

Ubuntu and Peacemaking in Schools

Vuyisile Msila¹
University of Johannesburg

Abstract

Recent newspaper reports in South Africa have been reporting incidents of violence, drug abuse, bullying and hate crimes happening within the schools. Occurrences of violent nature such as stabbing are beginning to be commonplace and there is fear that the kind of learners produced by the schools might not be fully prepared to live with others in a peaceful environment. Moreover, the recent xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals do not augur well for teaching the learners to be tolerant and be accommodating to diversity. In this case study, a primary school introduced a programme of peace education and *ubuntu*. According to Pulkinnen (1989:95) the goal of education for peace is to help individual grow into a critically thinking empathic person who is able to cooperate with peers creating peace for all nations. On the other hand, *ubuntu* is described as an African worldview of humanism.

The study showed that some African-based models such as *ubuntu*, combined with other “universal philosophies” can help in curbing or minimising violence in educational institutions such as schools.

Key Words: *Ubuntu, Peace Education*

¹ Assoc. Prof. Vuyisile Msila is affiliated with Faculty of Education , University of Johannesburg, South Africa. E-mail: vmsila@uj.ac.za

Introduction and Problem Postulation

Mawonga Primary School is situated in a historically black area in the Eastern Cape. It is not the best of township schools yet it is not the worst. It is not situated in an informal or squatter area like Ntombenhle Primary or Dalizwe High School. Mawonga has a sturdy modern building with four computers, although only four of the staff members can operate them. The school also boasts a laboratory whose materials have not been opened because there are no qualified science teachers. Mawonga has 26 classrooms and 29 educators. The classes start from grade 1 to grade 7.

Every morning, Mawonga learners move in clusters; boys clad their grey and white school uniform, girls in black and white. They carry their books in either their back packs or used plastic grocery carrier bags. Twelve years into the democratic dispensation, the school is still 100% black. None of the historically black schools have managed to attract learners from other racial groups in South Africa. The exodus of learners has been one sided and that is black parents bussing their children to former white, former Indian or former Coloured schools. In search of better education the black parents are leaving schools such as Mawonga close by. Some critics have argued that this has led to dwindling quality in many township schools (Msila, 2005). However, Mawonga is one of the few schools in the township that many parents prefer. The school is situated deep inside the township and some parents come from far as Kwazakhele which is more than twenty kilometres away to register their learners here. This is one of the few schools that have benefited from intra-township migration. The teachers in the school say that many parents who cannot send their children outside the township prefer their school because there is a belief that the school teaches the learners better English and parents maintain that this translates to quality education.

However, even in this school there are reports of bullying, violence and low scale drug use. The principal tells of an incident of a learner who was forced by one of the older boys to abuse certain drugs in a toilet and among these was dagga (marihuana). The boy ended in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in a local hospital. It was after this incident that the teachers maintained that there was a need to intervene in order to better the school environment. It was after the Parents Teacher Association (PTA) committee members and School Governing Body (SGB) suggested that some community members needed to be given some time in the school and teach the learners certain “communal values”. The term was not explained well although it appeared that the meeting did for consensus was reached. In fact, the PTA committee agreed that they needed some form of part time education on *ubuntu* and “other related African values”. It was in April when the school’s new governing body suggested this intervention. The School Governing Body (SGB) was doing something which was in line with the Departmental policy on the work of SGBs in schools. The Department of Education SGB policy states that:

It will be useful to get the school community involved in the work of the governing body. This will lighten the work load. This means that the governing body should try to learn about the needs of the community and the activities carried out by the community. You should also ensure that the school community knows what you are doing and why. This means that members of the community need to get information easily about the school and governing body

(DoE 1997: 58)

When the community members were called to intervene they were supposed to intervene and through their teaching of certain African values try to minimise the rate of unbecoming behaviour among learners. The main question that this article poses is linked to the SGB's goals: Can intervention strategies associated with African values help in minimising undesirable behaviour in schools?

Sub-questions addressed included the following:

- Can peace education be enhanced by some African values such as *ubuntu*?
- Can schools facilitate the transformation of society for the better?

