

The Role of Peace Forum and Peace Education in Building Peace in Ethiopia: A Case of Wollo University, Ethiopia.

Temesgen Mendo¹, Endale Lemma²

1 Ministry of Federal Peace, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,
mendotem@gmail.com

2 Ministry of Federal Peace, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,
endexlemma@gmail.com

Abstract : *Universities have the power to foster a secure atmosphere where people feel most at ease and can support their student's social and personal development. Peace forums and education play a significant role in raising community awareness of peace and development. In this sense, the social functions of peace education are indispensable for establishing, enhancing, and building peace. This study sought to assess the contribution of peace forums and peace education in peacebuilding at Wollo University and the research question was, how have peace forums and peace education contributed to peacebuilding at Wollo University? The qualitative approach was selected and deployed for gathering data. In this regard, interviews, observation, and focus group discussions were used during data collection. The study's findings show that Wollo University's Peace Forum and Peace Education failed to achieve the intended goals of fostering peace and peacebuilding due to a lack of consistent support from stakeholders, the perception of the Peace Forum as the political parties' covert hand, and the fact that the majority of its members view themselves as patrons rather than as the forums' proprietors. Therefore, the Wollo University Peace Forum needs to work hard to meet its objectives.*

Keywords: Conflict resolution, higher education, Peace education, Peace Forum.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a natural existence and part of societies that cannot be ignored or illuminated completely but can be managed. Conflict is a state of confrontation between and among individuals or groups who hold opposing an idea with others and attitudes. As Tafese (2011) stated conflicts can arise for a variety of reasons, including a lack of resources, and racial, ethnic, caste, political, personal, religious, or cultural differences. Conflict will occur when two people (or groups) want to do things that are mutually contradictory and not compatible with each other. From the other perspective, it is frequently stated that conflicts are desirable in shaping human philosophies and interactions.

Many research shows that conflict will never happen without adverse repercussions. Such effects frequently pose significant threats to society and jeopardize specific human development goals (Shani,2010). As Adams (2006) points out, conflicts are caused by a lack of information, emphasizing that cases of misunderstanding, incorrect information, or incomplete information exacerbate disparities in opinion and societal inequalities, which can contribute to or exacerbate clashes. According to Aguba (2010) while many people believe that, the public library is best suited to reach out to society to resolve conflict.

There are 43 public universities in Ethiopia at the moment of the research conducted(2018). At public universities, various structures and institutions work in peacebuilding. Among others students union, the peace committee, the Police force, and the peace club tried their best to create a peaceful academic climate in a higher educational institution before the 'Peace Forum' was established at the beginning of 2008. To cultivate the students in good manners peacebuilding works at the grassroots level through peace committees, peace clubs, and community policing (Akalewold, 2005).

The structure of the peace forum' was established and started to exert its effort in peacebuilding at a higher educational institution in 2000. This paper set out to examine the performance of the Peace Forum and peace education in peacebuilding by taking Wollo University as a case study. Despite the efforts of peace institutions in peacebuilding, violence, protests, and unrest are common events in almost all public universities in Ethiopia (MFPDA, 2018). As a result, the researcher found that investigating the performance of the peace forum and peace education at Wollo University is vital for future use.

Statement of the problem

The data from the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs (MFPDA) now (Ministry of Peace) confirms that public universities are disordered; the academic environment is insecure which leads to chronic problems in the country's development. As a result of this, higher educational institutions in collaboration with government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) work seriously on peacebuilding. However, attempts aimed to ensure peace through the installation of the mentioned structures in public universities were not fruitful. Thus, as one approach that addresses the unrest in public universities and shortcomings in the above-listed structures, the government in particular the previous Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs (MFPDA) now

the Ministry of Peace (MoP) introduced the 'Peace Forum.' Despite the efforts of all peace organizations unrest continues in higher educational institutions.

Studies that are conducted on the role of various peace structures in promoting peace in public universities are almost null. One can find some related works which focus on causes and conflicts in higher institutions. Just to mention two of them, Miressa (2018) and Abebaw (2014) conducted their studies on the causes and intensity of the conflict in Bahir Dar and Mizan Tepi universities respectively. However, no one researched the performance of the Peace Forum in peacebuilding in higher educational institutions. Thus, this study is designed to fill the gap by taking Wollo University.

General objective

The overall objective of this study is to assess the role of the peace forum in peacebuilding at Wollo University.

Specific objective

Specifically, this study has the following objectives.

1. To assess the mechanisms Wollo University used in peacebuilding before the establishment of the 'peace forum'.
2. To examine the reasons behind establishing the 'Peace Forum' at Wollo University.
3. To investigate the role of the 'Peace Forum' in peacebuilding at Wollo University.

Research Question(s)

1. What kinds of approaches were in use at Wollo University to build peace before the establishment of the Peace Forum?
2. What makes Peace Forum different from the previously used mechanisms of peacebuilding at Wollo University?
3. How does the 'peace forum' perform in peacebuilding at Wollo University?

