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The Promise of Peace Studies: An Effective Weapon for Today's Challenging South African Classrooms?

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ABSTRACT

Research is beginning to show that school violence is becoming a global concern. Schools in various countries experience some form of violence. Long before they go to school, children learn that the society solves its conflicts and its problems through violent means. In many schools learners soon internalise the violence that they witness daily in their classrooms and school playgrounds; they grow up suspicious, angry and violent. The society influences what happens inside the school premises simply because schools are the microcosm of society. This review article explores the potential of peace studies in South African classrooms. Currently, the curriculum does not emphasize this discipline, although in the past few years violent incidents have been happening in schools. In this paper the authors approach the topic by firstly looking at the historical significance of violence in South Africa and its bearing on the present society. Secondly, they investigate important philosophies that have a potential to enhance peace in schools. South Africa is unique in that the apartheid legacy played a role in breeding a violent society. This paper argues that there is much need for policies that would directly address the challenges linked to violent behaviour in schools. Conscientious and proactive educators can use peace studies for example, to address the violent youth culture. Peace studies can also curb violent behavior sometimes displayed by teachers upon learners.

Keywords: Peace studies; Ubuntu philosophy; youth violence; schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

This article focuses on the potential of peace studies in schools. Peace studies is a field of social science that identifies and analyses violent and non-violent behaviours as well as structural mechanisms, attending social conflicts with a view towards understanding those processes which lead to a more desirable human condition (Dugan 1989: 74). It aims at the prevention, de-escalation and solution of conflict by peaceful means. The Kroc Institute (2008) defines peace studies as an interdisciplinary academic field that draws on disciplines such as psychology to (i) understand the causes of armed conflict; (ii) develop ways to prevent and resolve war, genocide, terrorism, gross violation of human rights; and (iii) build peaceful and just systems and societies. Peace studies as a field is concerned with conflict transformation and seeks to ensure that victory is attained by all those involved in conflict. The area of peace studies in South Africa needs to be an important area especially given the fact that post-apartheid education policy is linked to the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1986). The Preamble to the Constitution states that its aims are to:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law (DoE, 2002)

The above clearly shows that education policy in South Africa is based on values that seek to promote social justice. Building a democratic society will need peaceable citizens. However, one should acknowledge that coming from a violent past, (apartheid was a violent policy against humanity), and achieving peace will always present its own challenges. The thesis in this article is that peace studies will be crucial in schools, if they are to produce responsible citizens. The authors have reviewed literature to explore this theme and later they argue why a specific policy is necessary to address school violence. The discussion starts by briefly exploring the current context of violence. We then explore societal values and how communities can be conscientised to embrace and support peace studies policy in schools. It is however, a critical commonplace that violence in South Africa has its roots in apartheid policy which was characterised by political domination of one group of people over the others.

2. DEFINITION OF PEACE

Definitions of peace have been extended beyond the notion of negative peace, that is, in the 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. In this regard peace studies have a deep pedagogical significance and educators should understand such conceptions. Galtung and Jacobsen (2000) assert that the best way to define peace is to define violence, its antithesis. This can be the starting point for conscientious educators and their learners who are eager to manage and overcome violence. Educators need to study latest research findings and inculcate human rights education in their classrooms.

Curriculum that includes peace embraces the teaching of basic human rights and familiarization with development problems (Pulkkinan 1989: 88). Hinde and Bateson (1989) concur when they point out that peace in schools has been interpreted in a narrow sense and they argue that education that promotes peace needs to start in the home and should then move over to the classroom teaching as this is pivotal for people throughout life.

3. THE APARTHEID POLICY: THE BEDROCK OF A VIOLENT SOCIETY?

Within the South African context, it is unimaginable to talk about violence without tracing it back to the draconian apartheid laws. It is now more than two decades after the attainment of liberation, yet there are many aspects of society that can still be linked to the apartheid policy. Apartheid was very violent in nature and was instrumental in breeding violent youth and society. Unjust laws were used to suppress the political activity of the black people. Lotter (1997:24) argues that violence and threats were often used as a means to repress resistance against oppression. Furthermore, this writer contends that:

Political domination in the apartheid society meant that blacks were governed against their will. They were coerced to do many things that for good reasons they did not want to do. They were also forced to refrain from doing things they regarded as legitimately in their self-interest to do. They could not freely determine their actions and well-being; they were excluded from the decision-making processes of their society. They had no say in most decisions affecting them, and no say in how and by whom those decisions were made. Such political domination and its widespread effects on people's lives generated intense feelings of anger and diverse strategies of violent and non-violent resistance.