Literature Review

Brenes-Castro (2004) writes about an *Integral Model* of peace education and states that it embraces certain principles that jointly express “a spirit of community”, a core value for peace. The *Integral Model* Peace Education (IMPE) is based on the postulation that there are universal values that shape a culture of peace (Brenes-Castro 2004: 79). This *Model* assumes a holistic vision of reality and perceives the universe as a dynamic totality characterised by diversity and interdependence between all beings. Furthermore, he states that ideal human community would be characterised by the following:

- Membership in such a community allows for the satisfaction of vital needs for all its members.
- There is commitment on the part of all its members towards the mutual protection, enhancement, and promotion of the common good of the community.
- The idiosyncrasy of each member is valued and her/his contributions are synergistically integrated within the diversity of the group.
- All members participate in the making of those decisions that affect the common well-being.

These are all crucial when one looks at the prominence and need for peace education currently.

Pertinent to the arguments above is the nature of peace as a medium of ecological balance. Definitions of peace have been extended beyond the notion of negative peace that is absence of war (Wenden 2004: 7). Furthermore, Wenden (2004:8) points out that some definitions of peace include the notion of peace with Nature, for example ecological balance as one that should underpin any definition of

peace. Wenden (2004) cites Sloan who avers that a peace that ignores ecological destruction is unsustainable. Wenden (2004:8) also cites Reardon and Nordland who state that ecological violence is part of the context and motivating force for peace education together with the violence of armed conflict and the structural violence of oppression and poverty. At a time when there is much violence happening in schools, peace research has become very crucial. Pulkkinan (1989:88) cites Helenius who points out that peace education's meaning can be sought by relating it to similar concepts such as education for international understanding and disarmament education. Peace education embraces the teaching of basic human rights and familiarization with development problems (Pulkkinan 1989:88). Hinde and Parry (1983) concur when they point out that peace education has been interpreted in a narrow sense and they argue that education for peace needs to start in the home and should then move over to the classroom teaching as this is pivotal for people throughout life. In a country where conflicts lead to bitter battles there is a strong necessity to take peace education seriously. Education for peace must seek to influence the goals towards which pro-social and cooperative behaviour are directed and to expand social conscience beyond national frontiers (Hinde & Bateson 1989:13). Galtung (1982) also highlights the problems of peace can be divided into three: the depletion of raw materials, the pollution of nature and of ourselves and the population problem. Peace education is seen by many as an aspect that is linked with other factors in life. Democracy, politics are some of the terms that can be used in connection with peace education. "Peace education cannot be only about peace; it has to be peace-day-to-day practice developing out of school reality, not only words that easily are covered with dust and equally easily forgotten (Galtung, 1982:63).

In this article the focus is on *ubuntu* and peace education. The focus is on how peace education can be fostered using *ubuntu*, an African form of humanism. *Ubuntu* like peace education reflects interdependence between several other concepts as well. Mthembu (1996:216) describes *ubuntu* as the key to all African values and that it involves humanness, a good disposition towards others, and a moral nature. Furthermore, Mthembu avers that *ubuntu* describes the significance of group solidarity and interdependence in African culture. Mbigi (2005: v) supports this by pointing out that *ubuntu* is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues that is so vital to the survival of African communities. Schools tend to reflect the society in which they are built. DiMaggio and Powell refer to this as institutional isomorphism. A violent society is more likely to breed violent learners in schools. Given this, educators in environments where society shows violent behaviour be it against fellow people or xenophobic attacks should be wary in that the behaviour outside the schools can manifest itself among the learners. The constant calls for a moral society are desperate calls for society to change for the better.

In his Steve Biko Memorial Lecture in Cape Town (2006) the Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, was quoted as saying that South Africa is in danger of losing its moral directions. Furthermore, he argued that the country has failed to sustain the idealism that ended the apartheid era (BBC, 2006). Among other factors

that are a challenge to *ubuntu*, are xenophobia and the lack of respect that exists among people. In his lecture, Tutu maintained that South Africans need to fight and oppose xenophobia. The rise of xenophobia in society has exerted many challenges on the existence of *ubuntu*. Mbigi (1997:18) points out that it is characteristic of transition are the fears and uncertainties and it is the task of leadership to manage the fears of the people. The sudden changes in the society and issues such as joblessness and poverty exert much pressure on the modern society that people need to re learn some aspects of culture. Harris (2002:169) states that the shift in political power in South Africa has brought about a range of new discriminatory practices and one such victim is “The Foreigner”. Despite these *ubuntu* is still seen as a beacon of hope that will create a truly democratic country. Maybe this is where the rebirth of society Ntuli argues about above becomes so necessary. It is within this broad context that this study wanted to investigate *ubuntu* and its possibilities of solving or minimising the violence apparent in some schools.