Scope (delimitation of the study)

The research is delimited within the following themes and time frame. Thus, it was delimited to assess the approach Wollo University used before the Peace Forum, the reason behind the formation of the Peace Forum and the performance of the Peace Forum' at Wollo University since 2017 -2019 E.C.

II. Conceptual and Empirical Literature Review

Conflict perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment in time (Machingambi, 2012). He, Puts the Conflict structure into the following three parts: attitudes, behavior, and situations that interact and create conflicts between actors. As Tafesse (2011) pointed out those conflicts involving economic orientation, human security, environment, historical issues, etc. harm the society. Due to this, some actions need to be taken.

Conflict prevention

The term Conflict prevention expressed by scholars as Conflict prevention is different for different people and there is no single definition that is agreed upon. During the Cold War, many practitioners and academics viewed preventive action as synonymous with pre-emptive strikes. Conflict prevention is a fairly new sub-culture of security and foreign policy studies (Bjurner, 2006).

Conflict management:

conflict management is the limited mitigation containment of conflict without necessarily solving it (Furlong, 2005). Further Stewart (2009) has added to this, that conflict management implies change, from destructive to constructive at the same time. Conflict Management refers to eliminating violent and violence-related actions.

Conflict Resolution: Conflict resolution actions are confined to after the militarized phase. Some scholars disagree with this conclusion, as it is, of course, possible to resolve differences in issue positions without bursting into war. Indeed, the Cuban missile crisis, the dispute in Cyprus, and the border conflicts between China and Kyrgyzstan are all examples of conflicts and crises that were handled or resolved before the war erupted. The process of conflict management is the foundation for more effective conflict resolution. A distinction between conflict management and Conflict resolution is, however, needed as a starting point as the concepts often are confused or integrated inappropriately (Ben-Porath, 2006). According to Ben-Porath, Conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the underlying incompatibilities in a conflict and mutual acceptance of each party's existence while conflict management refers to measures that limit, mitigate, and/or contain a conflict without necessarily solving the problem.

Peace: Peace is more than the absence of conflict. Peace is living in synchronization and not hostile to others. Peace is a quiet and stress-free state of mind. World peace grows through non-violence, acceptance, justice, and communication. In general culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world realize universal difficulties; can resolve conflicts fruitfully, know and live by

international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the integrity of the Earth. Such learning cannot be achieved without intentional, sustained, and systematic education for peace. Education is the single most important means for empowerment and sustained improvement in all well-being (EU, 2012).

Peacebuilding

The term 'peacebuilding' was coined by (Galtung, 1975). With the publication of 'Three Approaches to Peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding'. Galtung developed many of the core concepts that continue to be applied in peace-building work and definitions. The former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced the concept of peacebuilding to the UN and indeed the international domain in 1992 defining it as an Action to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict. The 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (also known as the Brahimi Report) defined it as activities undertaken on the far side of the conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something more than just the absence of war.

The context explains that for peacebuilding to be effective and sustained the activities targeted towards it should focus on the people concerned; those affected by conflicts especially women should be considered and involved. In simple terms, peacebuilding is all activity aimed at improving the quality of life. Peacebuilding prevents, reduces, transforms, and helps people to recover from violence in all forms (Schirch L. , 2006).

In light of these definitions, the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992) described peacebuilding as a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peace-building strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized sequence, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

According to Gawerc (2003), 'Peacebuilding' is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. Michelle also contended in general, the term peace-building refers to policies and programs to restore stability and effective social, political, and economic institutions after a war or serious upheaval, an extremely broad concept that encompasses democratization, gender, human rights, and development. This is usually through intervention by the military, negotiations, etc. It will also suffice to add that while some of these definitions look at the process of peacebuilding emerging only during the post-conflict situations, other definitions also include that peacebuilding initiatives exist even during the pre-conflict period for the avoidance of violent conflict erupting in the first place.

Peace Education

Peace education is a unifying and comprehensive concept that seeks to promote a holistic view of education. However, its relevance is inextricably part of and is highly dependent on context (Oaldand, 2005). According to Oakland, Peace Education is more effective and meaningful when adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with universal human values. It should also be globally relevant. Given such a framework, it is hard to find a universally accepted definition. Accordingly, Peace Education is characterized by its many definitions. As Orungbemi (2011) reveals, Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures. Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation, and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet. Further, as Ogunyemi (2006) adds, Peace education is skill-building. It empowers children to be creative and adopt nondestructive ways to settle conflicts and to live in harmony with them, others and their world. Peacebuilding is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family. According to UNESCO (1945), Peace Education can be envisaged as the process of developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and values that enable learners to: identify and understand sources of local and global issues.

Peace education acquire positive and appropriate sensitivities to these problems; resolve conflicts and attain justice in a non-violent way; and live by universal standards of human rights and equity by appreciating cultural diversity, and respect for the earth and each other (Kumar, 2010). Besides he confirms that Peace education is coherent, critical, and capable of dealing with different concepts of peace among others, and also able to implement them through various means. Teaching peace education is considered a necessary instrument for the promotion of democracy, progress, development, and civilized society without which peace may be a mirage.

