said, they do not have but in one of their meetings they discussed about having a training like that but because the government has not made it a subject for schools to adopt, so they are waiting for government to make it a subject first or else they may be accused of introducing subjects that are not approved by the ministry of education.

In an interview with principal Y to find out on his knowledge of peace education and whether he have teachers in his school that are teaching the subject? He replied that in his training he has not known much about peace education and there is none of his teachers that are assigned to teach peace education because they do not have a subject like that in his school. I also asked him about his knowledge generally about peace education but he told me gently that he has little idea about peace education.

In an interview with Head Master K, I asked him to find out whether they are teaching peace education in their school? He replied that, that subject has not been introduce by the ministry of education in the State. I further asked how their pupils handle act of Aggression. He replied that sometimes they asked them to fight back or they can report the person to the teachers. So from this interview one can see that children are not taught on how to deal with aggression from the inside.

In an interview with Principal I, I asked him to know which type of training did he received whether in 3rs or in peace education? He answered that his training was in 3rs and he did not know anything about peace education. I further asked, which type of training are they giving to the children on handling acts of aggression? He said, it is what he was taught that he is teaching the children.

In an interview with Headmaster A, I asked, what peace education does to a person who is trained in it? He asked me back to tell him what peace education is all about because he is just hearing about it.

In an interview with Headmaster L, what do they teach children to do when they are provoked? He said they have been telling them to be patience with one another as in the gatherings one person must offend another person. So I further asked whether this is how young people will learn to accommodation each other. He said, what they should tell them to do, only to tell them to be patient with one another.

In an interview with Principal S, I asked, what are the values of peace education to the children? He asked, what I mean by that, does peace education have any value. Yes, it teaches children to respect each other, respect for human life, and respect diverse views. Peace education have some guided set of ideas, doctrines and principles which are centred on changing mind set, promoting



human rights. This is what gives peace and stability in the society. The principal said he is hearing about the values of peace education for the first time.

In an interview with Headmaster W, I asked what peace education is all about. He said he didn't know. So I said peace education is all about empowering people with skills, attitudes and knowledge to build, maintain and restore relationships at all level of human interactions. To develop positive approaches toward dealing with conflicts from personal to inter-personal, physically and emotionally, that nurture each individual, create a safe world base on justice and human rights.

In an interview with Principal Q I asked? Which skills are gotten from peace education? He asked me what you mean by that. He has not known any activity of peace education talk less of him given me the skill of peace education. Well, I will let you know three of them today, critical thinking, problem solving and self-control. This help in no little way to control people's behaviour in the society.

In an interview with Headmaster X, I asked her which attitudes are necessary for a peaceful society. She mentions, self-respect, honesty and tolerance. In fact, in all the interviews I did it was only this headmaster that seem to have a little knowledge of the subject, even though she confessed that it was a guess work.

In an interview with Headmaster E. I asked? How are they teaching children about the culture of peace in their school? He asked me back does peace has culture? I said yes, he asked me to tell him the culture of peace. I told him that culture of peace education consist of first, respect for life- since all beings like themselves, such should be accorded to all beings as all holy books teach about the sanctity of life, secondly, liberty- no one wants to be in bondage, when liberty is tampered with crisis ensues and thirdly, Justice- there no talking about peace without justice. Justice focuses on healing social relationships and attempts to build the types of society that reflects the values of those who suffer and brings bout peace. He thanks me and said he has learnt allot from our discussion but on his part he no idea of it earlier.

In an interview with Principal O, I asked how their student is handling conflict in school. He said that many of them lack patience and most of the time they fight each other. I asked? How do you think they will stop fighting each other? He said he do not know. So I asked? Whether they try teaching them peace education techniques but he said he has no idea of what I was talking about.

In an interview with Principal B, I asked? How many of his teachers have knowledge of peace education and how are they using it to teach the students. He said, for them in Gombe metropolis they have not experienced too much conflicts so they are not interested in teaching students about conflict management. They can learn it on their own because he feels that Gombe is not too hostile to the point of introducing peace education in our schools.

From the above interviews, one can see that many teachers are ignorant of the role of peace education in formation processes in socialization of the pupils /students. Teachers who should be at the centre of educating the younger generation on these techniques are not trained in this area



and their urgent need for this to be done so that children will be taught the skills that promote diversity. Teachers who do not have any idea about peace education cannot be able to help other children to learn to live peaceful with their fellow students and to imbibe the tenet of calmness and non-violent when provoked. These responses have clearly indicated the level of understanding of these head teachers/Principals about what constitute a peaceful society, therefore, we call on those saddled with the responsibility of policy formation in the educational sector to act fast to include peace education in the curriculum of the schools in Gombe Metropolis.

Currently, the education system in Gombe Metropolis focuses mainly on the "3Rs" (reading, writing, and arithmetic). However, this traditional approach is insufficient for modern needs. Most teachers in the metropolis are not trained in modern styles of peace education or human security.

The curriculum currently lacks lessons on human rights, respect for diverse views, and internal restraint when provoked. Therefore, Students from primary to tertiary levels need to be taught to respect diversity so that they can live in harmony with others.

**The study offers the following recommendations:**

Curriculum Reform: The Gombe State government should overhaul the educational curriculum to include peace education from primary school through university levels.

Teacher Training: Educators at all levels must be trained in peace education skills and the new syllabus.

Expanded Learning: Education should move beyond basic literacy to include skills like active listening and conflict management.

**Conclusion**

Peace education is essential for empowering citizens with the critical thinking and communication skills needed to manage diversity particularly in Gombe Metropolis. Therefore, we encourage the Government to act fast to correct a deficiency in our training processes in the State.

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### LIST OF INFORMANTS

| S/No | Code | Name                | Age | Sex | Location | Occupation | Date/Time         |
|------|------|---------------------|-----|-----|----------|------------|-------------------|
| 1    | J    | Victoria Mecshack   | 45  | F   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 2/4/2025<br>10am  |
| 2    | T    | Ibrahim Shabal      | 50  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 6/4/2025<br>3pm   |
| 3    | P    | Muhamad Umar        | 48  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 8/5/2025<br>2pm   |
| 4    | Y    | Tanko Adamu         | 46  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 10/5/2025<br>11am |
| 5    | K    | Nora Elisha         | 48  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 10/5/2025<br>12pm |
| 6    | I    | Abdulsalami Ishiaku | 53  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 15/5/2025<br>9am  |
| 7    | A    | Yusuf Abdullahi     | 49  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 16/5/2025<br>12pm |
| 8    | L    | Aminu Ibrahim       | 50  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 16/5/2025<br>2pm  |
| 9    | S    | Kareem Fatima       | 46  | F   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 18/5/2025<br>10am |
| 10   | W    | Joy Enowie          | 46  | F   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 20/5/2025<br>11am |
| 11   | Q    | Florence Digawam    | 53  | F   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 26/5/2025<br>1pm  |
| 12   | X    | Shafari Samson      | 54  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 27/5/2025<br>11am |
| 13   | E    | Victoria Paloma     | 50  | F   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 30/5/2025<br>2pm  |
| 14   | O    | Ibrahim Waziri      | 55  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 4/6/2025<br>12pm  |
| 15   | B    | Nasiru Ibrahim      | 48  | M   | Gombe    | Teacher    | 10/6/2025<br>12pm |