

Teacher Professional Development: Preparing African Secondary School Teachers towards Enhancing Peaceful Coexistence in Multi-Ethnic Classroom Communities

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Abstract : African countries contend with many developmental challenges particularly that of overcoming ethnic and religious conflicts. There is the recent wave of terrorism which is also ascribed to religious intolerance. It is a reality that most sub-Saharan African countries/communities consist of several distinct ethnic groups. In a typical classroom, within both rural and urban contexts, children from diverse ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds converge to learn and grow together. This implies that education has the potentials for fostering inter-communal understanding such that young people could learn, grow together and assume leadership positions to work in pursuit of common goals of nation building. However, given the spate of inter communal clashes erupting too frequently in many parts of the continent and the dangerous trend of ethnicization of serious national affairs, it is doubtful if these objectives are being realized through education. Thus, this paper argued that the current developments indicate failure of the education system in the realization of the countries' educational goals of creating united, peaceful and indivisible nations, thus far. Further, the failure occurred and would continue to persist unless teachers are purposefully prepared in terms of professional competencies and attitudes to entrench in their students the culture of peaceful coexistence through the various professional roles they play within the schools and communities. Therefore, the paper examined the changing context and challenging roles expected of sub-Saharan African teachers in engendering peaceful coexistence and the need to purposefully develop their capacity and mindset for the new roles. The paper then recommended programs to expose and re-educate teachers towards such roles.

Keywords : sub-Saharan Africa, teacher, professional development, peaceful coexistence, multi-ethnicity, communities

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