

From War Studies to Peace Building and Social Transformation at the University of Zimbabwe in the Post-COVID-19 Era: New Directions

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses a positive peace lens to examine the replacement of the War and Strategic Studies (WSS) degree curriculum, to the degree in Conflict, Peace Building, and Social Transformation (CPST) at the University of Zimbabwe in the year 2021, by considering the global pandemic and seeking new directions in the field. The paper addresses two questions: 1) What changes and factors provoked the change in direction, from the WSS curriculum to CPST, and 2) What are the potential benefits of repackaging the WSS degree programme? The paper argues that the paradigm shift accommodates pandemics, such as COVID-19, which reconfigured social, political, and economic patterns of life, and a new direction emerged, that is, a change of focus from negative to positive peace. Among the reasons for curriculum changes, and for CPST superseding WSS, was the desire to give the programme a human face, and to align the degree so that it promotes the positive peace and sustainable development needed to address trajectories associated with emerging nonviolent threats to humanity – such as a global pandemic. Lastly, we see the new direction of CPST as a counterhegemonic strategy to address confrontational and militaristic approaches to human conflict. COVID-19 has reminded us that confrontational politics are slowly becoming irrelevant for addressing the ambivalence of life, and in the struggle to contain global pandemics, which pose new threats to peace, security and development.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19; war studies; positive peace; social transformation; sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Peace education has been a topical subject in higher education curricula the Second World War; the first course in peace studies had been introduced at Manchester College in 1948 (Drago, 2013). The History Department at the University of Zimbabwe offered War and Strategic Studies (WSS) at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The curriculum content of the degree programme at undergraduate level mainly involved the military history of Zimbabwe, and the world in general. Its courses dealt with the military history of topics such as the world wars, third-world conflicts, international security, guerrilla warfare, arms control, war and society, and military technology (University of Zimbabwe, 2019). Considering Zimbabwe's experience of an armed liberation war fought from 1966 to 1979, one may argue that it was prudent and understandable for the University of Zimbabwe to help the nation celebrate its war history by offering this curriculum, which emphasised confrontation as the only suitable approach to replacing the former white minority government in Zimbabwe. Mavhunga et al. (2012) explain that this was also the situation in Zimbabwean secondary schools, of which the history curriculum was designed to celebrate Black African war heroes.

The WSS degree programme had been designed to develop staff in the uniformed forces who had not had the opportunity to attend university because of their participation in the liberation war. However, due to changes in the world order, influenced largely by nonviolent threats to peace like the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to rethink the curriculum to suit the emerging needs of a continuously evolving society. This helps to address relations with other countries and various social pathologies, such as world hunger and pandemics like COVID-19, which had become a social and medical disaster (Moisio, 2020). Rebranding the name and content of the degree programme was unavoidable. The change from WSS to Conflict, Peace Building, and Social Transformation (CPST) reflects Judith Butler's (2009) motif of the differential grievability of life, and an attempt to reimagine a pedagogy of compassion that foregrounds the nurturance of people who are afflicted and marginalised in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, by the year 2021, the WSS Bachelor of Arts Honours degree had been split, and repackaged into three Bachelor of Arts Honours degree programmes, namely, i) History of War and Security, ii) Risk Reduction and Disaster Management, and iii) Conflict, Peacebuilding and Societal Transformation (University of Zimbabwe, 2021). The courses and modules of these new programmes were revamped, and are now fashionable and compatible with the 21st century's need for peace education. According to Hove & Ndawana (2019), peace education is an important vehicle for social transformation and development. The changes are important in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, because they are geared to promoting social unity, cooperation and harmony, thus, helping in the fight against the crisis. Unlike many studies (Marongwe & Garidzirai, 2021; Olawale et al., 2021; Skhephe & Mantlana, 2021) which saw COVID-19 as a disaster, this article views it as partly an opportunity to reinvent a new curriculum at University of Zimbabwe that rethink its approach to global politics. It can, therefore, be argued that such a curriculum change could motivate society to work for peace through unity,