This excerpt shows that long before freedom was attained in South Africa, domination, exploitation and oppression by government begot a violent society. Unfortunately, schools were part of the state institutions that disseminated this propaganda. Then in 1985 and 1986, a decade after the 1976 uprisings as explained above, black learners were demanding "liberation before education". More student activists were detained nationwide. As the soldiers occupied school yards, tension mounted in all black schools (Human Awareness Programme, 1990). Bantu Education for black South Africans had been a means of restricting the development of the learner by distorting school knowledge to ensure control over the intellect of the learners and teachers, and propagating state propaganda (Kallaway, 1988). Education for black South Africans was a way of maintaining the blacks in a permanent state of political and economic subordination. School children under apartheid became aware that the education system had been an obvious instrument of control to protect power and privilege. The resistance to apartheid education sensitised the black learners and made them to be aware of the need to strive for a better system of education. Vogelmann and Simpson (1990) wrote about how the apartheid's ghost after 1990 had come back to haunt its creators (the National Party) for the escalating conflict at the time. Furthermore, they point out that South Africa is rooted in this history. Naylor (2002) also argues that much violence today should be attributed to apartheid. "South Africa's political, social and economic conditions have all been shaped and devastated by apartheid" (Naylor 2002:1). This discussion is in no way justifying a violent society, but seeks to understand its origins. Debates on violence in the South African society and particularly in schools would be flawed if it disregards this historical context and reality.

4. VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION IN SCHOOLS: SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD

Newspaper reports in South Africa continue to confound many as they reflect different kinds of violence in schools: *Schooled in violence*; *School violence under spotlight*; *Scared at school* are all some of the newspaper headlines that emblazon newspapers occasionally. In fact, Media Tenor South Africa reports that in the period from January 2007 until April 2009 there was not one single month without coverage of school violence in South African television news. This is alarming and one of the biggest teacher unions in South Africa, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (Naptosa) was quoted as saying that recruiting young people to the teaching profession would be difficult if violence in schools continues (Mail and Guardian, 2006). The paradox in this scenario is that schools are being declared as the most unsafe places, as many critics are arguing that children are more likely to get violated against at school than at any other place. One would wonder what happened to the traditional picture of the school; a place of order and discipline.

The above portrays a rather bleak picture. South Africa is fast becoming one of the most violent societies in the world (CSVR, 2010). The CSVR Report also explicates that among the factors that worsen the situation are the following:

- A problem of armed violence linked to a subculture of violence and criminality;
- Inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization;
- Vulnerability of young people linked to inadequate child rearing and poor youth socialization;
- Perceptions and values related to violence and crime;
- Reliance on the criminal justice system.

Many of these happen outside the school premises and this shows that the society influences what happens within schools. Netshitahame and Vollenhoven (2002) state that the problem of violence in schools like the related problem of violence in society has become one of the most burning educational issues. Mortimore (1997) also argues that schools are part of the larger society and are subject to the society's norms, rules and influences. Violence in schools can be divided into various categories and these include bullying which might amount to serious injuries. Lately, some learners have been found to carry knives and guns to school. Furthermore, there have been a number of fatalities in various schools around the country in the past years. Prominent among these though is the growing sexual violence. The Human Rights Watch (2001) notes:

South African girls too often encounter violence in their schools. South African girls continue to be raped, sexually abused, sexually harassed, and assaulted at school by male classmates and teachers. For many South African girls, violence and abuse are an inevitable part of the school environment. Although girls in South Africa have better access to school than many of their counterparts in other sub-Saharan states, they are confronted with levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools that impede their access to education on equal terms with male students.

Sadly, many girl learners have to leave school because of persisting sexual violence. Severe bullying has also made many learners to leave school because they fear what might happen. However, as pointed above, violence in schools is not peculiar to South Africa; all over the world there seems to be problems associated with violent behaviour in schools. Potts (2006) examines Australian cases that capture schools as dangerous places by exploring the extent of violence from pupils to pupils, teachers to pupils, teachers to teachers, pupils to teachers, dangers from physical environments and lastly dangers from the natural environment.