A Department of Education publication (2001:16) states that out of the values of *ubuntu* follows the practices of compassion, kindness, altruism and respect which are at the centre of making schools places of effective culture of learning and teaching. *Ubuntu* is envisaged as a philosophy that would ensure that there is more diligence and a culture of achievement. The publication further points out:

Equality might require us to put up with people who are different, non-sexism and non-racism might require us to rectify the inequities of the past, but *ubuntu* goes much further: it embodies the concept of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference...Ultimately; *ubuntu* requires you to respect others if you are to respect yourself. (DoE, 2001)

Based on democratic principles as well as the ethos of the African worldview, *ubuntu* is always described or presupposed to be ideal democratic tenet. The democratic ideals it enshrines appear enough to convince many that its democratic base could solve many societal problems. Currently, in South Africa, there is the quest for a new identity that is not like the identities based on race and colour of the past and this multicultural society seeks solutions from a number of democratic philosophies and models. In the past decade there has been a need to embrace the spirit of *ubuntu* in various aspects of the society. Ntuli (1999: 184) states that the spirit of *ubuntu* has long disappeared and he states that that is the reason why we need an African renaissance. Furthermore, Ntuli opines that in the face of the present cultural and moral collapse in South Africa, there is a need to strive for a rebirth. Yet, Dandala (1996: 70) states that *ubuntu* requires a great deal of learning and sharing and institutions can achieve this through the training of people to practice greater interaction. Schools and the societies around them need to learn the values of *ubuntu*.

Research Methodology

The school Mawonga Primary was selected purposefully after they announced in one of their School Governing Body (SGB) meetings that they were to try intervention

strategies to create a peaceful atmosphere and respect among learner community. The researcher was currently working at the school on a different project when he decided to ask permission from the school to investigate this intervention as well. The principal and his staff had announced how they wanted to enhance the school's moral values and peace utilising *ubuntu*. Some SGB members were certain that many schools in the historically black townships have truant learners because the community is no longer cherishing positive African values such as *ubuntu*. As mentioned above, the school had experienced a few acts of violence among learners the previous year and this goaded the parents to intervene fearing that the school might experience more serious acts of immorality and violence.

These experiences included stabbings one with a mathematical sharp instrument and the other with a nail clipper. There were also four bullying incidents reported and in each a learner was beaten up. Then there was occasional use of drugs. The latter included tobacco smoking and the other two incidents were of serious drugs including dagga (marijuana) and use of some "illegal tablets". The school had selected five parents to come and work with the grade 6 and 7 learners. The senior classes were selected because that was usually where the misdemeanours occurred. 96% of the reported cases were among the senior learners. The parents were to work with four classes: two were grade 6s and the other two were grade 7s. As facilitators they were to rotate as they taught the learners various aspects linking these to traditional African way of life and what they referred to as peace education. The parents were all retired members of the community and they consisted of three males and two females.

Three of these members were retired teachers, one a traditional healer and the other a religious leader. The five facilitated lessons on various topics or streams as they rotated among the classes. They roughly divided their streams under the following:

- Facilitator A. *Ubuntu*, gender and peace
- Facilitator B (African) culture and society
- Facilitator C Growing up in a healthy and peaceful environment
- Facilitator D *Ubuntu*, the society and peace
- Facilitator E Conflict in the society

All the above streams had a common element in that *ubuntu* cut across. The facilitators emphasized the value of *ubuntu* and need for peace during their facilitation. The classes took place three times a week for one hour each after school. Three researchers were granted permission by the school to observe at least two sessions a week. They recorded notes as they passively observed what was happening during the classes. Three of the facilitators used more activities for the learners while the other two mainly used the lecture method. Yet in both styles there was much interaction encouraged between the learners and the facilitators.