love, empathy, and cooperation, which are important weapons in the fight against nonviolent threats to humanity, such as that posed by COVID-19.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is rooted in the context of positive peace, a theory developed by Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung in the late 1960s. Galtung's goal was to promote sustainable peace through peace keeping, peace-making and peace building. The notion of positive peace originates from Plato's idealism and Emmanuel Kant's view that perpetual peace can be achieved if there is cooperation amongst all. These ideals are referenced in the introduction of the CPST curriculum, which promotes social cohesion and offers strategies for fighting emerging nonviolent threats to peace and development. Galtung (1976, as cited in Grewal, 2003) argues that positive peace can be categorised into two types: i) Direct positive peace, which involves training people in peace education as a way of building a peace infrastructure, and ii) Structural positive peace, which has to do with transforming the inner structures of society, so that they work to achieve peace and justice. Such structural institutions promote cooperation, restore relationships and promote voluntary participation of the citizenry in the pursuit of sustainability (Sandy & Perkins, 2000). Therefore, the common denominator is that positive peace advocates for a proactive restructuring of an infrastructure, to achieve peace. It is important to note that positive peace theory has broadened the definition of peace. Grewal (2003) says that peace is no longer defined as only the absence of direct violence (negative peace), but as the absence of structural violence (positive peace). Therefore, by using a positive peace lens, a health pandemic, like HIV and AIDS or COVID-19, can be categorised as structural violence that threatens peace.

Unlike negative peace, which is temporary and comes as a result of the end of something undesirable, positive peace is the creation of peace through positive actions and interactions that aim to create a more inclusive and supportive system (Selamaj, 2020). This implies that education is a pillar of positive peace infrastructure, because it is through education that humanity is socialised to work together to avoid and resolve crises. Selamaj (2020) explains that positive peace can be intrinsic, as an individual learns to do good for the benefit of everybody. Groten and Jansen (1981) argue that positive peace has to do mainly with governments honouring the social contract by meeting people's basic needs, or providing the minimum for subsistence in return for the citizenry's loyalty and cooperation. Positive peace, therefore, calls for the creation of positive and conducive conditions that can help to avoid or resolve the underlying roots of the potential for conflict. It can be argued, therefore, that the provision of social amenities – such as good health facilities, housing and education – are pillars of positive peace. Therefore, having the CPST curriculum geared to positive peace makes it a relevant curriculum that addresses social ills.

In simple terms, positive peace theory emphasises the creation of strong institutions that promote cooperation, thus, avoiding structural violence, which is mainly a result of people

grieving a lack of opportunities and the absence of good governance (Galtung, 1981; Groten & Jansen, 1981). Structural violence is defined by Naidu (1986) as legalised human suffering in the absence of direct and overt use of violence. This means that structural violence is connected mainly to the collapse of the social contract, which may result in problems such as poor service delivery and lack of good governance, thus, forcing people to counter the status quo.

According to Sandy and Perkins (2000), positive peace entails decentralisation of power and authority. Doing so helps reduce feelings of anonymity and powerlessness, particularly amongst members of the minority and subaltern. Positive peace facilitates the development of relationships that can restore and preserve community values and spiritual needs, leading to self-actualisation (Naidu, 1986). Structural positive peace, therefore, calls for the injection of an aesthetic through the creation of strong, reliable institutions that promote good living and sustainability. The creation of such institutions requires a peace-educated human resource base that understands the social and geopolitical environment of the day. These goals explain the importance of a positive peace curriculum. Vorobej (2008) says that such a stable environment promotes intellectual and moral development and provides people with the chance to seek happiness. It can also be argued that such an environment makes it easier to deal with pandemics, like COVID-19, which are more threatening than guns and ammunition. Reardon (2000) adds that positive peace is a sense of enjoyment of human rights by all. These benefits show that a curriculum rooted in positive peace is the way to go, because it touches the base of the social fabric by emphasising the creation of a stable society with functional amenities. This notion concurs with the way Galtung (1986) defines peace as a positive condition. Positive peace indicators include functional amenities, recognition of human rights, universal access, participation, development, and reduction of poverty. The positive peace theory helps to explain the rationale for the transition from a militaristic WSS curriculum to the broad-based CPST curriculum.