Peace Education in Kenya

Components of Peace Education have always existed in the Kenyan curriculum. Subjects such as Civic Education, Social Ethics, Agriculture, Health Science, Religious Education and lately Environmental Education have always featured, both in the upper Primary and Secondary sections of the Kenyan School curricula. However, in the teaching of the other subjects in the schools

especially in the secondary schools, there is little time provided for teaching peace education (Adeoluna, 2006). A further observation is that not all students get to interact with peace education because the subjects of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and History that address peace education in the secondary syllabus are optional in forms three and four not to mention that those subjects have only one topic in each class addressing peace-related issues. It is possible to grasp the school system in Kenya also places a lot of emphasis on extra-curricular activities, which involve culture, sports, and all types of creative arts. However, these subjects have often been taught in isolation from each other. They lack the proper focus and have been dogged by the use of inappropriate methodologies. Sometimes, their contents have been censored and distorted to serve the interests of the government of the day. Even in cases of no state interference, the Kenyan education system with its heavy emphasis on examinations, does not give the schools and teachers enough room to appreciate the value of life skill education as (Adeoluna, 2006) confirms.

Peace education in Ethiopia

Civics and Ethical Education aim to produce effective and active citizen, who can recognize the problems of their countries, their citizenship responsibility, and their desired code of conduct. (Birhanu, 2012). As Birhanu informed, in Ethiopia formal peace education is not introduced yet. But, a training book for peace values building in Ethiopia, published by IRCE in 2003 could serve as a foundation for formal peace education in the future.

Civics and Ethical Education

Civics and Ethical Education is aimed at promoting the foundation of democracy and democratic values to reduce conflict among students with different backgrounds and interests. When students have a good attitude toward their citizens and follow democratic procedures and rules, they can solve conflicts of interest. This means Civics and Ethical Education is maintaining unity in diversity in higher education in particular and in Ethiopia at large. This implies that some contents of Civics and Ethical Education do celebrate and appreciate multiculturalism and the existence of people who have different languages, ethnicities, religions, or other elements (Yamada, 2011). The teaching of Civics and Ethical Education aimed at generating political consciousness in the students and inculcating a democratic outlook in the souls of the students. For young democracy, a study of Civics and Ethical Education can help a lot to develop proper attitudes in students, which can ultimately strengthen democracy (Gottlieb, Karla and Robinson, Gail, 2006).

Civics and Ethical Education make students of higher education socially efficient and well-aware of the social and political problems of their country to take an active part in them. It is the students of today who think about the destiny of the future of his/her country. Consequently, social efficiency requires the students to have the qualities of sympathy, cooperation, patriotism, etc. Such qualities can be developed in students by scientifically teaching civics and ethics (Shankar, 2009).

III. Methodology/ Material and Method of data collection

Data collection is the method of acquiring and evaluating the information on variables of interest in a systematic manner that allows researchers to answer research questions, hypotheses, and outcomes. All fields of study, including the humanities, business, and others, use data collection as part of their research. While the methodologies differ depending on the discipline, the emphasis on accurate and honest data collection stays the same. The purpose of any data collection is to obtain high-quality evidence translated into rich data analysis and to construct an effective and credible response to the questions addressed. Accordingly, the qualitative data collection was used and applied in this study. In this regards, qualitative data obtained from the respondents was interpreted the given question based on their personal opinions, understandings, and feelings. The in-depth interview of the qualitative data was used to examine the various aspects of the research problem and determine critical implications, understanding, the context of the tile.

V. Result and Discussion

Peacebuilding at Wollo University before the launch of the peace forum.

This research discussed the task of peacebuilding at Wollo University in cultivating the moral and ethical values of the students and other members of the University. To realize this Wollo University used the following organizations. Students, Students' police, peace clubs, civics, and ethical education, and Institutional rules and regulations. Wollo University also used civil society organizations such as elders and religious institutions as support by teaching the youth about peace to create a peaceful educational climate. (KII, Students' Dean of Wollo University Desse Campus April /2019).

Accordingly, any illegal actions are evaluated with the mentioned peace institutions. As KII and FGDs revealed Wollo University used these institutions for the creation of a stable academic climate. There were discussions or debates among students and awareness creation programs on the issue of peace prepared for Wollo University students by different institutions. The previous MOFPDA takes the lion's share in giving capacity-building training and supervision on the peace issue. (KII of Ministry of Peace, 'Peace Forum' leaders and FGDs at Desse campus and Combelcha campus, April /2019).

Awareness creation and training

Capacity building is a vital task carried out by stakeholders. The respondents exposed the facts that training and capacity building in the Federal and Regional development forums enhance their motivation. However, all members do not have equal access to training. Some members are invited to participate in pieces of training and conferences repeatedly and others push aside. This corrupt method caused fissures among/and within peace committees.