The grade 6 learners consisted of 49 learners and the grade seven learners were 62 learners. Of the total 111 learners in the population 50 were randomly selected to be interviewed as part of a sample. 22 of these learners were males. Six grade 6 and six grade 7 teachers were selected. Of these teachers half were female. All the facilitators were also interviewed during and after the intervention period. On average, the facilitators were interviewed almost once every two weeks and this amounted to ten 45 minutes interview sessions for each facilitator. The facilitation spanned from May to September. The learners also came during the winter vacation for five hours per five days for three weeks. The facilitators used a number of aids and strategies to facilitate the learning. Drums, clothing, stories including legends, were some of the teaching aids used to facilitate learning. For the first three contact sessions the teachers were present in the classes but from the rest of the period (from end of May to September), they did not attend. The researchers also set time aside to use unstructured interviews to interview the learners.

The facilitators were referred to as coaches used a similar time table in the entire 20 weeks in the school. They used alternating weeks where they would facilitate simulation games. In other weeks there would be group work and discussions. The facilitators, who were referred to as coaches divided the entire group into seven “villages” each with a leader. Villages were supposed to be more effective than others and each of them had rules that were supposed to guide them. The villagers were following a strict code of rules that was put down democratically by the “people of the village” (the learners themselves). Among these rules, each village was supposed to lay down rules of protecting the environment, living in peace with others and living for another person as capture by the *ubuntu* philosophy. The simulation games that the learners acted out occasionally clearly reflected the ideal life the villagers wanted to live. Sometimes they would act out as to what needs to be done to those who break the rules. It was made clear that those who broke the rules would be punished or ostracised by the community. The values of *ubuntu* were emphasized by villagers who wanted to ensure that good happened to fellow villagers at all times. In one simulation game the villagers could not leave one villager who was caught by a tiger while they were on a hunting expedition. In another, the villagers made a plan on how they could rescue a drowning man even when they could have drowned themselves.

The Findings

As the intervention continued, the learners’ understanding the values and importance of peace and *ubuntu* grew as they also saw how these impacted on the larger society. It was also significant to note how they saw the interdependence between the people and their environment. In one simulation game a group of villagers were shunned upon for polluting a river that served a number of households. Many villagers were also sensitising others not to destroy the environment; this included cutting down trees and polluting the air. When the learners were interviewed they stated that what the coaches facilitated helped them in “seeing life differently”; they saw not only the

value of nature, but also the value of other fellow human beings. One learner-participant summarised one concept by stating:

When you upset one member of the village, you affect the life of other villagers. We need to ensure that the village life is not disturbed all the time.

Another learner said that she now knew that she lived for the fellow villager and whatever she does is for the benefit or detriment of the other villagers. The participants also talked openly about the need for peaceful living in each village. In one simulation game the learners' role played a scene where a villager from village A wronged another one from village B. The villagers from village B were very angry and wanted to attack the other village. However, they tried to resolve the conflict amicably through their leaders. At the end the villages solved the conflict without the use of violence. The conflict resolution skills were welcomed by the teacher-participants who stated that sometimes violence among learners occurred because the learners could not find alternative ways of solving them besides violence. One teacher opined that the learners were reflecting their society where conflicts were solved through violent means.

The coaches also argued that they discovered that many learners "did not understand their cultural identity". When asked what they meant about this concept of *cultural identity*, one explained that although these learners were African "their culture was fuzzy and it was mixed with the foreign culture on television. They do not have pride in anything and do not understand their roots of humanness". Another coach concurred by stating that many children grow up in homes where they do not get the "correct cultural guidance". According to a third coach the learners are supposed to understand "the roots of humility and respect based on the values of *ubuntu* as embraced in the African culture". The coaches believed that it was through the five month intervention that learner-participants were "beginning to find their roots" as they saw the need for peaceful living and upholding the values of *ubuntu*.

The teacher-participants reported dwindling cases of violence among learners after the third month. Two teachers maintained that the idea of villages worked because villagers were competing against one another even outside the formal classes. No one wanted to bring disrepute to his or her own village. The latter tended to spread to the idea of the classroom and the broader school. Another teacher argued that what the coaches were doing was to simplify the current National Curriculum Statement (NCS) curriculum. This post-apartheid South African curriculum is based on the values of the Constitution of the Republic. The current education system in South Africa requires education to follow the ten fundamental values of the Constitution of the Republic and these include democracy, social justice and equity; *ubuntu*, an open society; rule of law, reconciliation and respect (DoE 2001).

