



Integration of value based education in the Kenyan education system as a response to emerging challenges

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Abstract

Value based education (VBE) is an outcome anchored on culture, religion, morals, values and character formation for holistic development. Values and attitudes are components for cognitive knowledge and are useful in attaining and maintaining peace across cultures. VBE enhances values for holistic education which promotes nationalism and global citizenship. These can be integrated in the school curriculum to enhance character building. Invaluably, value education leads to development of fundamental principles, common humanity, sustainable development, social justice and equality for peaceful co-existence. There is need to produce citizens who are able to respond to emerging issues through negotiation and mediation. The purpose of this paper is to assess how value based education can be embedded in the school curriculum as part of the national curriculum reform process. Methodology involved identification and analysis of documents focusing on values education and global frameworks. Additionally, review and documentary analysis of varied reports and literature was conducted. Qualitative descriptive and comparative analyses were used to interrogate the position of VBE in promoting peaceful coexistence and spurring growth. This paper reveals that values mold character which can enhance academic achievement, cohesion, teamwork, strengthen relationships and perpetuate attainment of sustainable development.

Keywords: character, education, global citizenship values, living values education, value based education

1. Introduction

Education is a process of inculcating values to equip learners to live a life that is satisfying to the individual in accordance with agreed societal values and ideals. The role of education is emphasized for character development; to bring out inherent qualities, latent potentialities and developing personality for individual wellbeing and the society (Gulati and Pant, 2008)^[13]. Value based education (VBE) aims at instilling qualities among students that culminate in holistic development of character in preparation for handling life challenges, growth and survival. Value - based education is known by a number of names including values education, value education, living values education, moral education, character education, among others. Each term has a slightly different meaning but generally refers to the same concept (Hawkes, 2013)^[8].

Values education is anchored on Ubuntu philosophy which is a natural way of being, it is about the essence of humanity. It is an ancient code of ethics based on respect, cooperation, generosity, forgiveness, sharing and reconciliation all of which are tenets of humanity which results in compassion, reciprocity, dignity and harmony in the interest of building and maintaining just communities. It gives an opportunity to explore and inculcate universal values. This philosophy refers to the human spirit and is anchored on goodwill, generosity, dignity, and reconciliation, a feeling of responsibility for each other's well-being and solving problems together. These values form the basis of life-coping skills and resonate with various sets of values agreed upon by many communities. Ubuntu is based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in the

spirit of family (Broodryk, 2002; Broodryk, 2006)^[2, 1]. It is a way of life that has held families and communities together for centuries, it enables people to live together in harmony and peace, which makes it a profound basis for values education for a better world (UNESCO, 1998; Sayers, 2016)^[26, 21].

Teachers play a major role in imbibing values since they spend a lot of time with pupils and students in schools. Values that can be incorporated in the curriculum may include peace, respect, honesty, tolerance, humility and cooperation (Iyer, 2013)^[10]. The Constitution of Kenya stipulates that value-principles are measures of integrity: high standards of professional ethics, efficient and equitable use of resources, efficient provision of services, involvement in policy making, accountability, transparency, fairness; equal opportunities among diverse communities, men and women and persons with disabilities. According to the constitution, the people of Kenya are committed to respect for the environment, nurturing and protecting the well-being of individuals, family, communities and the nation. Other essential values are human rights, equality, freedom, democracy, social justice and the rule of law¹

Education is a fundamental right world over, and in Kenya, it is based on the principles of political equality, national unity, social justice and human dignity; freedom of religion and conscience; freedom from ignorance and disease; equal opportunities for all citizens, irrespective of race, religion, sex or color; equitable distribution of national income; and the promotion and preservation of cultural heritage. The goal of education in this nation is to prepare and equip citizens to

¹ www.klrc.go.ke

function in their environment and to be useful members of society. Through education, Kenya strives to foster national unity, serve the needs of national development, equip youth with knowledge, skills and expertise for participation in enhancing quality of life, promote social justice and morality and foster various cultures for development of positive attitudes for global citizenship (UNESCO, 2006)^[25]. Through these goals promotion of political, social and economic development is possible.

2. Need for Value Based Education

VBE plays a significant role in dealing with new and emerging challenges. These challenges include economic, social and environmental issues. Emerging issues in Africa are risk of social unrests, high fuel and food prices, civil wars and uncertain political transition (United Nations, 2013; African Development Bank, 2011)^[23]. Other identified challenges are climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, desertification, inadequate disaster preparedness, low resilience to natural disasters, potential non-achievement of millennium development goals, energy crisis, trafficking and piracy, low penetration of ICT services, urbanization, need to develop disaster response mechanisms, genetically modified crops in relation to food security and technology transfer (Economic Commission for Africa, 2012)^[7]. With increased erosion of moral values and threats to values, there is the desire to build a global community that is peaceful and prosperous (Drake, 2003)^[6]. However, the recent exit of Britain from the European Union threatens the desire for a global world and global citizenship.