As long as the responders' confirmation training courses are confined to the University by the ministry to participate, it has increased the motivation of the staff and the capacity of the members to train the members who did not train the trainers. The support and supervision given by the University Management team were limited. To adjust to the scarcity of capacity-building training by Wollo University Peace Forum has increased the teaching and learning of the various purposes of the forum (advertising, conversation, theater, t-shirt), forums, Flyers, self-helpers, and the ability to expand their membership and participation. Especially, to increase the number of female students. However, the consistency in capacity-building activities has some problems. This was confirmed by the interviewee from the Ministry of Peace (MOP) obtained from the agreement in Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), and the analysis of data.

As revealed by the Peace Forum leaders and members, concerning the construction of a society that condemns violence, Wollo University Peace Forum has actively participated in a peaceful, calm, and cooperative manner in peace, stability, and reconciliation. The participants explained that co-working with student police enabled Peace Forum to prevent students from encountering conflict. To ensure that the process of learning is organized well, and smoothly and that the community can work to prevent disruption. It was noted that it was able to preserve peace, implement the principles of democracy, implement the principles of collective peace, maintain the peacekeeping force, and ensure peacekeeping. Referring to the data of the Peace Forum president and other respondents Peace Forum tries to provide counseling to students with disabilities. However as explained by other respondents there are ups and downs in performance due to unproductive capacity-building tasks, inconsistency follow-up, and budget constraints. On the contrary nonmembers of the peace forum see the overall situation differently. Accordingly, the data shows Peace forum at Wollo University is limited, particularly the conference at a higher level, not only because of the high level of recognition and acceptance of the forums but also because of the overwhelming opposition. The possibility of creating capacity building is not seen. Generally, in this area, some students are active in nothing but corruption. According to their perspective, the Peace Forum leaders and members join the committee for self-gain not to serve the society. Likewise, in Wollo University, despite the fierce opposition from competent such as the Students Union, and Students Police, there is a lack of understanding of the fact that some of the students do not even know what their job is.

Similarly Wollo University Management team has shown the purpose and mission of the Peace Forum is limited and incomprehensible, and that the forum lacks the human and financial resources to achieve its motto, besides the student's focus is on education. The training provided by the MOFPDA on the viability of the training provided, as well as the need for a survey to evaluate the impact of the training, and the experience gained from other university Peace Forums are beneficial and transformative and have created a spirit of competition between universities.

Joint monitoring and support

The observation described at Wollo University Peace Forum, the management team planning and reporting preparation, and the minutes of discussion and related file management and organization, monitoring, and support (planning, joint consultations, surveillance, and support activities) are not well reviewed and updated. For that reason, a report based on a plan was developed and held by secretaries by the secretariat, and the necessary files were arranged improperly. The defaults were confirmed by all respondents including the Ministry of Peace, Peace Forum leaders, and members. As the respondents mentioned communication is through telephone. Thus most of the time made errors or distorted.

Besides the result in group discussions exposed the fact there is a wide gap seen among the federal, regional, and the senior Peace Forum leaders and Management team at Wollo University. Key informants from the Ministry of Peace elaborated more about the communication gap. According to their information due to workload programs were canceled which failed the monitoring and support.

The Ministry of Peace supervision and follow-up is not consistent. It implies the gap between the federal, the regional, and the management team of the University in communication which deters the flow of information. Besides the Nonmembers of the Peace Forum, the activities of the peace forum with other peace committees are not as required. The cooperation of the Students Union, Student police, and the pajama club around the dorm and block is visible. Humanitarian tasks most of the time joint activities. Welcome ceremonies for the newcomer at the beginning of the year strengthen the evidence. Especially the unforgettable role of Peace Forum in controlling the fire and saving the building from distraction in 2009 E.C. is an important event. This was the result of joint monitoring and evaluation. But lack of consistency is still a problem. As cleared by almost all respondents and observations Wollo University management team works with the peace forum closely. Peace Forum is also one of the members of the management team of Wollo University. This implies that the peace forum at Wollo University works with other peace organizations in a friendly way. The achievement at Wollo University is the efforts of cumulative exertions of the community which resulted from joint monitoring and support

Coordination

The research outputs cleared in Wollo University, the peace forum interacts with other organizations, with the campus police, the security officer, and the peace and security of the universities. The forum will be attended by the local government and security forces, the kebele peace committee the school peace club, and the federal institutions. Wollo University, with better coordination of peace organization, got the institution name the “peace ambassador”.

There is a strong bond among the local Peace Committee, Peace Club, religious fathers, local community, police, and Wollo University Peace Forum. These pave the way to the University of Wollo, providing a peaceful education for all. Communication in situations and opportunities is handled peacefully and in other ways on issues that are convenient for other issues. This achievement is comparatively a good experience to be shared with other universities.