One aspect that the teachers interviewed noticed after the programme was initiated was the respect that learners had for one another. The school had cases of learners suffering from the pandemic of HIV and AIDS. Teacher participants stated

that many learners tended to overlook the stigma usually associated with this illness and began to respect everyone. The teachers said that the learners appeared to be aware of their fellow learners who were affected by the disease and tended to treat them with disdain and prejudice. The coaches instilled a sense of respect for another person and ascertained that the learners were able to address issues of HIV and AIDS in an honest and open manner. Communication about the disease moved from being a closed subject to an open one. The idea of not discriminating against HIV-positive individuals was stressed by the coaches in relation to the values of *ubuntu*. The DoE publication (2001:67) points out that:

Ensuring that HIV-positive people are not discriminated against reinforces the constitutional values of social justice, equality and *ubuntu*, but, by turning stigma into acceptance, it also performs the powerful function of modelling these values.

The educators stated that while the learning area, Life Orientation covered several topics on HIV and AIDS learners still had certain stereotypes and prejudices against people living with the disease. Furthermore, the teacher-participants stated that certain aspects of sex education were compulsory although they still struggled with many aspects. The coaches made approaching some of the problematic areas easier for teachers.

One of the aspects that the coaches stressed was the idea of a democratic environment where there is no fear. The coaches explained that some simulation games clearly illustrated how difficult it was to live in an environment where fear ruled. Learner-participants also commented how difficult it was to operate in an environment where there was fear. Talking about the importance of shedding fear, many learner-participants referred to one simulation where a shepherd was in constant fear of a lion. He could not look well at his father's livestock because he was afraid of the beasts. This impacted badly on his task of looking after his father's herd. In one session, discussions were around fear and the detrimental effects of bullying within schools. The facilitators repeatedly talked about "the need for the learners to reclaim the schools". He said that they needed to own the schools and be proud of their schools. It was stated that these could not be reclaimed when there is a culture of violence. Furthermore, the learners understood and internalised some of these values. One learner-participant said:

It was important for us to learn about non-violence. For some of us it is difficult to come to school because we are scared of being beaten or harassed by bullies. What the coaches taught us was important in that we need to find better ways to resolve our differences.

Another learner-participant contended:

This is what we've been trying to do in the Learner Representative Council. As learner leaders, we've been telling our fellow learners the need to restrain ourselves from acts of violence. It is difficult because some of the learners fight over gambling money and so on. However, what the coaches have told us here is important because now we know

the value of peace in schools. I like the idea of *ubuntu*. It really showed us the importance of respecting one another.

The coaches also discussed issues relating to school-community links. One of the coaches stressed the need for the learners to look after their school even when they are in their community. The school had experienced a spate of crimes in the previous months and computers, garden tools and food are among things that were stolen from the school. The learners learnt that *ubuntu* also means respecting what you have, your property. The coaches stressed the need for the learners to work and try to satisfy the mandate of the School Governing Body (SGB). This was incorporated in learning about democracy and schooling. The democratisation and transformation of education was from its incipient stages embracing the will to include all stakeholders like parents, teachers, learners and members of the community should be able to participate in the activities of schools (DoE 1997: 6).

The Analysis of the Findings

Peace Education and Ubuntu

Whilst *ubuntu* can be seen and be referred to as an African concept, it shares much with other universal concepts. *Ubuntu* in African societies is linked to a number of important similar concepts. Prinsloo (1998) cites Chikanda who stated that *ubuntu* is African humanism that involves alms-giving, sympathy, care, sensitivity to the needs of others, respect, consideration, patience and kindness. Broodryk (2006) concurs with this when he states that *ubuntu* world view contains the basic values of humanness, caring, sharing, respect and compassion. These definitions are comparable to the definition given by Galtung (1982: 62) of what peace education is. Galtung states that the content of peace education include words such as “international understanding”, “co-operation”, “peace”, “human rights”, “fundamental freedoms”. All these universal values of peace are also part of *ubuntu* philosophy.

The idea of peace education in South Africa is relevant considering the violent nature of education in the past. Violence was not only between learners and the system but sometimes between learners and their teachers or learners versus fellow learners. The learners and teachers in the study learnt that *ubuntu* can enhance peace in an organisation such as the school. Some form of transformation is also necessary to enable individuals to be receptive to *ubuntu* and its ideals. The learners needed the support of the coaches for them to grow. Mbigi (2000: 4) contends that for people to do more and get more in life they need to become more and grow and he says that this is the essence of African philosophy. The learners in the study grew more as they continued their involvement in the programme. There was a conscious effort among them to make a change in their school. The intervention by the coaches in the school ensured that the learners were prepared to change the atmosphere in the school as they became receptive to democratic values.

