AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON PEACE EDUCATION: *UBUNTU* LESSONS IN RECONCILIATION

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Abstract – This essay examines the value of educating for peace. It does this through a consideration of the African cultural world-view known as *ubuntu*, which highlights the essential unity of humanity and emphasises the importance of constantly referring to the principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation in efforts to resolve our common problems. The essay is not based on field research, but rather on a discussion of the issues pertaining to *ubuntu* and peace education. The discussion focuses on how Desmond Tutu utilised the principles of *ubuntu* during his leadership of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It also outlines the five stages of the peace-making process found among *ubuntu* societies: acknowledging guilt; showing remorse and repenting; asking for and giving forgiveness; and paying compensation or reparations as a prelude to reconciliation. Potential lessons for educating for peace and reconciliation are highlighted based on the premise that the *ubuntu* approach to human relationship-building can offer an example to the world.

Résumé – UNE PERSPECTIVE AFRICAIN SUR L'EDUCATION À LA PAIX: LEÇONS *UBUNTU* EN RÉCONCILIATION – Cet essai examine la valeur de l'éducation à la paix. Il fait ceci à travers une considération de la vision culturelle africaine du monde connue sous le nom d'*ubuntu*, qui accentue l'unité essentielle de l'humanité et souligne l'importance de se référer constamment aux principes de l'empathie, du partage et de la coopération dans les efforts pour résoudre nos problèmes communs. L'essai n'est pas basé sur des recherches sur le terrain, mais plutôt sur une explication des problèmes concernant l'*ubuntu* et l'éducation à la paix. L'explication se concentre sur la façon dont Desmond Tutu a utilisé les principes de l'*ubuntu* pendant sa direction de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation sud-africaine. Elle indique également les cinq étapes du processus de rétablissement de la paix trouvées parmi les sociétés *ubuntu*: reconnaître sa culpabilité; montrer du remord et se repentir; demander et accorder le pardon; et payer une compensation ou des réparations comme prélude à la réconciliation. Des leçons potentielles pour une éducation à la paix et à la réconciliation sont mises en avant, avec pour base la prémisse que l'approche *ubuntu* de l'élaboration des relations humaines peut offrir un exemple au monde.

Zusammenfassung – FRIEDENSERZIEHUNG AUS AFRIKANISCHER SICHT: *UBUNTU*: VERSÖHNUNG LERNEN – Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die Frage: Was bringt Friedenserziehung? Dazu befasst sich die Untersuchung mit der kulturellen Weltsicht Afrikas, die unter dem Namen *Ubuntu* bekannt ist. *Ubuntu* hebt die grundlegende Einheit aller Menschen hervor und betont, wie wichtig es ist, sich stets auf die Prinzipien der Empathie, des Teilens und der Zusammenarbeit zu besinnen, wenn wir unsere Probleme lösen wollen. Der Aufsatz basiert nicht auf Feldforschung, sondern erörtert Punkte, die mit *Ubuntu* und Friedenserziehung zusammenhängen. Insbesondere geht es darum, wie Desmond Tutu als Vorsitzender der südafrikanischen Wahrheits- und

Versöhnungskommission die *Ubuntu*-Prinzipien genutzt hat. Außerdem werden die fünf Stufen des Friedensprozesses in *Ubuntu*-Gesellschaften umrissen: die Schuld anerkennen, Reue zeigen, um Verzeihung bitten und verzeihen, sowie Entschädigungs- oder Reparationszahlungen als erster Schritt zur Versöhnung. Davon ausgehend, dass der Ansatz von *Ubuntu* zum Aufbau zwischenmenschlicher Beziehungen für die ganze Welt beispielhaft sein kann, werden mögliche Unterrichtseinheiten zur Friedenserziehung vorgestellt.