The Association for Living Values Education (ALIVE) works to help students explore and develop positive values and realize their potential. Its goal is to create caring, respectful environments where students feel safe, want to learn and live their values. This organization has a number of participating countries. They train living values educators working with street children and children in difficult situations, youth in need of drug rehabilitation, young offenders, refugees and children affected by war². In the recent past, there has been an uprise of social ills in schools and the society. Examples of these are school unrests, political protests, domestic violence, violence and crime. These can be addressed through integration of VBE in the curricula.

The desire for VBE is evident from efforts in various countries despite the lack of consensus on value concerns in society. For instance, there are gaps in knowledge about values in New Zealand schools. It is not known what stakeholders believe and know about values implementation in the curriculum, nor is the effect of teaching values on students known. Questions that arise from reviewed literature is what and whose values are to be taught? Are values to be "taught" explicitly or "caught". In New Zealand there has been lack of research on the nature and effect of values (Notman, Latham, Angus, Connor, McGregor and Scott, 2016)^[18]. However, research reveals that values play a key role in delivering educational philosophy usually embedded in the school motto. Educational beliefs and values can be promoted through documented rules and regulations, staff and student handbooks (Notman et.al, 2016)^[18].

In Australia, a study was conducted to design and undertake projects that identify good practice in values education and to demonstrate how implementation of the National Framework for Values could realize provision of values education (Curriculum Corporation, 2006)^[4]. This shows the need for VBE in schools. Educators and school administrators in India have expressed the need for a program that will enable schools to provide values education in the formal and informal curriculum. Emphasis has also been made on the need for schools to inculcate skills, values and attitudes that help in harmonious (Central Board of Secondary Education, 2012). The Framework for Action on Values Education in Early Childhood shows the need for integrating values in early childhood programs. The concern of participating countries and organizations, including Kenya, Mauritius, Beirut, Kuwait, Israel and Sweden, was reinforcement of awareness of the need for a flexible, creative, communicative and supportive learning environment for a young child; the impact of a value-based child friendly learning environment, importance of surrounding children with human core-values from an early age and the possible ways of implementing values-based early childhood approaches for better social, emotional, academic and spiritual development (UNESCO, 2000)^[24].

3. Educational Reforms in Kenya and Value Based Education

Kenya's education system has achieved many milestones since independence. However there have been many challenges that require reforms to sustain the ever increasing demand, improve quality and produce students who can handle political, social, economic and environmental challenges (Cheserek and Mugalavai, 2012)^[3]. A value-based curriculum would address issues like marginalization, access and transition rates caused by behavioral problems. Educational reforms in Kenya has resulted in the country enacting five educational reforms since independence, among them are The Ominde Commission of 1964; The Gachathi Commission of 1976 referred to as National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP); The Kamunge Report of 1981; The Mackay Report of 1984 referred to as The Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya and The Koech Report of 1999^[16] referred to as Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQUET); Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System (Koech, 1999; Gachukia, 2003; Kamunge Report, 2008; Ondigi, Ayot, Mueni, Nasibi, 2011)^[16, 12, 14, 19].

Notably the Mackay Report of 1984 recommended the establishment of a second public university and retained the goals of education and training by Ominde report. The goals of education to date are: fostering nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity; promote socio-economic, technological and industrial skills for the country's development; promote individual development and self-fulfillment; promote sound moral and religious values; promote social equality and responsibility; promote respect for varied cultures; promote international consciousness and foster positive attitudes towards other nations and to promote positive attitudes towards good health and environmental protection (Cheserek et al, 2012)^[3]. These goals are sufficient

² www.livingvalues.net

to drive VBE as they cover local, regional and international needs. Coupled with values stipulated by the Kenya Constitution 2010 and Kenya Vision 2030, Kenya can successfully integrate VBE into the curriculum from early childhood to tertiary and university education levels. The reform efforts point to the need for education to address arising challenges. Changes have been proposed and implemented in the curriculum with an intention to promote life-long skills to enable learners to adapt and improve quality of living. In 2011 a Task Force commissioned by the Minister of Education recommended realignment of the Education sector to Vision 2030 and the Constitution of Kenya. Both policy documents recognize education as the vehicle for realization of development goals and sustainable development through industrialization. The latest educational reform effort was initiated in 2015 whose principle aim is to change the 8-4-4 curriculum which has been blamed for overloading students and creating stress among them culminating in low academic performance, school unrests, destruction of property, and irregularity in administration of examinations among others.