In England, The Daily Telegraph reports of research that suggests that physical attacks by pupils on teachers are more common in primary schools than in secondary schools. Teachers are “threatened, pushed, scratched, punched, bitten, kicked and spat at” (The Daily Telegraph, 2010). Furthermore, Benbenishty and Astor (2008) point out that time and again the public in countries such as Japan, Finland, Brazil, Norway, Israel, Malaysia, America, and Ethiopia are alarmed by atrocious acts of violence in schools. These writers cite an incident where a gunman in Finland opened fire at his trade school, killing ten people and burning their bodies. Moore et al. (2008), examine the sexual violence in Organisation of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) focusing on Europe, Australasia and North America. In their research they show how the growing violence in these countries is affecting the pupils’ health. All these examples show that school violence is a global problem facing all countries although this paper is only interested as to how policy can be influenced in South Africa to combat school violence.

5. PEACE STUDIES AND ITS RELEVANCE

Forcey and Harris (1999) argue that peace studies is a relatively new interdisciplinary field of study which has mostly focused on war prevention, social and economic justice, and ecological security. Furthermore, these writers assert that peace studies offers high school educators, as well as community leaders, theories and strategies that address the violent youth culture. Peace researchers usually talk of the need for “positive” peace as opposed to “negative” peace. Brock-Utne (1989) defines positive peace as an aspect that has to do with the integration of human society and functional cooperation. She defines this in positive light; as the presence of desirable conditions in society. Hinde and Bateson (1989) have also highlighted of the need to emphasise the aims of educating for peace, to be more positive than the mere removal of current threats. “It must seek to build a world in which the causes of civilisation’s discontents are minimized, and the potential of individuals to live fulfilled lives is more fully achieved” (Hinde & Bateson 1989: 16). The latter is in agreement with the post-apartheid education policy as cited in the introduction above.

Chubb and Moe (1999) have pointed out that there are no panaceas in social policy although some critics can perceive peace studies as among the solutions or panaceas that can assist in bringing about peace in society. Mortimore (1997) argues that effective schools can compensate for the ills of the society for schools offer an opportunity for the individual to develop whatever talent he or she possesses. Furthermore, Mortimore argues that effective schools can enable even the disadvantaged learners to mount any challenge. With the challenge of violence in schools, schools that can deliver peace studies well can support learners to grow towards a peaceful life. Many schools fail to achieve any measure of success because of violence and decadent morals among learners and teachers. School management and staff that want to ensure success in the absence of violence need strategies to teach peace and much literature highlights various forms of introducing peace programmes in schools.

Forcey and Harris (1999:3) aver:

Peace Studies examines problems of violence in the schools in three different modes: peacekeeping; peacemaking; and peace building. In the peacekeeping mode, educators use violence prevention activities to create an orderly learning climate in schools. For peacemaking, educators use conflict resolution techniques to teach students to manage their own conflicts constructively. With peace building, finally, educators try to teach how the power of nonviolence can demonstrate to the young futility of inflicting violence on others.

Schools need such a policy; one that would not only explore the causes of violence but also seek to overcome such challenges. Schools can lead in the fight for a just society.

6. VALUES LINKED TO PEACE

As highlighted above, the post-apartheid system of education magnifies values associated with human dignity and safety. However, we need to acknowledge that some misdemeanors happen as schools become sites of violence and danger for learners and teachers. In South Africa there are ample documents and Acts that support safe school environments. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act 84 of 1993); the Constitution of South Africa 1996 are some of the documents that spell out the need for the rights and safety of pupils in schools. However, the societies where most schools are situated are experiencing moral decay. The latter is not peculiar to South Africa as pointed out above. Potts (2006: 319-320) examines incidents in Australia when he states:

Whether schools today are dangerous and unsafe places remains to be seen, but certainly the media find it worthy to report instances of schools as dangerous and unsafe places. For example, in the period December 2004 to February 2005 inclusive, Melbourne's *The Age*, the city's quality broadsheet newspaper, reported at least eight stories on the dangers that schools and their staff posed to pupils. Headlines included: ' "Reckless" teacher had threesome with girl students and spoke of incest'; 'Judge jails "lustful school teacher"'; 'Criminal checks reveal second sex-offence teacher'; 'No jail plea for sex count teachers'; 'Teacher in sex case faces sack'; 'Telcos move on school SMS bullies'; 'Teacher, school staff dismissals rise'. Even allowing for the public's obsession with sex and sexual peccadillos and for the fact that sex sells newspapers, these headlines suggest that schools can be dangerous places.