Resumen – UNA PERSPECTIVA AFRICANA SOBRE LA EDUCACIÓN PARA LA PAZ: LECCIONES *UBUNTU* EN RECONCILIACIÓN – Este ensayo examina el concepto de valores de la educación para la paz, y lo hace bajo consideración de una tradicional filosofía africana conocida como *ubuntu*, que realza como esencial la armonía entre los seres humanos y enfatiza la importancia de usar como referencias constantes los principios de actuar con empatía, de compartir y de cooperar con los esfuerzos por solucionar nuestros problemas comunes. El ensayo no está basado en un estudio de campo, sino más bien en un análisis de los temas que forman parte de *ubuntu* y de la educación para la paz. El autor centra su análisis en cómo Desmond Tutu ha aplicado los principios *ubuntu* durante su dirección de la Comisión Sudafricana por la Verdad y la Reconciliación. Además, hace una breve descripción de las cinco fases del proceso de pacificación que se han comprobado en las sociedades *ubuntu*: admitir la culpa, demostrar remordimiento y arrepentimiento, pedir y conceder el perdón, y pagar compensaciones o reparaciones como prólogo de la reconciliación. El autor destaca lecciones potenciales sobre la educación para la paz y la reconciliación, basadas en la premisa de que el enfoque *ubuntu* sobre la construcción de las relaciones humanas puede ofrecer un buen ejemplo para el mundo.

Резюме – ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ АФРИКИ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ДУХЕ МИРА: УРОКИ *УБУНТУ* ПО ПРИМИРЕНИЮ – В данной статье подчеркивается важность образования в духе мира. Это делается с учетом африканского культурологического мировоззрения, называемого *убунту*, где подчеркивается единство человечества и важность постоянного обращения к принципам эмпатии, сочувствия и участия для разрешения общих проблем. Данная статья основывается не на исследованиях, проведенных на местах, а на обсуждении проблем, касающихся *убунту* и образования в духе мира. Дискуссия фокусируется на том, как Дезмонд Туту применял принципы *убунту* во время своего руководства Южноафриканской комиссией по примирению и справедливости. В статье также приводится пять этапов миротворческого процесса на примере обществ *убунту*: признание вины; угрызения совести и раскаяние; прощение; и возмещение ущерба или репарации как прелюдия к примирению. Потенциальные уроки обучения в духе мира и примирения основываются на предпосылке о том, что подход *убунту* к построению отношений между людьми может служить примером всему миру.

The value of educating for peace

An increasingly militarised world magnifies the challenge of inculcating the values of non-violence and effective problem-solving. To respond to this

challenge, educators need to explore innovative ways to draw lessons from, and transmit, peaceful ways of solving problems (Hutchinson 1996; Harris 2002). Hence, the value of educating for peace cannot be underestimated. The type of world that we as human beings create in the future will depend on our ability to reject violent and militaristic approaches to solving problems. Peace education should therefore be a central pillar to improving human relations in the family, in schools, at the workplace, within countries and across borders.

There is also value in looking at different cultures to experience how they educate for peace. African cultures are repositories of a substantial body of knowledge on how to promote peace and maintain harmonious communities. It is paradoxical then, that the continent continues to be afflicted by significant levels of violence. However, it also indicates that there is a need to transmit the knowledge drawn from African cultures of peace to present and future generation of Africans.

Culture, peace and reconciliation

There has been an increasing interest in the role that culture plays in determining human relations, and the social sciences are increasingly focusing on the impact that culture has on peacemaking (Abu-Nimer 2001; Avruch 1998; Deutsch and Coleman 2000; Zartman 2000). Societies have always developed their own mechanisms and institutions for managing disputes in a way that preserves those societies' integrity and fabric. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that cultural approaches for managing disputes around the world can play a vital role in promoting peace and social order within communities and even nations. It is important to systematise these experiences and utilise them to educate future generations in promoting a culture of peace.

In the case of South Africa, for example, a difficult political situation was addressed through various peace-building institutions and mechanisms for governance. Specifically, the South African government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a mechanism for initiating the process of transitional justice in the country. The Parliament of South Africa issued the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995*, which stated that the purpose of the Commission was "to provide for the investigation and the establishment of as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross human rights violations committed during the period from 1 March 1960" (South Africa 1995). The Act also stipulated that the TRC would place an emphasis on "the taking of measures aimed at the granting of reparation to, and the rehabilitation and the restoration of the human and civil dignity of, victims of violations of human rights" (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa 1995).

In practical terms, the Commission functioned through three committees: the Amnesty Committee; the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee; and

the Human Rights Violations Committee. These institutions and mechanisms helped the people of this country to transcend the bitterness, hatred and suspicion of the past and to make the transition to a more stable – albeit still imperfect – political order. Today, South Africa has a range of institutions, known as Chapter Nine institutions, that include the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, and the Commission for Gender Equality. Through their remit, which is defined in Chapter Nine of the South African Constitution, these institutions' purpose is to support and ensure the consolidation of peace, human rights and democratic governance in South Africa.