Despite the above information, the responses of most of the Key Informants Interviewee (KII) indicate that their relationship with the local government is not in the case of conflict prevention, but mostly in the case of information when it is needed, but with a timely manner it is possible to prevent and minimize disruptions before and after the problems arise. In the same vain many Wollo University Peace Forum leaders have come up with ways to interact with other organizations, with the help of the Students Union, Students police, the Security Officers Regional Security Office, Peace and Security of the Universities, Ministry of Peace (MOP) and local Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs). The forum cooperated and attended by the local government and security forces, the kebele peace committee the school peace club, and Federal institutions like the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The one that causes conflict and deters coordination between the Peace Forum and the Students Union at Wollo University is that the Students Union gets some support from the university legally with finance but the Peace Forum is not treated in the same manner. To finance the peace forum the willingness of the management team is decisive or proposal preparation is a pre-condition. Thus, peace forums are discouraged. Moreover, at Wollo University, the data collected collectively shows that there is little acceptance of the Peace Forum of the university in the field due to the bad mouth on it. The research output exposed the rumors about the Peace Forum emanating from the influence of political parties, according to the information from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), a Peace Forum is assumed as a hidden security or information worker for the ruling party. This deters the coordination at Wollo University.

The information collected from Some respondents, especially non-Peace Forum members, explained Peace Forum at Wollo University while working with the University Administration and local security organizations, and with the various faculties, the effort to support the teaching and learning process is great, but all levels of the peace committee; there is a high level of competition and dissatisfaction with the Students Union and Peace Forum. The reason behind as exposed by the respondents is the conflict of interest. On the other hand, the Management team of Wollo University confirms that the peace forum has a good working relationship with the other organizations, creating coordination of peace organizations, and ensuring that the University has the necessary financial support and equal access to all peace committees. So, Wollo University creates different Peace structures to build peace at the compound. There is a good way of being trained in the university and recognizing that they are working for a single purpose.

Practices and outcomes of the major activities

The research outputs show the achievements of the Peace Forum and the challenges faced by the Peace Forum. Among the achievements, are establishing a common understanding amongst the students in peace in the universities, setting a system to welcome new students into the university, and working together with other peace organizations like peace committees and youth of local government, to keep the beauty of the field, differentiate the main areas of the institution where security and peace prevail, where problems arise. Particularly, visible and enormous achievements at Wollo University Peace Forum had been able to save a lot of students from the destruction of a building in 2009 when it was set on fire. Keep the peace at the institution, in many colleges when violence broke out; Wollo University was not in disturbance. This was mainly the effort of cooperation peace organization of Wollo University peacekeeping role. The challenge on the other side, is the lack of proper bureaucracy often results in a lack of commitment to leadership. The lack of recognition of Peace Forum by the university's leadership and misconceptions of political leaders about Peace Forum as political messengers or informants are challenges. These facts were expressed by all respondents. The lack of consistent support and supervision provided by the Ministry of Federal and Pastoralist Development Affairs now MOP was the other challenge.

As respondents confirm despite the fact, the Peace forum prepared a welcome ceremony for the newcomers and gave the necessary information about campus life, cooperated with other community members to clean the compound, and created a common understanding about security. Even if it is difficult to achieve its objective Peace Forum works to establish a common understanding among the students in the universities. Peace Forum leader said that Wollo University's Peace Forum cooperating with other peace organizations had been able to save a lot of students from the destruction of a building in 2009 when it was set on fire. As respondents revealed, when violence broke out in many Universities Wollo University comparatively was peaceful. The consensus in Focus Group Discussions FGDs confirmed the evidence. This was due to the efforts of the peace forum, the Peacebuilding community, the Students Union, the Students' police, and the leadership of the University and the Community. On the other side, there was a lack

of understanding of the peace forum among the students, management, and other members of the institution, which led to a misperception about the mission of the peace forum. According to respondents, some students assumed peace forums as political groups that work for the governments. Due to this, they refuse to join the Peace Forum. Besides the poor bureaucracy, lack of committed leadership, and misconceptions of political leaders to Peace Forum as political messengers or informants. The lack of proper support and supervision by the concerned body of the management team of Wollo University and the Ministry of Peace are the main problems of the Peace Forum in achieving its objective. Thus, Peace Forum performance is inefficient due to the lack of financial support for the activities of the peace deals, the lack of resources, the disagreement among the management team of Wollo University with the role of 'peace Forum', and the lack of commitment of peace forum members.

Peace forum in conflict prevention

Mini Media

As the Key Informants Interviewee (KII) points out the media is the main instrument for the dissemination of information to disprove rumors on social Media. The focus group also confirms Peace Forum plays a major role in Mini Media by participating and leading the program on peace issues. Besides the documents and the programs at the office to follow up the Mini Media confirm Peace Forum coordinates and facilitates the overall activities of the Mini Media to function well. Accordingly, the program on peace issues disseminates on time regularly. As the research output confirms, the Mini Media at Wollo University the main channel to share information for a conducive environment for education the main effort exerted by Peace Forum with collaborating with students union.