The above scenario does not bode well for effective teaching and learning in any country. Peace studies can be introduced as one of the tools that would see Constitutional ideals such as human dignity, brought to fruition. It should be clear though, that schools cannot do it alone; even the most effective programme in peace studies will fail if the society does not become part of the campaign for peaceful schools. Many poor children learn in schools that are inherently dangerous, where the physical space is not conducive to peaceful learning. For many of these learners there can never be peace in their lives as long as their schools have this "violent disposal" to their beings. Stewart and Knott (2002) have portrayed some schools as places where learners encounter hostile learning environments. With no choice, many poor black families send their children to schools where there is widespread drug use, teacher absenteeism, no culture of learning and teaching, bullying and various other ills not conducive to peaceful living. Soon some of these learners drop out, for school is not

conducive or they might stay just to make sure that none of their peers ever learn effectively; this can be a vicious cycle parents never want (Stewart & Knott, 2002).

However, even when given the worst of circumstances, diligent teachers will strive for a peaceful environment. All parents, irrespective of their socio-economic status want their children to succeed. Assiduous teachers will lead by example by showing and living a philosophy of peace. There are a number of philosophers who were born or had lived in South Africa whose peace philosophies can be invaluable for schools striving for peace. Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe are among these leaders. However, here we will briefly explore Gandhi's philosophy on peace.

Mohandas Gandhi otherwise known as Mahatma which means great soul, is arguably one of the leaders who is a personification of peace in the 20th century. Gandhi was very relevant to the poor and destitute, for his philosophy which was based on character education was mainly taught to the poor and illiterate. He used his *satyagraha*; a system that hardly requires formal education but strong character education (Sinha, 2010). The term *satyagraha* literally means an insistence on truth using non-violent cooperation. Allen (2007) contends that Gandhi's formulations of peace education are shaped by his commitment to *satyagraha*. Whilst, Gandhi's philosophy can be found complex at times-its emphasis on peace is unequivocal. Educators can use his positive moral and spiritual vision in the classroom. Allen (2007: 294) avers:

Gandhi offers many valuable insights on education. Educators can benefit greatly by studying his formulations of the true goal of education as liberation; providing a means for service to meet the needs of others, for liberation from all forms of servitude and domination, and for one's ethical and spiritual liberation. He presents challenging insightful formulations of basic and new education with regard to character building as the goal of education...Gandhi's peace education approach offers possibilities for conflict resolution when contradictions become exacerbated and individual groups, or nations are on the brink of overt violence.

Gandhi was more for self transformation; that the individual who changes can change the world around. Teachers can use these principles based on truth and morality. Moreover, these beliefs "include resisting injustice, developing a spirit of service, selflessness and sacrifice, emphasizing one's responsibilities rather than rights, self-discipline, simplicity of life-style and attempting to maintain truthful and non-violent relations with others" (WAY et al., 2007). Gandhi had the ambition of bringing about world peace, and many saw him as the real fighter for justice. Martin Luther King Jr. was later to be quoted saying, "if humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony". Patel (no date) highlights Gandhi's 5 teachings to bring about world peace:

- Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear and punishment.
- Learning the power of non-violence. What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?
- The greatest noble cause is to display our desire to bring about peace in this world by our own sacrifice and not that of those who oppose our views.

- An eye for an eye will only make the world blind. Our cultural, religious and political differences should not provide the backbone to invoke conflicts that can only bring sorrow and destruction to our world.
- We must become the change we want to see in the world. We should not discriminate amongst ourselves based on faith, caste, creed or any other differences.

It is hard working teachers with a commitment to lasting peace that would be able to instill these values and they need a dedicated community that would support the school.