There has furthermore been a growing interest in the cultural values and attitudes held by South Africans that enabled a spirit of forgiveness and a willingness to move beyond the legacy of the apartheid state. From the outset, Tutu (1999) was of the conviction that as far as South Africa as a nation-state was concerned, there could be ''no future without forgiveness''. Informed by his own adherence to the African world-view of *ubuntu*, Tutu, as the Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, was able to provide leadership, advice and guidance to his fellow country men and women in during his country's difficult and precarious period of transition.

The question now is: What are the lessons that can be drawn from this notion of *ubuntu*? In particular, how can *ubuntu* contribute towards the ongoing debates among peace practitioners and researchers as to how culture can inform our efforts to implement practical and effective conflict resolution initiatives?

The revival of cultural values for peacemaking

People derive their system of meaning from their own culture. What does it mean to be human? What is – or ought to be – the nature of human relations? These notions feed into the attitudes and values that we choose to embrace, which in turn determine how we interact with each other. Cultural attitudes and values therefore provide the foundation for the social norms by which people live. Through internalising and sharing these cultural attitudes and values with their fellow community members, and handing them down to future generations, societies can – and do – re-inform and re-construct themselves on the basis of a particular cultural image.

When we survey various parts of the world we are confronted with images and cultures of violence. Societies seem to be tearing themselves apart and the attitudes and values in these societies seem to be predicated on a cultural logic of self-interest, private accumulation and the competitive drive for power and resources. This in turn promotes exclusion on a fundamental level and feeds a cycle of poverty, debt and economic marginalisation while

simultaneously generating and regenerating the vicious cycles of perpetual violence that we are currently witnessing. Any effort to arrest these cycles requires an intervention at the level of culture, particularly with regard to the way that people perceive themselves and their responsibilities in relation to others. Until significant steps can be taken to reduce the adherence to a culture of violence and exclusion, we will continue to postpone genuine peace. But where do we begin in our attempts to reverse this persistent and pernicious culture of violence?

In order to initiate the social reconstruction of war-affected communities, a key step will be to find a way for members of these communities to "re-inform" or educate themselves in a way that emphasises sharing and equitable resource distribution. This, in effect, means emphasising the importance of reviving cultural attitudes and values that can promote education in order for peace to flourish.

Peacemaking and reconciliation in South Africa: Tutu on *ubuntu*

The world recently witnessed the South African transition to democracy based on universal suffrage. It is true that this process of change was marred by instances of violence between members of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) – as well as the general violence of the then South African Defence Forces towards sections of the population. However, most observers were nevertheless surprised that the country was not plunged into a more violent and devastating confrontation engulfing all sectors of the population (Waldmeir 1998). The prevailing view is that the transition was "relatively" peaceful. How, then, could this social and political transformation be achieved? Over a period of several decades, the authoritarian apartheid regime had fostered a culture of violence and brutality that was built upon attitudes of hatred and fear, and embraced the negative values of social and political exclusion and economic marginalisation. The country's ability to move beyond the conditions created by this legacy, without a culture of vendetta and revenge taking over the minds of the oppressed, remains a key lesson for the rest of humanity. As Nelson Mandela (1994) observed, "time and again the prophets of doom have been confounded by the capacity and determination of South Africans to resolve their problems and to realize their shared vision of a united and peaceful and prosperous country".

However, the reconciliation in South Africa is still fragile and its social and economic project is by no means complete. The economic well-being of large sections of the population remains to be addressed if a more sustainable reconciliation process is to be consolidated. For the purposes of this essay, the focus will be on the cultural attitudes and values that have enabled the country to move forward and instigate change progressively. It has been common practice for certain South African leaders to be invited to visit

Northern Ireland, the Middle East and other African countries to share with them the practical peacemaking wisdom which can be derived from the South African experience (Tutu 1999). So what are the cultural values underpinning this "capacity" for transformation to which Mandela refers? Can these values also contribute towards "re-informing" and educating other communities across the world that are struggling to make peace between their members?