Awareness creation training and conference

The respondents were asked to explain what they understood by the terms peace, 'Peace forum' and peacebuilding. All the respondents agree that percolation of peace is the absence of violence, the presence of tranquility and calmness, and a safe environment to live in. They also understood the peace forum as a committee that works for stability at campuses. For many respondents peace and peace forum means the same thing and are interconnected. Without a Peace forum, there can be no peace, and vice versa.

Respondents alluded to the fact that peace provides an opportunity to demand and exercise their rights and achieve their full potential as equal human beings. As revealed by an agreement reached in FGDs...peace and peace forums are very important to academic stability. It provides an opportunity to demand rights, there is increased access to opportunities including education, employment, and participation in politics. The consideration of all respondents about the term "peacebuilding" was similar. They understand the term peace-building as a 'process' or 'project' that builds lasting peace and in which all groups in society should be involved. Besides respondents noted that peacebuilding relates to forgiveness, dialogue, and recovery to build trust, reconciliation, and build new relationships. The focus group discussions also show clarity about peacebuilding. On this ground; Peace Forum is effective in achieving part of its task.

Conflict indicative assessment

The Students Union members and Peace Forum collaborating with other peace organization members were asked whether they felt secure living on campus. Almost all reported that they felt insecure. Even though there are variations in response among the categories of organizations almost all Ministry of Peace, Peace forum leaders, Students Union leaders; Students Deans; and Community policing officers exposed they felt insecure.

This all happened against the effort of the peace forum members organized with other peace organizations at Wollo University like the Students Union, Students police, and Female pyjama night club work consistently for the stability of the campus. As the president of the peace forum of Wollo University expressed on 20 April/2019 they evaluate the information daily and report the result to regional and federal concerned bodies. Besides, according to the degree of the issue, they try to solve the problem by their effort. Accordingly, the peace forum differentiates the areas of conflict at the campus as student cafes, libraries, dorms, football fields, and recreational places. Consequently, some students are assigned and oriented to follow up the social media.

The research investigated the mechanisms used in peacebuilding at Wollo University before the formation of the peace forums as student unions, institutional regulations, and student police used in peacebuilding. As expressed by the key informants Wollo University used different dialog forums for the resolution of conflicts in the campus pre-peace forum time. The research output exposed punishment as the main measure for those who made mistakes. The justification for the formation of the Peace Forum was to create alien forces in peacebuilding. At the same time, the concern is to fill the gap in peacebuilding.

The impact of the conflict on Campus students

The respondents exposed how the conflict at Wollo University affected them, and in particular, if there were any differences observed among ethnic groups. All the respondents noted that there were general and ethnic-specific impacts of the conflict. They are renowned that the conflict resulted in the postponed study of many of their friends and made unstable community members, while

others had been maimed and were living with the scars and burden. The discussion in Focus Group Discussion put many have been academic dismissal and postponed classes. They also noted that the volatile security situation continues to provide a potent ground for Fano and Qero, further exacerbating the impact of the conflict at the country level. The majority of the respondents also felt that relationships among communities and ethnic groups have been eroded by the tension running on campus, which had an impact on trust-building as they prefer to rely on their ethnic group.

They also noted that students are targeted and, at times, pressured to take part in riots and join violent groups or serve as tools for instability of the academic climate. The majority of the respondents also noted that the ethnic tension had led to a distraction from higher educational institutions. Some students have been forced to postpone their educations and look for business, jobs or whatever it is they find to provide their livelihoods. Besides, all respondents agreed on the view that the ethnic tension had affected students on account of their academic performance. The respondents acknowledged that the loss of state protection had heightened insecurity on campus.

Peace Forum Performance in Peace Building at Wollo University

To know the performance of the peace forum in peacebuilding, KII respondents were asked several questions: have they played any role as peacebuilders; what motivated them to undertake these activities; were they involved in any organization while undertaking peacebuilding; did they have training in peacebuilding; and whether they transmit a culture of building peace in their dormitory and departments? The majority of the respondents acknowledged that they had played many roles as peacebuilders but were not satisfactory. They especially expressed activities they carried out to disprove rumors related to ethnic groups. The Focus Group Discussion and all Respondents also noted that they formed linkages with community policing outside the campus consisting of youth, women religious men, and elders to ensure ethnic harmony in Wollo University. All respondents acknowledged that they had received training in the different areas of peacebuilding, either through their peace forum, MOP, or local NGOs. Some also noted that they have received training out of their campus. They stated that they found such training useful in enhancing their peacebuilding capacity. In doing so all respondents stated that they try to transmit a culture of peace to their classmates, doormats, colleagues, family, and community. At the same time, they noted that they deliver peace messages through Mini Media and billboards, and aware the public on peace issues. They also highlighted the use of poetry and song to transmit peace messages. They organize female students at the block by the name of pajama night to secure the campus. The Peace Forum's participation in peacebuilding at Wollo University in preparing peace days celebrations; participation in selecting peace ambassadors; participation in disseminating peace programs in Mini Media; and participation in distributing pamphlets and other leaflets on the issue of peacebuilding is good but needs more finance to improve its performance.