7. THE ROLE OF PEACE STUDIES

One horrendous aspect the learners learn from society in recent history is the ill of xenophobia. Among others, peace studies needs to trounce this monster of xenophobia. In the years 2006 up to 2008 there was widespread violence against black foreign nationals. In one gruesome tale the National Terror Alert (2008) reports, "More Anti-immigrant violence rages on in South Africa. The man certainly looked dead, lying motionless in the dust of the squatter camp". This is the violence that learners witness outside their schools. The pictures of destitute foreigners have sent disconcerting implications to learners who have begun to internalize violence as an acceptable way to solve conflict in society. Arguably, schools have become battlefields, dangerous places because the youth tends to model the violence they see happening in the society. The peace studies field has to address this. The teacher needs to alert the learner about the institution of war. Hinde and Bateson (1989) argue that one major goal of education for peace must be to alert individuals to the ways in which their behaviour may be affected by war and hatred. These writers highlight two sources of enemy stereotype; fear of the strange (unknown) and the fact that every person seeks to define himself or herself as an individual; a South African, a black person, a Tree Party member and so on. Hinde and Bateson (1989) also aver, "one task of education for peace must therefore be to expose the psychological mechanisms at work in the creation of the enemy image and in other processes whereby the institution of war influences individuals". At the same time it must promote knowledge of other peoples; to render the acquisition of an enemy image less likely in the future.

Effective peace studies will address some of these challenges highlighted above. The community and society at large have a huge role to play in ensuring that children are brought up to be responsible citizens. Lieven (1989) declares that the development of children's positive social behaviour towards others is crucial; learning about peace will not be successful unless one is also fostering a positive outlook and an attitude of caring and cooperation. Education needs to liberate learners and enable them to be prosocial. Lieven (1989) argues that parents and teachers who model warm loving relationship will give rise to prosocial children. Yet, in the society today many children grow without parents hence the school's role becomes critical in this regard.

The challenge the society has is the inability to deal with the violent youth. Usually, parents blame schools for ill-disciplined and uncouth, aggressive children. Educators on the other hand blame parents for the uncontrollable violent youth. It is because of this blame game that society will take time to solve the problem of violence in society. Forcey and Harris (1999) state that schools have tried to employ violent means to deter violent youngsters, Moreover, Forcey and Harris argue that adults fearing teenagers often threaten them with

punitive action rather than providing the love and care all children need. The community can help schools in the building of responsible peaceful citizens; it is responsible communities that would help in making the school's task lighter by teaching aspects of social justice. Violent communities (where conflict is frequently unresolved) do not help to enhance the positive growth of the learners. The children can be taught by society that there will always be conflicts but these can be resolved in more peaceful ways. Peaceable families and communities will ensure that children create peaceful and healthy school climates.

Forcey and Harris (1999) posit that educators in peaceable schools often try to involve parents in building respect for conflict resolution processes. These writers also show the need for collaboration between schools and families. They add that efforts to model cooperative behaviour in classrooms can be undermined by coercive parental discipline. Moreover, families are the settings for such learning, and schools can contribute to their peacefulness by providing guidelines for consistent, safe and loving approaches to self-discipline (Forcey & Harris, 1999). The community and society need to rethink the way in which children are socialized. There needs to be a shift from stereotypical roles; it is acceptable for boys to be confrontational and aggressive whilst girls are expected to be gentle and feminine. Brock-Utne (1989: 153) writing about peace in schools, points out:

It would be a different type of education, of socialization for both boys and girls. It would entail the development of competence in nonviolent conflict solutions, in power-to and a doing away with strong competition, power-over. It would mean girls' refusing to become feminine in the sense when femininity means the acceptance of playing a serving and secondary role...Sex role socialization seems to be such an important part of all socialization and so related to learning going into attitudes furthering conformity, loyalty, violence, competition, caring and relating, that it seems necessary to combat such socialisation, especially of a rigid kind.