South Africa is a model of unity through diversity, and has sometimes been referred to as the "rainbow nation". It is clear that different groups and individual members of South African society will have drawn on aspects of their own individual or group cultures when dealing with the process of transition. Many drew upon their own family values and their religious background. An analysis of all the different cultural backgrounds and belief systems is clearly beyond the scope of this essay; hence, the focus will be on *ubuntu*, an African way of viewing the world adhered to by a significant number of ethnic groups and individuals, some of whom were involved in guiding the nation through its troubled transitional phase.

As Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Tutu (1999) reflects in his book *No Future Without Forgiveness* that he constantly referred to both his Christian and cultural values during this phase. In particular, he highlights the fact that during the Commission hearings, he repeatedly referred to the notion of *ubuntu* when guiding and advising witnesses, victims and perpetrators alike. The concept of *ubuntu* is found in diverse forms in many societies throughout Africa. More specifically, in the Bantu languages of East, Central and Southern Africa, *ubuntu* is a cultural world view that tries to capture the essence of what it means to be human. In southern Africa, we find its clearest articulation among the Nguni group of languages. In terms of its definition, Tutu (1999, pp. 34–35) observes that

> *ubuntu* is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, '*Yu, u nobuntu*'; he or she has *ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people' (in Xhosa *Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu* and in Zulu *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye*). I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share. A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when other are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

As human beings whose identity is defined through interactions with other human beings, it follows that what we do to others eventually feeds through the interwoven fabric of social, economic and political relationships to impact upon us as well. Even the supporters of apartheid were, in a sense,

victims of the brutalising system from which they benefited economically and politically: it distorted their view of their relationship with other human beings, which impacted upon their own sense of security and freedom from fear. As Tutu (1999, p. 35) observes, "in the process of dehumanising another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanised as well".

This notion of *ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of building peace through the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between different peoples. It provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness, as well as a rationale for sacrificing or relinquishing the desire to exact revenge for past wrongs. It provides inspiration and offers guidelines for societies, and their governments, on how to legislate and establish laws which will promote reconciliation. In short, it can "culturally re-inform" our practical efforts to build peace and heal our traumatised communities. It is to be noted that the principles found in *ubuntu* are not unique, and as indicated earlier, they can be found in diverse forms in other cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, an ongoing reflection on and re-appraisal of this notion of *ubuntu* can serve to re-emphasise the essential unity of humanity and gradually promote attitudes and values predicated on the sharing of resources as well as on the collaborative resolution of our common problems (Khoza 1994; Maphisa 1994).

The *ubuntu* approach to conflict resolution and reconciliation

How, then, were the principles of *ubuntu* traditionally articulated and translated into practical peacemaking processes? *Ubuntu* societies maintained conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms which also served as institutions for maintaining law and order within society. These mechanisms pre-dated colonialism and continue to exist and function today (Masina 2000; Mbigi and Maree 1995; Prinsloo 1998). *Ubuntu* societies place a high value on communal life, and maintaining positive relations within the society is a task in which all members of the community are involved. Hence, a dispute between members of one society is perceived not merely as a matter of curiosity with regards to the affairs of one's neighbour, but in a very real sense an emerging conflict that belongs to the whole community. According to the notion of *ubuntu*, each member of the community is linked to each of the disputants, be they victims or perpetrators. If everybody is willing to acknowledge this (that is, to accept the principles of *ubuntu*), then people will either feel some sense of having been wronged, or a sense of responsibility for the wrong that has been committed. A law-breaking individual thus transforms his or her group into a law-breaking group. In the same way, a disputing individual transforms his or her group into a disputing group. It therefore follows that if an individual is wronged, he or she may depend on the group to remedy the wrong, because in a sense the group has also been

wronged. We can witness these dynamics of group identification and their impact on conflict situations across the world.

Ubuntu societies developed mechanisms for resolving disputes and promoting reconciliation with a view to healing past wrongs and maintaining social cohesion and harmony. Consensus-building was embraced as a cultural pillar with respect to the regulation and management of relationships between members of the community (Prinsloo 1998). Depending on the nature of the disagreement or dispute, the conflict resolution process could take place at the level of the family, at the village level, between members of an ethnic group, or even between different ethnic groups or nations situated in the same region.