Participation in Peace Day's celebrations

According to the responses of respondents, Peace Day's celebration is the main task of the Peace Forum, the peace organization of the University, and religious men, elders, and regional security and Zonal security organs, cooperate with the peace forum. Consistent support, follow up, active roles, Good commitment to peacebuilding, Roles as supportive, financial support, being active participant, cooperative, facilitate activities, a participatory role considered as a good participant for peace days celebration. But ethnic thinking/maladministration/corruption, lack of skills/education/confidence, especially for serving the society, lack of time and willingness, and lack of technical/financial capacity are considered as non-active in peace days celebration. As a result of this, the 'Peace Forum' at Wollo University impaired in performance.

Participation in selecting the peace ambassadors

Participation in selecting the peace ambassadors from the perspective of respondents and concurrence in focus group discussion, Participating well, showing good commitment to selecting the peace ambassadors, following information about the peacebuilding task role of individuals and groups or faculties, giving credit to be a good participant. On the opposite, Mismanagement, corruption, low participation in peace forums, low attendance... etc. in peace issue programs, are registered as dormant. Accordingly, the Peace Forum and other stakeholders 'should not fulfill the requirements to be good or dormant. So the performance is in between. This is because of the absence of reliable data about the candidates.

Participation in conflict resolution and prevention

The peace forum participation in conflict resolution and prevention is low in Wollo University for all areas. This can be attributed to the fact that students are very active at the campus and community levels advocating for peace, but are systemically marginalized in the national processes. On many occasions, top-down approaches are applied in the conflict context giving prominence to warring parties at the expense of grassroots activities. In the case of Wollo University, involving the party members and relatives of political leaders has been given more prominence, thereby creating a less inclusive peace-building process. It can be argued that the concern is usually to ensure cessation of hostilities, hence the need to proceed in such a manner. Ignoring such a large segment of society results in skewed peace dividends as the warring factions, mainly male, are seen participants than the female.

Participation in post-conflict peacebuilding: The respondents revealed that peace forum participation in post-conflict peacebuilding is very low, especially in the participation for creating a favorable academic climate, and good governance. Peace forum members even though they had taken training in peace issues did not perform as required due to different reasons such as time constraints, lack of commitment, and deficiency of experience. Peace forum members themselves have also not been given due consideration as candidates for peace ambassadors. It has always been presumed that peace forum members are not active participants and only play peripheral roles such as holding seats in meetings and workshops. However, irrespective of their position in the ranks, these peace forum members have still participated as peace builders' perpetrators and their exclusion is hindsight. It is also worth noting that the peace-building process at Wollo University is still in the formative stages, and it mainly applies partiality tactics and gives consideration only to party members. Therefore, government forces are not appropriately trained to handle these peace forum members of peacebuilders. In the institution of peace and stability force, peace forums are allocated duties such as custodians of peace, secretaries, and communication. Due to the reasons mentioned and related facts peace Forum did not perform as required. The peacebuilding process is yet to be well established at Wollo University. This process is very crucial, especially for students, as it allows them to begin a healing process as they are more often than not suffering deep psychological effects of the conflict. The continued delay of this process therefore continues to provide ground for anxiety among students, as the effects are long-lasting.

Factors Determining Peace Forum's Participation in Peace Building

One of the aims of the research on hand was to examine the factors that enable and/or hinder the participation of a peace forum in peacebuilding at Wollo University. The part is split into enabling and hindering factors, and the findings are discussed in the following sections

Enabling factors: The respondents informed various factors they considered to provide an enabling environment for the peace forum's participation in peacebuilding. They pointed out different deliberate interventions by the government particularly the Ministry of Peace (MOP) and other stakeholders.

Institutions: The participants expressed different interventions taken by the government, religious organizations, community policing, elders, and civil society among others in encouraging and promoting the peace forum's participation at Wollo University in peacebuilding. When discussing the role of civil society organizations (CSOs), the majority of the respondents noted they have played an active part in promoting and advocating for peace concerns. The groups have lobbied and advocated for a favorable academic climate and provided support, financial, and technical to the peace forum. Through their extensive support, these communities were able to marshal national support for the rights of students at Wollo University.

Other factors

The respondents exposed other factors that enabled peace forum participation. The majority of the respondents gave two key responses: The tenacity of the peace forum and ICT infrastructure. They noted that these two elements have enabled the peace forum to mobilize for a cause. On observation, all the respondents interviewed students have at least one mobile phone.

Hindering factors: The respondents pointed out the factors that determine peacebuilding efforts in conflict resolution, prevention, and Participation in post-conflict peacebuilding. As it is clear in the response political party's hindrance accepted by respondents, cultural/religious norms, insecurity, education, skills, and experience hindrance agreed on all respondents. But no time constraints since all of the members and associates attend every meeting and conference.