In this study, positive peace is defined as a situation where the political, economic, and social institutions of a society are healthy and are able to provide what is expected of them. It is, therefore, important that the education curriculum in Zimbabwe mainstreams peace studies to promote love, harmony and good governance. Doing so could restore the peace infrastructure that had been destroyed by decades of suffering, toxic politics, and crisis. It is imperative to mainstream peace building in every sector, to promote positive peace, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development, since positive peace provides sustainable solutions that make it easier to solve crises in their various forms. Universities should, therefore, be applauded for imparting knowledge, conducting research, bridging the gap between theory and practice and, above all, helping in the fight against crisis and pandemics such as COVID-19. The concept of positive peace shows that every sector is important in peace building. For example, good governance ensures reliable social amnesties and promotes unity and cooperation, which helps in the fight against pandemics like HIV and AIDS and COVID-19, among others. Therefore,

it was important for the University of Zimbabwe to embrace positive peace by shifting from the WSS to the CPST curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is evident that the subject of peace studies continues to attract scholarly attention in the contemporary world. Much has been written on the origins, development and importance of peace education. Leading intellectuals, such as Johan Galtung, Kenneth Boulding and Anatol, have written extensively on peace education. Beleuta (2017) writes about peace education in India and other parts of the world, and Delgado (2008) describes peace education at Colombian universities. Dick and Thondhlana (2013), Harris and Hove (2019), Hove and Ndawana (2019), and Makuva (2013), are among the scholars who have written on peace education in Zimbabwe. The value of their contributions and the gaps in their publications will be enunciated as the paper unwinds.

In a 2013 publication, Galtung and Udayakumar concur with Dress (2005), Delgado (2008), and Galtung (1986), that peace education is a life process and an important ingredient of sustainable development. Galtung and Udayakumar (2013) argue that the process does not end with teaching about peace, but continues to bridge the gap between theory and practice, that is, becoming what we teach. This argument goes hand in glove with the positive peace theory, which emphasises that both direct positive peace and structural positive peace are lifelong processes that call for the proactive participation of individuals in order to strengthen the infrastructure of positive peace. Therefore, according to Galtung and Udayakumar (2013), peace education is a pillar for moulding the peace infrastructure, because, through peace education, individuals are socialised to be good citizens who are proactive in peace building. Such literature is treasured in this publication, because it helps to justify the inclusion of peace education in the university curriculum. However, this paper was written in the COVID-19 era, therefore, it emphasises the relevance of peace education in the fight against deadly pandemics.

The importance of peace education in today's society is reflected in a growing consensus amongst scholars that peace studies should be mainstreamed in the same way gender education is studied as a cross-cutting discipline. Dress (2005) argues that a nation needs a comprehensive peace infrastructure that can take a holistic approach to peace building. Generally, experts agree that there is need to mainstream peace building in every sector. Beleuta (2017) explains that, in India, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and other countries, there is increasing scholarly advocacy to mainstream peace building in school curricula. Delgado (2008) adds that, even though the role of universities is not yet prominent in Colombia, they have assumed a more active and visible role in peace building and reconciliation processes, through activities oriented to reconstructing the social foundations of communities. Therefore, even though the scholars referenced above have not written specifically on the importance of rebranding the WSS degree programme at the University of Zimbabwe, their work supports the idea that peace studies is the cross-cutting issue in contemporary studies all over the world today.

Hove (2019), in an article entitled, *The Necessity of Peace Education in Zimbabwe*, clearly explains the benefits of mainstreaming peace education in Zimbabwe. Hove (2019) credits Zimbabwean tertiary institutions for teaching peace studies, but, like Dick and Thondhlana (2013), Hove (2019) argues that peace studies should be taught from kindergarten to university level. Doing so is essential if Zimbabwe is serious about breaking the continuous cycle of violence, toxicity and intolerance, particularly in political circles, which presented as waves of political violence in the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. Dick and Thondhlana (2013) argue that conflict transformation, conflict management and peace building should be taught at primary school, because long-lasting cultural practice begins in childhood. Hove (2019) agrees with Dick and Thondhlana (2013) and Harris and Hove (2013) that education can be one of the most effective ways of solving problems caused by violence in sub-Saharan Africa. The ideas of Mediel Hove, one of the longest serving members of the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Zimbabwe, are visible in the CPST curriculum that replaced the WSS degree.