In the context of the *ubuntu* societies found in southern Africa, particularly among the Xhosa, disputes would be resolved through an institution known as the *inkundla/lekgotla* which served as a group mediation and reconciliation forum (Masina 2000). This *inkundla/lekgotla* forum was communal in character in the sense that the entire society was involved at various levels in trying to find a solution to a problem which was viewed as a threat to the social cohesion of the community. The proceedings would be led by a Council of Elders and the Chief or, if the disputes were larger, by the King himself. The process of ascertaining wrong-doing and finding a resolution involved family members related to the victims and perpetrators, including women and the young. The mechanism therefore allowed members of the public to share their views and to make their opinions broadly known, thereby involving the wider community in the process of conflict resolution. In particular, members of the society had the right to put questions to the victims, perpetrators and witnesses, and offer suggestions to the Council of Elders on possible ways forward. In its capacity as an intermediary, the Council of Elders had an investigative function and acted as an advisor to the Chief. By listening to the views of the members of the society, the Council of Elders could advise on solutions which would promote reconciliation between the aggrieved parties and thus maintain the overall objective of sustaining the unity and cohesion of the community.

The process of reconciliation itself involved five key stages. Firstly, after the facts had been ascertained by hearing the views of victims, perpetrators and witnesses, the perpetrator – if considered to have done wrong – would be encouraged, both by the Council and other community members in the *inkundla/lekgotla* forum, to acknowledge responsibility or guilt. Secondly, the perpetrator would be encouraged to repent or to demonstrate genuine remorse. Thirdly, the perpetrator would be encouraged to ask for forgiveness and the victim in turn would be encouraged to show mercy. Fourthly, where possible and at the suggestion of the Council of Elders, the perpetrator would be required to pay appropriate compensation or reparations for the wrong done. (The payment was often of symbolic value rather than a re-payment in kind, with the primary function of reinforcing the perpetrators' remorse.) Amnesty could thus be granted, but not with impunity.

The fifth stage sought to consolidate the process as a whole by encouraging the parties to commit themselves to reconciliation. This process of reconciliation tended to include the victim and his or her family members and friends, as well as the perpetrator and his or her family members and friends. Both groups would be encouraged to embrace co-existence and work towards healing the rift between them, thus contributing towards restoring harmony within the community, which was vital in ensuring its continuing integrity and viability. The act of reconciliation was crucial in that it symbolised the willingness of both parties to move beyond the psychological bitterness that had prevailed in their minds during the conflict situation.

It must be added that this process was not always straightforward, and there were naturally cases in which one or both parties resisted following through with the various stages of the peacemaking process, particularly perpetrators who were reluctant to re-live and reveal past events. In the same way, victims did not always find it easy to forgive and could, in some instances, withhold forgiveness, in which case the process would enter an impasse and relations between members of the community would suffer. However, forgiveness, when granted, generated such a degree of goodwill that the people involved, and the society as a whole, could then move forward, even from the most difficult situations. The wisdom of this process lies in the recognition that it is not possible to build a healthy community at peace with itself unless past wrongs are acknowledged and brought out into the open, the truth of past events revealed and social trust renewed through a process of forgiveness and reconciliation. A community in which there is no trust is ultimately not viable and gradually begins to tear itself apart. The traditional peacemaking process emphasises the need to draw on the *ubuntu* notions of "I am because we are" and "a person being a person through other people" when faced with the difficult challenge of acknowledging responsibility and showing remorse, or of granting forgiveness.

This traditional form of peacemaking covered all forms of offences, ranging from family and marriage disputes, theft, damage to property, murder and wars. In the more difficult cases involving murder, *ubuntu* societies sought to avoid the death penalty because, in line with the society's view of itself – as people through other people – the death penalty would only serve to cause injury to the society as a whole. Even though forgiveness and reconciliation are necessarily more difficult to achieve in such cases, the emphasis was nevertheless still on mending the broken relationships caused by the death of a community member.

The guiding principle of *ubuntu* was based on the notion that both parties to a dispute need to be reconciled in order to re-build and maintain social trust and social cohesion, with a view to preventing the emergence and escalation of a culture of retribution among individuals, families and the society as a whole. We continue to observe how some individuals and sections of society in the Republic of South Africa, epitomised by Mandela and Tutu, have drawn upon aspects of the country's cultural values and attitudes to

"re-inform" and educate their fellow citizens and thus enable the country to move beyond its violent past. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has as many critics as it has supporters, also relied on the willingness of victims to recognise the humanity of perpetrators and there are even some documented cases of victims forgiving those who caused them harm (Villa-Vicencio and Verwoerd 2000). Tutu himself on several occasions advised victims – provided that they felt themselves able to do so – to forgive. His guiding principle was that without forgiveness there could really be no future for the new Republic, which echoes some of the wisdom of the *ubuntu* approach to reconciliation (Tutu 1999).