Democracy and Schools

Wenden (2004) perceives a link between social and ecological peace/violence. Furthermore, he states that there is a need to make learners aware of and understand this interrelatedness of social and environmental realities. The violation and degradation of the environment leads to the violation of human rights. Wenden (2004: 6-7) avers:

This reciprocity between the violation of Earth rights and human rights presents a challenge to educational institutions whose task is to inform students about and prepare them to cope with and even remedy social and environmental problems. Of special relevance is the response to this challenge of peace education and environmental education, two educational specialisations whose task it is to respond, respectively, to social violence and ecological violence.

Schools need to enforce this link. For true democracy to be achieved learners need to see this “big picture”. For democracy to be attained there is strong necessity for the attainment of social and environmental peace. In Brenes-Castro’s (2003: 83) Integral Model of peace education, peace is considered as a state of integrity, security, balance and harmony- and it is assumed that each person lives within these relational contexts: in relationship to the self, to others and to nature. When Brenes-Castro (2003:85) highlights a culture of democracy he refers to the critical and responsible participation of all citizens in promoting common good and security of all humans and community of nature.

Furthermore, Brenes-Castro (2003: 85) points out:

Given that we do not live in isolation and that our life projects are to a certain degree determined by collective decisions in our families, communities, nations and the world as a whole, we need to be able to participate critically and autonomously in the making of decisions at all these levels. This requires respect for cultural and ethnic diversity as well as a commitment to respect and promote human rights for all, including future generations, that is, a sense of solidarity.

Tyack, Kirst and Hansot (1980: 254) pointed out that public schools need to revive a sense of public good and that they should renegotiate the ideological contract using common schools to achieve democracy. Schools need to strive to achieve this despite having to frequently operate in an environment laden with pandemonium. Schools are continually scrambling for order in a rather disorderly world (DeLany 1998:134).

This study showed the importance and necessity to facilitate more knowledge on democracy. *Ubuntu* enshrined this democratic principle. The democratic role of education as highlighted in the Constitution needs to be upheld in the classroom.

Gutman (1999:76) stated, “the professional responsibility of teachers is to uphold the principle of no repression by cultivating the capacity for democratic deliberation. Learners should be made to understand the democratic principles beyond democratic rhetoric. The coaches taught the learners how democracy works in practice. Games, role play and stories were some of the aspects used to teach democratic principles.

Mbigi (1997:3) pointed out that *ubuntu* can play an effective role in nurturing social relationships in a socially divided society. Furthermore, Mbigi contended that *ubuntu* can play a significant role in building a spirit of harmony and reconciliation. What the coaches did was to facilitate knowledge that would strengthen the learners’ sense of belonging and being accountable to a large group. At the end, the learners understood the sense of solidarity and unity within a large group. The villages’ concept enhanced strong ties amongst villagers. The implication of this was respect for one another.

Politics and Peace Education

Galtung (1982:66) states that it is necessary for educators to touch on politics if peace education is to be achieved. Furthermore, Galtung points out that, “to believe that we can have anything like peace education without touching politics is not only naïve, but also itself a very political point of view and a way of manipulating young people so as to make them insensitive to the reality of the world around them”. Whilst there appears to be a need to stress reconciliation in South Africa, there is also a pressing need to focus on the discussion of challenges existing in a conflict situation. Brenes-Castro (2003:79) writes about the importance of focusing on political environment to achieve peace. Brenes-Castro states that if people are given an opportunity to understand the nature of the violence and authoritarianism they have experienced they will realise that it is not inevitable and that they can aspire to live in peace.