Hove (2019) and Pigozzi (1999) are among the scholars who agree that education is an important part of peace building. This notion has amplified calls for mainstreaming peace education in Zimbabwe. Makuva (2013), in his presentation to the Philosophical Society of Zimbabwe to advocate for the transition from negative to positive peace, acknowledges the progress made by the organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration, but laments that its efforts yield negative peace. Instead, he argues that there is a need to create positive peace through peace education anchored on *hunhu* and *Chivanhu* (Shona words for humanism and humanity). This idea is echoed by Hove and Ndawana (2019), who argue that education is a dependable vehicle for the promotion of peace and development, because the curriculum can satisfactorily address Zimbabwe's technical needs.

It can, therefore, be argued that peace education can be an important social weapon in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Hove and Ndawana (2019) and Makuva (2013) lament that peace education is not being effectively enforced in the Zimbabwean education system. Makuva (2013) takes a step further, by advocating that peace education should be a constitutional issue that should be included in the national constitution (which was being written at that time). Such an argument shows that peace education has been topical for a while, and that it was imperative for the University of Zimbabwe to realign its curriculum to address these societal demands.

This study uses Makuva's paper to explain the nexus between peace studies and societal needs. With Makuva's (2013) ideas in mind, it can be argued that the war studies degree curriculum was centred on negative peace, because it was based on building peace with reference to the country's military history. However, unlike Makuva (2013), who looked at peace education in general, this paper is unique and contributes to the field of peace education in several ways. One of its contributions is to the new direction of the field. It focuses specifically on the benefits of the change to the CPST curriculum at the University of Zimbabwe, by

explaining how the curriculum is geared to achieving positive peace and how it is relevant in a world traumatised by COVID-19.

What are the Changes in the CPST Curriculum?

This section responds to Question 1, namely, what changes and factors provoked the change of direction from the WSS to CPST curriculum? Understanding the factors that contributed to the repackaging of the WSS degree curriculum at the university of Zimbabwe calls for an analysis of a bigger picture – of the social, political and economic environment the university operates in. Universities serve a society with a certain set of expectations; therefore, they are expected to react to, solve and satisfy those societal challenges. Such challenges, such as pandemics, environmental disasters and political conflicts, play a pivotal role in moulding the curriculum. It cannot be denied that the WSS curriculum was old-fashioned, confrontational and no longer compatible with the new world order characterised by nonviolent threats to peace and development. Worse still, with the arrival of the unexpected global COVID-19 pandemic, which threatened the very existence of humanity, curriculum change was unavoidable. An analysis of the changes introduced in the new programmes of the peace, security and society department reveals that the programmes cover both violent and nonviolent threats to peace and development. The newly introduced curriculum seems to address a gap – that of nonviolent threats to peace, such as pandemics, of which COVID-19 is topical at this time. Such aspects were marginalised in the WSS curriculum.

The Curriculum and Nonviolent Threats to Peace

One of the notable changes in the Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Conflict, Peacebuilding and Social Transformation degree (HCPST) is the broadening of the curriculum to cater for emerging challenges facing the world. Instead of focusing on violent conflicts – which yield negative peace, as was the case in the WSS degree – the HCPST degree aims to achieve social transformation, so as to curb nonviolent threats to peace, and build positive peace. This makes the curriculum relevant in a world threatened by nonviolent pandemics, such as COVID-19.

The rebranding of the curriculum, therefore, cannot be alienated from the issues of the day. Chaudhary (2015) and Reece and Walker (2000) agree that curriculum design is influenced by a plethora of factors, chief among which social conditions, environmental factors, economic issues, political forces and other topical issues of the day. This means that a curriculum pulls from a wide source base that defines society. The newly introduced CPST curriculum comprises courses such as Introduction to Social Transformation, and Disaster Preparedness and Prevention in Zimbabwe. These courses address emerging societal needs of a new world order characterised by positive peace, as opposed to negative peace.

The CPST curriculum focuses on peace strategies instead of war strategies. In contrast, an analysis of the WSS degree curriculum content shows a focus on studying strategies and tactics of gaining victory through physical violence. Among the core courses of the WSS degree programme were Military History of the First World War, Strategic Doctrine, Mechanisation and Air Power, Military Technology and Guerrilla Warfare, which taught students the art of war. This

degree produced strategists and fighters of physical wars and conflicts. It can be argued that the curriculum took war and conflict as a means to an end, that is, winning conflicts as a means to achieving peace. This was understandable, considering that Zimbabwe was born out of a protracted armed struggle. Such a naïve approach to peace studies, according to Drago (2013), was common at most universities after the Second World War, because the state understood that making peace was a process that could require, as a last resort, waging war. Therefore, military academies were concerned with teaching how to fight the enemy in the most effective way possible. Diplomacy was the preserve of people concerned with international relations (Drago, 2013). It can, therefore, be argued that the WSS curriculum was rooted in the principles of negative peace, because it defined peace narrowly, as the absence of war, and was intended to produce graduates who were experts in war strategy, as opposed to peace strategy. Such a curriculum has little relevance in a world ravaged by COVID-19 – a world where nonviolent pandemics present the new threats to peace, security and development.