Ubuntu lessons in educating for reconciliation and its incorporation into school curricula

It is evident, then, that *ubuntu* approach to conflict resolution and reconciliation can contribute towards peace education, and there are four key lessons to be learned. Firstly, it is important for people affected by conflict to participate in the peacemaking process. Secondly, both victims and perpetrators should be provided with encouragement and support as they go through the difficult process of making peace. Thirdly, there is great value in acknowledging guilt and remorse, and in granting forgiveness as a means of achieving reconciliation. Fourthly, and most importantly, the vital lesson for peace education that *ubuntu* promotes is that the essential unity and interdependence of humanity must constantly be emphasised. By nurturing the reality of our shared humanity, this can serve as the foundation upon which to live out the principles which this unity suggests: empathy for others; the sharing of our common resources; and a collaborative approach to resolving our common problems. In order for governments to incorporate *ubuntu* into their peace education programmes, they would have to work in partnership with international organisations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). A policy consultation process that includes UNESCO, governments, academic institutions and civil society organisations would have to be established in order to enumerate the elements and aspects of *ubuntu* which should be incorporated into school curricula, initially in Africa and subsequently in educational systems across the world. This would have the advantage of promoting an innovative approach to inculcating the core principles of peace education through the use of *ubuntu*.

Ubuntu application in conflict situations in Africa

As discussed above, the notion of *ubuntu* is familiar in some, but not all, regions of the African continent. There would be added value in spreading the principles enshrined in *ubuntu* to other parts of Africa, such as Rwanda,

Liberia and Darfur, which have suffered or continue to suffer the tremendous burden of violent conflict.

Following the genocide in Rwanda, efforts have been made to revive an indigenous system of restorative justice known as *gacaca* to address the issue of reconciling large numbers of suspected perpetrators with their erstwhile victims. An introduction of the notion of *ubuntu* in this context would help the adherents and practitioners of *gacaca* to understand and compare the principles shared by both of these indigenous approaches, which can only add value to the peace process in Rwanda. Similarly, countries where *ubuntu* is upheld could benefit from learning the core principles and processes involved in the *gacaca* process.

In the case of Liberia, work is underway to operationalise a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and, again, the policy-makers and peace-builders in this country could benefit from learning how individuals like Desmond Tutu referred to the tenets of *ubuntu* as he advised the victims and perpetrators involved in the difficult process of truth-telling and reconciliation.

The current conflict in Darfur between the Government of Sudan and the armed militia in the region, which started in 2003, has led a significant number of gross violations of human rights. Although there is currently no peace to keep, there is no reason why the foundations for peace education cannot be laid at this point in time. A *ubuntu*-based peace education programme targeted at the youth in the region and within Sudan itself may initially be met with resistance, but could pave the way for a discussion of cultural practices in Darfur which can subsequently be incorporated into peace-building processes.

Conclusion

This essay has discussed how *ubuntu* can inform peace education and, in particular, processes of reconciliation. The incorporation of *ubuntu* into school curricula would in effect promote an African perspective on peace education. Susan Collin Marks, a South African conflict resolution practitioner, makes an important point in her chapter entitled "Ubuntu, the Spirit of Africa: An Example for the World" in *Watching the Wind: Conflict Resolution During South Africa's Transition to Democracy*: the question that faces us today in the context of our globalised world is whether we can draw on "*ubuntu* forms of peacemaking" and harness the recognition of our essential unity in order to work towards "*ubuntu* forms of governance" that allow all citizens to participate publicly in matters relating to their societies and governments, that protect human rights and that enable the adoption of transparent and accountable forms of leadership. In addition, recognising our fundamental unity can also inspire us to construct "*ubuntu* economies" which strive for equal access to opportunities through fair trade and the distribution of wealth, with the ultimate goal of designing global institutions

and mechanisms that encourage the sharing of the earth's resources for the benefit of all. However, this is a goal and an ideal that cannot be achieved unless policy makers, education officers, teachers, practitioners, peace activists and youth workers take on the challenge of educating for peace and reconciliation by drawing upon the principles of *ubuntu*.

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