4. Framework for Action for Values Education in the Curriculum

Education is responsible for development of values and we cannot overlook the importance of education for values in the 21st Century when peace and security have become a major concern for many nations. National curriculum reforms in Kenya are ongoing and this would be the ideal time to plan for value based education as one of the solutions to the challenges faced in the education system.

There are various frameworks that have been proposed for integration of value based education. These frameworks include steps to structure value based education and application values screen in identifying values and infusing them in the curriculum (Iyer, 2013; Otieno-Omutoko and Gunga, 2016) ^[10]. For instance, the Indian framework for Education for values reiterates that there can be no single approach to value education (Gulati and Pant, 2016). This framework includes statements of vision, expectations, strategies and benchmarks for implementation and assessment of value in schools. This approach concurs with the proposed step wise process and it can be customized to suit specific country needs (Otieno-Omutoko et al, 2016; Iyer, 2013) ^[20, 10]. Various approaches can be used from early childhood to other levels of education.

In planning for VBE, cognizance has to be taken of the fact that value education helps to provide a road map for children and youth to live a life based on ethical principles which are important for the self and the society at large. Family is the first unit for learning for children and parents must take the responsibility of inculcating moral values in children. This will help in setting a basis for teachers to continue with the pursuit of imbibing values in early years of learning. For the family to play its part in value education, parents and guardians need to be sensitized on their role in values education. Research shows the importance of early years of education for positive influence in children. Value orientations are largely determined between age 2 and 6. This is the appropriate time to instill values such as peaceful co-existence, propagate non-violent activities, teaching on self-respect and respect for others and appreciation of diversity.

UNESCO (2000) ^[24] proposes a framework that addresses the basic needs of young children, reaching out to them despite the challenges experienced in developing countries like poverty, social exclusion and urbanization.

Values are internalized through conditioning and socialization, and this explains why living values education is majorly experiential (Indrani, 2012) ^[9]. As much as education depends on cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains to achieve change in behavior, the affective domain would be resourceful in values education because it addresses interests, attitudes, opinions, appreciations, values and emotional sets. Instruction in VBE can be structured through the five levels of the affective domain which are receiving phenomena, responding to phenomena, valuing, organizing values and internalizing values. This approach to learning results in characterization by a value or value complex. It is at the fifth level that individuals will have developed a value system that controls behavior over a long period of time leading to a lifestyle. The objectives of such a person will be concern with personal, social and emotional adjustment. Such a person will display self-reliance in working independently, cooperate in group activities and maintain good habits. Development of a value complex is an expected outcome of values education and can be used for assessment of levels of achievement (Jantan, 2009) ^[11].

To concretize a VBE program, goals and objectives need to be developed. This process is better off as participatory to include policy makers, gatekeepers, caregivers, teachers, religious leaders, parents and children. Objectives will be realized through identification and implementation of activities. Such activities would include training of teachers, sensitization programs for parents/ guardians and community members. Educating of children on values should be coupled with activities to explore; for instance, values of stories, fun activities, song, dance, games and drama. A monitoring and evaluation plan will be key for assessment of performance and for decision making.

Additionally, a communication plan will help in dissemination of information to stakeholders, enhance creation of awareness on children's' needs and rights. The same space can be used for building preventive and corrective skills for conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence. The implementation framework would include addressing value concerns at personal, family, school, community and state levels, with each level being used as a bar to ensure a holistic approach. Community effort can be initiated and nurtured by individuals who participate in building value based networks. To support dissemination of VBE, relevant factual information would be gathered so as to develop realistic guidelines for implementation. Classrooms can be used as environments for VBE by creating value-based learning environments; identifying a culture of values which then become the pillar around which behavior and relationships revolve and which in turn influence the tone of instruction and pedagogical practice (Drake, 2003) ^[6]. Classrooms offer a good environment for teaching and practicing values which can either be incidental and planned that is 'caught' or 'taught.' To enhance and reinforce skills of teachers', initial and continuous training, workshops and seminars can be offered to create and maintain a value-based teaching environment (Drake, 2003) ^[6]. For continual improvement, a quality improvement model can be

used to ensure achievement of objectives and realization of deliverables.

5. Values Education in Practicing Countries

Values education draw from the three domains of learning, that is, cognitive, affective and psychomotor thereby enhancing the skills required for living. Values appeal to the mental, emotional and physical skills of individuals. These domains of learning can be used by educators to plan for values teaching (Jantan, 2009) ^[11]. Living Values Education Program (LVEP) has been implemented in approximately 70 countries at about 6,000 educational settings throughout Africa, Asia, Australia, Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North America. Some of the participating are countries include Mauritius, Kuwait, South Africa and Kenya. Settings include schools, others day care centers, youth clubs, parent associations, centers for school children, health centers and refugee camps.