The CPST curriculum that was introduced advocates for positive peace and accommodates non-military issues, and includes diseases and cultural conflicts as new factors that shape the contemporary world. The CPST curriculum includes courses that aim to strengthen the social fabric as a means of creating a safe world through unity and cooperation. Such courses include Participatory Approaches to Societal Transformation, Disaster Preparedness and Prevention, Theories and Practice of Nonviolence and Education for Peace.

According to Galtung (1964), positive peace refers to the integration of human society, whilst negative peace refers to the absence of violence or absence of war. Grewal (2003) explains that negative peace is precarious and pessimistic, because it is based on fear and the desire to avoid a possible recurrence of previously experienced violence, regardless of the friction that may exist in a society. On the other hand, positive peace is optimistic and can be defined as the absence of structural violence, that is, the absence of conflict-causing factors in a society (Grewal 2003). Sandy and Perkins (2000, cited by Makuvaza, 2013) dismiss the notion of negative peace, and claim that it is no longer acceptable, because it is too simplistic and misleading. Negative peace gives false comfort, by implying that, as long there is no direct violence, then there is peace and there is no need to be concerned about peace issues. Matyók and Schmitz (2014, p. 55) argue that strategies that are based on negative peace are outdated and need to be changed. They assert:

We find ourselves in a period of significant change, and formal and informal institutions and systems of the past that support negative peace alone need modification to meet new demands. Tomorrow's battlefield still needs warriors able to close with and destroy the enemy but also those proficient in conflict prevention, management, and transformation skills.

This assertion makes it clear that positive peace defines the new curriculum of peace studies in the contemporary world. Military academies are advised to embrace conflict

prevention and peacebuilding curricula. Therefore, with such views in mind, it can be argued that the rebranding of the war studies degree was long overdue.

One of the major strengths of the newly introduced peace education curriculum at the University of Zimbabwe is that it links with other academic fields, such as law and governance. Peace studies generally is an interdisciplinary academic field that draws from history, sociology, political science, anthropology and other related subjects (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2021). The fact that the curriculum designers of the University of Zimbabwe managed to accommodate the emerging needs of the new world order without losing the original framework of the discipline deserves credit. As reflected in the 2021 university prospectus, some courses in the Department of Peace, Security and Society are taught in combination with courses in other disciplines. For example, Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding is designed to be co-taught with the Department of Creative Media and Communication, while Participatory Approaches to Societal Transformation is designed to be co-taught with Community and Social Development, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Peacebuilding in Africa is crafted to be co-taught with Languages, Literature and Culture. This shows that peace education involves cross-cutting issues that touch on all spheres of life. It is no wonder that Makuvaza (2013) and Hove (2019), among other scholars, advocate for it to be mainstreamed in education at all levels.

Why the Change to CPST?

Job Market Issues

Ever-changing human resource demands is one of the socio-economic factors that influence curriculum design all over the world. Yazdi (2013) explains that the labour market has a direct bearing on curriculum design, which means that curriculum designers are influenced by the demands of the job market. Acknowledging this relationship promotes the design of curricula that are relevant and that produce employable graduates. It is not a secret that the 21st century demands workers with hands-on experience. Pragmatists like John Dewey have long emphasised the necessity of learning by doing (Janse, 2019). According to Dewey, learners learn better if they interact with their environment (Shook, 2000). Some universities in Zimbabwe, like the Midlands State University and Solusi University, were, by the turn of the millennium, already offering four-year peace studies courses that required one year of work-related learning. This gave students hands-on experience of the content they were being taught in class, and gave them the chance to experience real-world challenges. However, practical application was missing from the WSS degree at the University of Zimbabwe. Students were taught a three-year theoretical curriculum that exposed them to stiff competition in the job market from their counterparts of other universities, who had experienced internship as part of the curriculum.

