"Empowering Young Voices for a Possible Pacific World".

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ABSTRACT

In most communities across the globe, the idea of war is usually conceived by the old and ageingpopulation. Paradoxically, those who effectively execute these ideas as combatants between the belligerents are the youths who have the strength to wage war as the protagonists. This paper examines the possibilities of transforming the mindsets of young people at a tender age. This is to ensure that as they grow to maturity, they would shone war, conflicts, and arm struggle. This has adversely affected the sustainable development of the African Continent in particular and theworld at large. So, Can the mindsets of young people be really transformed to shone conflicts, war and confrontations in the world today? The paper is a critical and analytical content that shows the lacunae of arm struggle as a way out of conflict and underlines dialogue through transformation of the mindsets of young people as a sustainable modus operandi. Proper analysis of data drawn from primary and secondary sources will result in a continent of peacemakers whowill establish peace structures manned by young voices from Think Tank Clubs created in our communities in collaboration with the Community Connectors for Peace, Traditional Authorities,Religious Leaders, Community Based Organizations, Civil Societies, and Community Elders. With these peace structures firmly rooted in our contemporary world with other groups quietly working to mitigate conflict with their people; peace building, reconciliatory measures and dialogue would prevail in all circumstances whereby discord may escalate. As such, there is cohesion and collaboration between Community Connectors for Peace, Local Government Authorities, Traditional Authorities, Community Elders, Civil Society Organizations, and Community Based Organizations. The emergence of Cooperatives engaged in Income Generating Activities and these Community Based Organizations championed by youths are obvious. Intensification of Communication through the social media animated by the young starswith nurtured mindsets in Citizenship Education, Peace Education, Civics and Moral Education will reduce radicalization of the young people and easy recruitment as combatants in case war- mongers start nursing ideas about confrontations. The culture and structures of peace created in each community in the world would lead to development and stability of the African continent and the world as a whole since the youths, who play the role of combatants between two belligerent Nations, would be against armed struggle perpetrated by war-mongers who aremostly the old and the ageing population. The youths at this stage already know that confrontations and war in a day can desecrate the environment and infrastructures build over centuries.

Key Words: War, Peace, Youth, Mindset, Development and Dialogue

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary communities the relationship of interconnectedness is inevitable. This is by virtue that one person, nation and continent is not self-sufficient. As long as humanity coexists, the emergence of conflict, tension, civil strife and war are inevitable. Nevertheless, it is a natural imperative that conflicts can always be resolved no matter its gravity and the devastating repercussions that some conflicts impose in a given geographic location.Contemporary Africa is characterized by endemic inter-state and intra-state conflict situations. The outcome is a vicious cycle of permanent instability, human rights violation, inadequate investment, unemployment, and the persistent poverty situation in the entire continent (Dze- Ngwa, 2009). In the African universe the Ubuntu spirit obliges us to evolve in the communalisticmanner. The idea as opined by some African Philosophers is that "I am because we are" (Workineh Kelbessa, 2022). Children from very tender ages should be groomed to understand that they cannot excel and cope without their fellow humans. The society has a responsibility of intensifying the processes of socialization. This is to transform the mindsets of children to inculcate the culture of peace, justice, fairness and respect for one another. When young people would imbibe

these virtues as they grow their mindsets would be nurtured and they may not depart from it. This modus operandi will ensure that youths become real harbingers of peace in this scientific and highly technological age. It is evident that in most cases the idea of war is conceived by the old and ageing population. In reality those who play the role of combatants are the youths but unfortunately they are the group in every society that suffers the consequences of any conflict most. This is very prevalent in all conflict affected countries in Africa and the world at large. A keen observation about armed struggle reveals that it is incumbent on us humans to work out ways to end violence against women, youths, and especially the girl child. What are the fundamental infrastructures of peace that needs revival in our various communities?

Rethinking Peace Education in our Communities.