The communities need to be sensitised to oppose these ills as they advance for peace studies. Pont-Brown and Krumboltz (1999) cite Harris' three important strategies towards a culture of nonviolence. Peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace building are three strategies. "Peace building seeks to create a culture of nonviolence by challenging youths not only to reduce violence in society, but also to commit themselves to building peace in all arenas of life (Pont-Brown & Krumboltz, 1999). Schools and surrounding communities can work in various ways to achieve these three important strategies. When children learn these from the community; they impact on the school climate. Communities can introduce effective programmes that can enhance the youth preparedness to be receptive to peace studies, among others. Winfield (1999) writes about how community-based programmes helped youth in the United States of America to develop empathy, whilst they also developed relationships with people different from themselves. The same conclusion about programmes outside the school was attested by Harris (1999) who witnessed a Summer Institute that taught nonviolence to adolescents as a way of preparing them to resist peer pressure for violent behaviour. In traditional Africa there was a philosophy that worked for the communities; this is the philosophy of *ubuntu*. Arguably, if *ubuntu* values can be upheld the communities and schools could be able to restore peaceful society.

8. UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AND PEACE

In a recent study, Msila (2009) argues that *ubuntu* can be vital for bringing peace in African societies. More current research has shown that there is a need to accommodate the African philosophies in education and *ubuntu* is one aspect of this philosophy that could not be

overlooked. Waghid (2004) argues that an African philosophy of education demonstrates the potential to promote justice, courage and truthfulness in individuals. This is not surprising when one considers that in Africa education was an aspect of community; the village wanted to see growth cultural attainment and moral growth. *Ubuntu* as part of this philosophy which promoted some form of common identity, communalism, an understanding that one cannot let the other person perish when they could help. This is sometimes referred to as African humanism. *Ubuntu* can offer an effective peace foundation in schools where learners would be made to understand that when they do wrong, it affects fellow human beings in many ways because no one exists as an individual. Van Wyk and Higgs (2004:203) state:

According to Letseka (2000, 181) the importance of communality to traditional African life cannot be overemphasised. This is because community and belonging to a community of people constitute the very fabric of traditional African life. Unlike the Western liberal notion of the individual as some sort of entity that is capable of existing and flourishing on its own, unconnected to any community of other individuals, not bound by any biological relationships or socio-economic, political and cultural relationships, obligations, duties, responsibilities and conventions that frame and define any community of individuals.

Ubuntu philosophy expects to see people treating one another fairly. *Ubuntu* regards all people to be equal when one considers their human-ness. All people are equal and all deserve the same treatment from life and this is the reason why peace studies without *ubuntu* is not conceivable in Africa. *Ubuntu* espouses unwritten and almost innate quality of the African to uphold the spirit of communalism; this entails accepted moral codes, instinctive kindness and fairness. An *ubuntu*-inspired curriculum would expect learners to be just, to uphold human dignity, to appreciate that people are different and to understand that when people work together peace and harmony can be brought to fruition. *Ubuntu* can also undergird the principle of fostering human rights and peace in education. The learners will soon learn that there is much to gain from respecting and not discriminating against others; this is the essence of peace.

However, *ubuntu* has waned in the society hence the current challenges in the South African society. Ntuli (1999) states that the spirit of *ubuntu* has long been disappeared. He states that that is the reason why the society needs 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. Dandala (1996) also points out that *ubuntu* requires a great deal of learning and sharing and institutions can achieve this through the training of people to practice greater interaction. This is a challenge to schools; there needs to be a conscious effort to try and embrace values such as *ubuntu* in the classroom; as pointed out above, schools are permeable and what happens in their premises might spill over into the communities. The DoE publication of Values (2001) lists *ubuntu* as one of the ten fundamental values of the South African Constitution and spells out its relevance to education. The document 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 victimization.

9. CONCLUSION

School violence is a global challenge. Schools in various countries report occasional violence from time to time. South Africa shares some of these international challenges as reports of school violence continue to be reported.. There is a strong need to look for

solutions before the society perishes from the seemingly uncontrollable anger that children are beginning to internalise. Peace studies can create opportunities for teachers and their learners to learn to build a peaceful society. The Constitution of the Republic on which the post-apartheid education policy is built, calls for a peaceful and democratic society. The document of the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2001) also examines a South African idea to mould a people from diverse origins, cultural practices, languages into one within a framework democratic in character that can absorb, accommodate and mediate conflicts and adversarial interests without oppression and injustice. Educational institutions can be a fecund ground to magnify these aspirations.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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