Bing (1989) agrees with Hove (2019) that peace education must include peace action. To Bing (1989), peace action can take the form of on-campus co-curricular experiences, off-campus internships, and foreign study. These activities give meaning to the theoretical content. Internship is important, because it helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This is

echoed by Galtung's (1986) argument that peace education should aim at making graduates practice what they learn. As a response to the need to bridge the educational gap, the revamped peace studies curriculum at the University of Zimbabwe now offers work-related learning to students in their third year. It is clear that these changes were due to external job market forces, and, therefore, shows that the university seeks to fulfil societal educational demands.

Competition Between Universities

Closely related to the demands of the job market, is competition for enrolment among Zimbabwean universities. In 2015, the University of Zimbabwe introduced two intakes (February and August), though the university director of Information and Public Relations Daniel Chihombori denied that the move was a result of competition from other universities (Mavudzi, 2015). However, it was clear that the university was under pressure to match other state universities. Midlands State University, for example, has four campuses and an enrolment of over 20 000 students countrywide. The competition for enrolment is also revealed by Bishau (2015), who explains that Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) needed to market its programmes to attract students from all over the country. As the oldest university in the country, having been established in the colonial era, the University of Zimbabwe used to enjoy a monopoly, and attracted the best students from all over the country. However, since the turn of the millennium several new universities have been established, and by 2018 the country had 24 registered universities (Garwe & Thondhlana, 2018). The increase in the number of universities ended the honeymoon for the University of Zimbabwe and, at the same time, state coffers experienced strain, such that funding for universities by the state was greatly reduced and universities had to depend mainly on tuition fees and levies paid by students for survival. This caused a scramble to increase enrolment, since more students means more funds. In 2015, the University of Zimbabwe introduced two intakes per a year, obviously as a way to increase enrolment for financial reasons. This meant that new marketing strategies to sell university offerings had to be developed. One of the strategies was to rebrand and repackage degree programmes to make them attractive to prospective students. WSS was a victim of this new marketing strategy.

National Policies

The political environment also has a direct bearing on the curriculum offered by schools and tertiary institutions. Fayose (2020) argues that curriculum planning is a political process, because, in most cases, governments want to influence curriculum content. Makuvaza (2013) and Hove (2019) agree that mainstreaming peace education is the only way the Zimbabwean government policy of national healing and integration can be a success. This idea, coupled with the policy of entrepreneurial education, which was introduced by the Zimbabwean government in the new curricula of primary and secondary education, means that universities have to adjust their curricula to accommodate government policies and align with secondary school curricula. This explains why rebranding of degree programmes was not only done by the University of Zimbabwe, or in the peace studies department, but was done by all other universities in the country too. The war studies curriculum was revamped to correspond with Zimbabwean

government policies whilst, at the same time, producing world-class graduates. The CPST degree curriculum was designed to include courses such as Youth and Societal Transformation, Disaster Preparedness and Prevention in Zimbabwe, Justice, Reconciliation and Peacebuilding, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Peacebuilding in Africa. These courses ensure that graduates serve the immediate needs of society, particularly national healing and reconciliation, which has been a topical issue since a wave of political and electoral violence was experienced in the country after independence in 1980.

This paper cannot list all the factors that contributed to the rebranding of the war studies curriculum. However, it is clear that the change was necessitated by internal and external factors that were shaped by social, economic and political forces. The university serves a community with certain expectations; therefore, it has to, from time to time, align its curriculum to remain relevant and meet those expectations. The potential benefits of the rebranding exercise for the university and the recipient community also calls for examination.