LVEP covers twelve values namely: peace, respect, cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance and unity. The program is designed to address the whole person and the activities build intrapersonal and interpersonal, social and emotional skills, values based perspectives and behavior. The approach is learner-centered and interactive which makes learning of values interesting and enhances individual participation (Drake, 2003) ^[6]. Following are case study reports showing the impact of value-based education on learning environments, personality and academic achievement in United Kingdom and Australia.

In West Kidlington School in United Kingdom, values was viewed as a platform from which curricular, policy, organizational and pedagogical decisions were made. This approach incorporated systematic introduction of values language, in conjunction with teaching and encouraging students to engage in reflection to understand themselves better. This approach was accompanied by curricular reforms directed at providing learning support for each student based on individual needs for personal and academic development. This emphasizes the need for curricular reforms to integrate value-based education and plan for its implementation within formal and informal educational setups. In this scenario, open, caring and supportive teacher-student relationships were developed which created an environment that allowed explicit and systematic teaching and opportunities for reflection. Teachers and staff consciously modelled values in their collegial relationships and their relationships with students and parents. Students then realized that they had control over their own behavior which improved classroom ambience and engagement which culminated in enjoyable learning. The resultant environment was conducive for personal, social development and academic diligence. This school was above national average and well above that of similar cohort schools. Also reported was emotional stability of students as a benefit of values-based approach to education, as well as improvements in student behavior and greater awareness of the wider community and consequences of their attitudes and actions on that community. Structured periods of silence were reported to have a quietening and calming effect which helped in resolving student conflicts without adult intervention. While the Australian Values Education Program had research projects that revealed values education as key in development

of good practice pedagogy, improved learning environment and greater student attention to classwork. Other positive effects were strengthened teacher-student relationships, classroom climate and ethos, student attitudes and behavior, student knowledge, understanding and achievement. (Hawkes, 2013) ^[8].

In Kenya, challenges that can be addressed through values education are existence of street families, youth unemployment, and various vulnerable children populations like orphaned and sick children and child-headed homes. LVEP works with such populations to create safe environments essential for self-understanding and appreciation of others. This program can be piloted in identified environments to address the needs of these populations and prepare them for worthwhile lives and improve livelihoods. Value –based education would be instrumental in improving academic performance, resolving of conflicts, reduction of social and school unrests, among others.

6. Importance of Value Based Learning Environments

VBE instils educational and cultural values and is aimed at multi-faceted development. It prepares students to live meaningful lives and meet challenges (Iyer, 2013) ^[10]. It is intended to harmonize all aspects of a human being, that is, physical, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social aspects to develop an all-round person. Values shape behavior, relationships and play a great role in making of choices (Indrani, 2012) ^[9]. Countries educate their populations to appreciate diverse cultures and meet challenges. Progress in development can be sustained through a strong value system which will help deal with new and emerging challenges (United Nation, 2013) ^[23].

It is the onus of educators to create a values-based learning environment, this can be done by placing renewed emphasis on moral and cultural dimensions of education which will enable individuals to grasp the individuality of other people and to understand the world's erratic progress towards a certain unity. Respect, peace, honesty and responsibility. To achieve values education there has to be an agreed set principles, and deeply held convictions that will drive the values agenda (Drake, 2007) ^[5]. Teachers play a significant role in in imbuing values, this can be done within the education content and also through the educational process. If deemed appropriate, values education can be handled as a subject in the curriculum but also as a guiding ethos that emphasizes the importance of creating a learning. A values process is all inclusive and calls for participation of various stakeholders, that is parents, teachers, the community and other educators. The success of a value-based program is dependent on training of teachers to create awareness and increase their understanding of themselves. This provides an opportunity for teachers reflect and initiate change in themselves. It is only then that they can provide opportunities that make students feel safe, explore and experience values (Drakes, 2007) ^[5].

Hawkes (2013) ^[8] cites a number of studies that show a correlation between development of high quality values and strengthened academic achievement; a link between performance and moral character as integrally related in the development of personhood. Other scholars show further evidence of joint effects in showing that it is the teacher who

provides quality content through effective pedagogy and establishes good relationships with students for greater academic impact. A United Kingdom Experimental Study reported a positive impact on all education measures including academic achievement. Also revealed is the ways in which a values-based approach to education and learning provides an ethos in which students develop positive characteristics in social interactions and engagement in their school work.

7. Conclusion

Value-based education seems to be the long searched for answer to country specific and shared global challenges. The approach developed by LVEP framework would be an appropriate beginning point for countries that desire to incorporate values education in curriculum reforms and structure values education for holistic character development. Seeking unity in diversity in a national or global context is a goal that all nations ought to seek. It is proven through research that all types of development take place in environments with minimum overt conflicts. Conflicts would reduce in an environment where communication is fostered and a measured understanding is nurtured to reduce the impact of every emerging challenge that face individuals, communities, institutions and nations.

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