To improve on internal stability and sustainable development there is dire need to introduce peace and tolerance education in Cameroon schools in particular and, the world in general. Cameroon, Africa and the world need peace and internal cohesion which, are sine qua non for development. Peace education can be define as the permanent struggle to minimize, transform and resolve conflict, in order to guarantee effective co-existence, concord among diverse peoples and their culture. Such education should be through formal and informal peace-building efforts. According to UNICEF peace education is "the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youths, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural, to resolve conflict peacefully". (UNICEF Program Report, 2012-2016). The concept of peace education is not given proper attention in the curriculum of different countries. When we highlight the idea of *quality education* articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals number four (United Nations, 2024), we should give ample time to peace education. Inclusive quality education promotes understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities. Education holds the potential to reduce the likelihood of conflicts by fostering critical thinking, encouraging open dialogue and creating economic growth opportunities. The concept of peace and justice as topics in Citizenship Education and Religious Studies is taught inschools but most learners fail to put it in practice. There is the need for a paradigm shift in the way it is planned and taught in our institutions. Though mainstreaming *peace education* into the school curriculum from kindergarten to university is slow in Cameroon for instance, it can still be taught in citizenship education until it becomes an independent subject. The teachers of different disciplines need to be well trained on the content of peace education. This is toguarantee that, in every lesson teachers may digress from time to time from the prepared lessonto impart the virtues that can bring peace in the mindsets of their learners. This can be done through touching stories that can prick the minds and hearts of youths in our age. Parents are also fully involved in this process because peace education is a formal or informal curriculum designed to build non-violent conflict resolution skills. The primary motive is to produce human beings capable of relating to others without resorting to violent conflict resolution strategies. Education promotes the knowledge, skills and attitudes to help people prevent conflict escalatingresolve conflict peacefully or create conditions for peace. Key elements like respect, equality, hard work, discipline, fairness, tranquility, consideration, tolerance, understanding and justice should be part and parcel of every teacher dealing with students at all levels. These virtues should begin from the homes as the parents have a responsibility to teach their children decent behavior and virtues-obedience, respect, love, peace, tolerance and peace. As children grow they will not depart from the values. These virtues will contribute in building up character in each child. The characters will later lead to good habits that can result to better behavior in our societies. Each time we come across a person that has been well trained on the key infrastructure- *peace education* his or her behavior is outstanding and different. The sense of serenity, calmness, tranquility and probity that emanates from that person is unquestionable. Children should be educated to love one another as they grow in society. The adults should be pace setters portraying practical examples that the younger generations can emulate. This education can be transferred to the school peace clubs, church groups, cultural associations, traditional dance groups, and community based associations. In Peace education teachers should encourage empathy and respect for differing viewpoints. Teach conflict resolution skills and the importance of peaceful dialogue. Promote critical thinking, thereby encouraging learners to thinkcritically and analytically. Establishing a sustainable infrastructure of peace requires that we dismantle the culture of war, promote human rights and responsibilities; build cultural respect, advocate for reconciliation and solidarity and living in harmony with the earth.

The mindset of waging war and relying on violence during times of conflict needs to be addressed in most communities in the world especially Africa. The educational system of Cameroon from keen observation is

lacking and requires a holistic approach towards peace building processes. Representatives from sector ministries like Basic, Secondary, and universities responsible for curriculum development should integrate *peace education* in the school curriculum. It is rather regrettable that school boycott strategy and pressure applied on thegovernment has been counterproductive to the country. This is so because school boycott has hadsevere impact on student's ability to attend school and learn which is a fundamental human right. It has been accompanied by Monday ghost-towns in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon from 2016 to date. Other spontaneous calls for lock downs especially on national holidays such as February 11, May 20 and other commemorative days like October 1, which sometimes is lasting for several days, weeks, and months has been so detrimental to denizens in the two restive English speaking regions. This has created trouble in the other eight regions as the number of Internally Displaced Persons keeps increasing daily. Schools, school pupils and students continue to be subject of attacks and violence for eight years running. In revitalizing thisinfrastructure of peace, training community school teachers and educators at all levels as peace educators is paramount. Organizing peace education programs in schools from Kindergarten to university will positively reinforce the peace culture. The peace education curriculum should be framed around value and environmental education, truth, knowledge and attitudes so as to better understand oneself, and others and the environment and make informed and responsible decisions. When this is effectively done in the communities it will help to promote community peaceful cohesion, values and leadership among school children in the North West and South West Regions. There is need to advocate for the transformation of current civic education curriculum to emphasize on peace education in order to develop self-awareness, community awareness, cultural awareness and environmental awareness among children thereby preventing future emergence of conflicts while creating conditions for sustainable peace. The collaboration between the school, homes and the communities need to be strengthened to ensure sustainability.Each sector in this trio-dimensional triangular model of school-homes-communities has a huge responsibility. All teachers have a responsibility to interact with their learners so as to go beyond demonstration and description as it has been the case for decades in the teaching and learning process. They have to transcend from lip service to inspiration and transformation of mindsets. The molding of the Head that is cognitive development should always complement the heart which is emotive development and the hand which is the practical behavior emanating from the coordination between the head and the heart. Hence, our behavior is the outcome of the extent to which the Head, Heart and Hand of learners have been educated.