Potential Benefits of the Curriculum Change

This section will explain the potential benefits of the evolution of the war studies curriculum at the University of Zimbabwe, and how the target market is expected to benefit from the changes. The new CPST curriculum is aligned to existing societal trends in peace building and sustainable development. It recognises the existence of nonviolent threats to peace, thus, making the curriculum relevant in a world that is being threatened by COVID-19. It added industrial experience as part of learning, thus, bridging the gap between theory and practice. In addition to giving the degree a human face, the curriculum shifted the focus from negative to positive peace. Such changes are expected to benefit both the university and the recipient community. As explained in the University of Zimbabwe 2021 prospectus, the Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in conflict, peacebuilding and social transformation equips graduates with the ability to analyse, discuss, examine and assess the advantages and disadvantages of conflict, as the basis for encouraging conflicting parties to engage. This is in line with the government policy on national healing and integration. It fulfils what Hove (2019) and Makuva (2013) advocate for when they argue that peace education should be the pillar of positive peacebuilding in the country. The curriculum intends to groom peace builders who have the ability to mould a peaceful society in which cooperation and unity are key. This is a major shift from the previous focus on strategies and tactics of fighting wars, to strategies and tactics of making peace. Zimbabwe will benefit much from graduates who are able to build positive peace, considering the nation's tainted history of violence and war as witnessed in the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. This is also a major step towards fighting global threats, such as COVID-19, that threaten world peace and development. The curriculum change is also expected to help in meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 16, which seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (UNSTATS, 2021).

The new CPST curriculum also aims to produce graduates with a spirit of voluntarism and self-development, who are able to constructively intervene in conflict, peacebuilding and social transformation activities (University of Zimbabwe, 2021). An analysis of the degree courses shows that the CPST curriculum aims to help the nation with healing and transforming. The peace education that is offered aims to produce a human resource base that is capable of steering the nation away from a culture of violence and intolerance, to cooperation and unity, thus, leading to sustainable peace and development. A curriculum that advocates for volunteerism, cooperation and unity makes the fight against pandemics such as COVID-19 a shared task. Makuvaza (2013) says peace education helps to promote practical positive peace.

The introduction of industrial attachment to the degree curriculum of the peace, security and society department provides benefits to the university, students and industry. The university benefits from partnering with the public and private sectors to groom useful graduates. Students gain hands-on experience, which makes learning meaningful by bridging the gap between theory and practice. This has been the emphasis of Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism, which values learning by doing (Dewey, 1986). At the same time, the recipient industry gains an opportunity to contribute to the moulding of the labour force they desire. Industrial attachment makes education relevant by addressing pressing societal challenges, such as COVID-19. Bing (1989) argues that peace education and good peace studies at the university level must include peace action, because experiential peace education helps to transform society for the better. The absence of an industrial attachment component was one of the major weaknesses of the previous peace studies curriculum, not only at the University of Zimbabwe, but all over the world. Lopez (1985, p. 119) explains that, due to the unique nature of the peace studies field:

It has a dynamism and relevance lacking in traditional disciplines. This is most manifest in the action component of peace studies, thus university peace education must have an experimental dimension in which students engage in or observe problems of peace and conflict.

This shows that scholars had long identified the absence of an industrial attachment as a weakness of the peace studies curriculum. Therefore, there is no doubt that including work-related learning in the peace studies degree programmes of the University of Zimbabwe is a step in the right direction.

Engaging in the quest for social justice is one of the key duties of peace education graduates. This engagement is important, because it helps destroy latent conflict-causing factors. In support of this view, Galtung (1996) uses the analogy of hygienic practices as a way to avoid the spread of diseases. He argues that peace education helps to achieve positive peace, because it avoids the germination of any potential causes of conflict, in much the same way as the spread of hygienic practices throughout society helps to limit the spread of diseases. An analysis of the peace studies curriculum introduced at the University of Zimbabwe, particularly the Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in CPST, shows that the courses are designed to create a

just society that is free of conflict causing agents. Courses such as Introduction to Social Transformation, Theories and Practice of nonviolence, Justice, Reconciliation and Peacebuilding, and Participatory Approaches to Societal Transformation are embedded in the idea of positive peace, because they focus on transforming society and promoting cooperation and unity, thus, uprooting the spirit of violence and intolerance.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the major changes that accompanied the evolution of the WSS curriculum. It reported that the new CPST curriculum has been broadened to cater for emerging societal challenges, for instance, global pandemics, especially COVID-19, which poses a nonviolent threat to peace. The conviction of positive peace has been reported as a major driver that shapes curriculum evolution, and makes curriculum relevant in the contemporary world. Such curriculum changes benefit the student, the university and the recipient industry. Work-related learning in the field promotes partnership in education and produces graduates with the much needed practical experience whilst, at the same time, bridging the gap that was obvious in the WSS degree at the University of Zimbabwe.

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