Understanding of Peace Forum in Peacebuilding

The respondents at Wollo University have a basic understanding of the terms peace, security, and peacebuilding. This can be attributed to the fact that the respondents were mainly engaged in peace-building activities and a majority held at least higher levels of education. Moreover, Wollo University is that has been in tension. As such, a majority of the leaders in various institutions have had interaction with external actors through peace negotiations, workshops, and conferences, where many of the issues are discussed. Wollo University still feels insecure but appreciates the gains made through the Peace forum. Peace forums, NGOs, and community policing work for good results. The conflict has greatly impacted on students. This is seen from two perspectives; general and ethnic-specific impacts. General effects include academic dismissal and loss of livelihood. The loss of trust and social relationships has also had a devastating effect resulting in the collapse of academic climate protection systems, especially for female students. However, there is recognition that students have been more adversely affected by the conflict. The problem therefore arises on how different ethnic groups will accommodate these changes and ensure equality is maintained without downgrading the role of the peace forum. Wollo University peace forum has played a very important role in peacebuilding on the campus, although they remain largely unnoticed. These efforts of Peace Forum are understood well on the campus even though some others are confused. The impairment in performance in the Peace Forum at Wollo University stems from the low attention of Peace Forum's members in fighting corruption and capacity building in peace issues.

Political parties

Political parties hinder the level of peace forum participation in peacebuilding. As such, the existing institutions lack appropriate representation, falling short of support. These dominated institutions continue to be perpetuated through the 1 to 5 EPRDF party formula, which is based on the party system, that is an EPRDF domain and students and staff are supposed to be led. Beyond this is the institutionalized prejudice where the political party views itself as superior to the other one. For example, issues of security are considered to be EPRDF domains, thus Peace forums have no role to play as they are considered 'neutral.' As such, many institutions considering the security situation prefer to employ party members rather than non-members.

VI. Findings from the study, Conclusion and Recommendation

The Basic Principle for the establishment of the Peace Forum is to create a forum for peacebuilding to create a peaceful environment for students to participate in the peaceful and healthy environment of the community outside the campus. Moreover, it aimed to cultivate students who have a love for nationalism and ethnic differences. Above all, it targeted to produce students who respect each other and feel and act as citizens of one country. The performance of the peace forum at Wollo University is low despite numerous efforts by the peace forum, the previous MOFPDA now MOP, and local NGOs. However, in academic climate stability, peace advocacy, and informal peacebuilding, peace forums play a very critical role.

The study has recognized several factors that have led to the current performance of peace forums mainly national legal frameworks, support, peace forum lobby groups, and activism as the changing dynamics of the conflict. However, this effort has yet to bear fruit when compared with national standards. Peace forums continue to face difficulties in their quest for the stability of the academic environment and participation as is common in other countries. For the Wollo University Peace Forum, specific factors hinder their participation owing to the instability of the campus. The main factors include political parties as perpetuated by the 1to5 formula; the interchangeability of the secular and religious laws to the detriment of peace forum participation; the lack of capacity in terms of resources and space due to their diminished inter-ethnic bargaining power; and continued armed conflict and violence that targets ethnic, more so from extremist groups.

Time constraints and the perception and responses of peace forum leaders were not found to significantly affect the performance of the peace forum. Lastly, the study concludes that the performance of a peace forum is an activity that has to be worked upon for it to be attained since it is not automatic. As such, the peace forum at Wollo University will have to continue putting in place measures that will ensure they enjoy their peace. For Wollo University, a secure academic climate is more of a concept that is externally driven and it has not found acceptance within the partisan community. Until such a time that deliberate government interventions are realized, peace forum participation remains just a promise that can be broken.

Recommendations

- Prosecute and follow up on all Wollo University cases to prevent the continued perpetration of human rights injustices on the peace forum. This can be done by strengthening the peace forum department in the Wollo University Police Service, through the current reform programs that focus on peacebuilding.
- Undertake periodic stability audits to enable the continuation, correction, and fuel of peace mainstreaming programs. Task for Wollo University
- Roll out multi-sectorial public awareness programs to enable national dialogue on the role of peace forums in peacebuilding. This should include government officials through the Ministry of Peace and Ministry of Education, religious and traditional leaders, women groups, donor agencies, and the citizens. It is worth noting the important role played by traditional and religious leaders in Ethiopia, and the extent to which they can be used in such programs.
- Deliberate government and donor agencies intervention programs to the small and micro-enterprises sector to enable youth economic empowerment.
- Deliberate interventions by government and donor agencies to enhance the effectiveness of youth groups' community-building initiatives such as in health, education, peace, and civic education.
- Begin to implement crucial peace-building programs such as judiciary reforms, and transitional justice to ensure that underlying youth issues are addressed.
- Ratify international legal frameworks concerning youth and develop national plans for long-term Implementation of peace issues. The task of the Ministry of Justice
- Continue and sustain the Federal Government of Ethiopia's efforts at ensuring national security through the potential peace culture of the country's peacekeeping framework. The task for local and regional governments as well as local nongovernmental organizations.

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