In the study a number of coaches reflected frequently on the atrocities of apartheid’s past. They told learners of how laws such as the Group Areas Act, separate schools for different races, Immorality Act which prohibited marriage across races, how these created much animosity and misunderstanding among races. By pointing out the past political setting the facilitators wanted the learners to appreciate the need for peace and *ubuntu* philosophy. A number of facilitators maintained that schools should be the starting point of building better societies. Labaree (1997: 41) opined that schools occupy an awkward position at the intersection between what people hope society will become and what they think it really is, between political ideals and economic realities. The society however, forgets that schools reflect the society wherein the schools are situated. The parents and community need to model how learners should best live. Schools situated in violent neighbourhoods are more likely to produce violent learners. To sustain good values there is a need for a well rounded syllabus. The nation needs achievers in mathematics and science but also in citizens who can co-exist well with fellow human beings. The society needs citizens that would be able to live interdependently with others.

The idea of villages as tried out by the coaches reflected what has to be pursued by the markets. The coaches showed a necessity for the community to strengthen the social capital. One of the recommendations suggested by the coaches was the need for more community involvement in the school if unbecoming behaviour was to be curtailed. One of the teacher-participants also concurred with the latter assertion by stating that he wished that there was more parental involvement to boost the embracing of *ubuntu* by the learners. Without good values the future of the society is doomed. Values are pivotal to the well-being of society. The values that are cherished transcend language, outward expression of culture, physical appearance or belief (DoE 2001:9). These experiences showed that there might be a strong need for the curriculum to include *ubuntu* philosophy.

Ubuntu and the Curriculum

Ubuntu is one of the fundamental values of the South African Constitution and has been proven to be relevant to education. *Ubuntu* is said to emanate out of the political tumult prior the 1990s and peacemakers wanted to ensure that in the process of creating a new framework, they would formulate a sentiment that would become part of the defining vision of the democracy (DoE 2001: 15). Furthermore, this publication states that there was a need in South Africa “for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimisation” (DoE 2001: 15). Whilst this kind of curriculum has not been crystallized and formalised as yet curriculum planners need to work towards its embracement.

The new South African education system, the NCS is based on various aspects of a democratic society. As mentioned above, the NCS is largely derived from the Constitution of the Republic. *Ubuntu* is one of the values cherished by the Constitution. However, what is really necessary is to equip teachers to understand the basic tenets of *ubuntu*. The DoE publication (2001: 16) states that out of the values of *ubuntu* follows the practices of compassion, kindness, altruism and respect which are at the centre of making schools places of effective culture of learning and teaching. *Ubuntu* is envisaged as a philosophy that would ensure that there is more diligence and a culture of achievement. The publication further points out:

Equality might require us to put up with people who are different, non-sexism and non-racism might require us to rectify the inequities of the past, but *ubuntu* goes much further: it embodies the concept of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference...Ultimately; *ubuntu* requires you to respect others if you are to respect yourself.

Conclusion

This case study has shed light upon a number of aspects associated with peace education. The study reflects that *ubuntu* can be one of the philosophies used to instil discipline and responsibility in schools. As envisaged in the current education system

in South Africa, schools can be vehicles and catalysts for the ultimate transformation of society. The interactive approaches employed in this study also show that these can steer schools to success levels as they entrench moral values. Other critics though, can point that teaching moral values can lead to indoctrination. Yet when this arises educators need to guard against it. Haydon (2003: 79) argues that to many educators, the idea of teaching moral and social responsibility may appear to run the risk of indoctrinating learners in society's values or for imposing educators' values. Conscientious educators though, will find ways of avoiding indoctrination. Involving learners through interactive activities may be one way of avoiding this indoctrination.

Preparing learners to be good citizens is one major task of schools. Archard (2003: 89) points out that countries need citizens and citizens are created. Furthermore, Archard posits that countries can only survive if they have a citizenry adequate to their nature and education is pivotal in creating citizens. A violent society cannot help in the transformation of schools. The study also shows that there are some African values that can nurture society towards a right direction despite sceptics. *Ubuntu* philosophy and peace education are some of the crucial cornerstones that can be used to minimise violence and enhance peace. *Ubuntu* philosophy, like peace education, provides meaning to life and is underpinned by wise lessons spilling over into precious coping skills; it encourages the development of personal and communal visions and missions (Broodryk 2006: 19). Schools are institutions that can prepare learners to be future leaders who can embrace good values. For learners to be useful in their society they need to have gone through education that has transformed them into matured citizens.

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About the Author

Vuyisile Msila is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education (Educational Management) at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Apart from Educational Management and Leadership, his interests include Sociology of Education as well as Educational Policy.

International Journal of Educational Policies

ISSN: 1307-3842

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