Building Resilience through Income Generation Activities in Conflict affected Communities.

Resilience based on economic recovery in most communities is the most suitable infrastructure for peace in the contemporary world. This is evident because unemployment is the main factor responsible for easy recruitment of youth as combatants in most communitiesworldwide. Youths in Cameroon and Africa in general are vulnerable since they suffer the problem of unemployment more than any other country worldwide. In peace building processes economic recovery is cardinal because it practically substitutes or replaces the gun culture. In theprocess of identifying youths to benefit from income generating activities we should first of all take note of those youths who are willing and available to participate in youth peace advocacy and peace building processes trainings. Those who give attention and acquire the required skills end up as community connectors for peace. These are youths who have been selected and trainedto explore the countryside of their communities and endeavor to impart their acquired knowledge to those youths who did not have the privilege to attend the training like them. When youths whohave had any prospects of starting any business due to lack of capita eventually receive supportto carry out income generating activities; a long term foundation for peace is established in that community. This is because the material to start up the business is provided than the physical cash many young people will be interested in joining the trend. The business is established and practiced on a fixed location. When it is functioning on a fixed location it becomes easy to control and follow up by the organization that donated the funds.

Most often the activities which youths can carry out include the establishment of poultries, piggeries, small scale farming, petit cosmetic shops, and other petit businesses. Incomegrowth is a critical step to youth autonomy and to ending Gender Based Violence (GBV) and violence against women, men and especially young girls and to household wellbeing and stability. The higher the income level, the fewer chances of school dropout for youths or for earlyand forced marriages for girls in particular**.** Therefore, empowering the youths means empowering the entire community. In the training of youth on Income Generation Activities, entrepreneurships and on setting up sustainability schemes such as cooperative initiatives and thrifts loans and savings schemes. Studies have

shown that group Income Generating Activities have a lower abandonment rate, even if the profit they generate seems to be insufficient for vulnerable members who have no other sources of income. There is need to focus on a kind of purchasing cooperative that demonstrate high chances of success in the local context. In most cases youths can be encourage to develop elaborate and comprehensive plans on IGAs and cooperatives. Based on observation and field work, *Income Generation Activities presented by groups,* that demonstrate high chances of success in the local context should always be supported.

Youths can thrive in their group efforts on income generation activities when it issupported by a dynamic learning, monitoring and evaluation approaches with them at the center as the owners of the Income Generation Activities (IGAs). The kind of monitoring, evaluation, research or listening tools and systems to be used at the beginning, during and end of the IGAs activities include regular data collection, data management and reporting. In this way data shouldbe collected on a regular basis to monitor the implementation of IGAs, track outputs, and assess the progress towards achieving outcomes and objectives. This will involve the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies. Kimberly has insisted that "qualitative data collection methods are valuable for understanding human behavior and experience" (Kimberly, para.2). The next important step in the consolidation of this outstanding infrastructure of peace is data management. A robust data management system should be established to ensure the accurate collection, storage, and analysisof data. This will include the use of data management software and standardized data collection tools to enhance data quality and consistency. Reporting is vital in all would be successful activities, as such, quarterly monitoring reports will be generated to provide timely updates on IGAs progress, challenges, and emerging trends (McCarty, 2024, para.1). These reports will contribute to evidence-based decision-making and facilitate adaptive management throughout theIGAs cycle.

Other important Parameters on the use of learning for adjustment throughout the IGAs cycle to ensure it meets its objectives and the needs of the beneficiaries are Baseline and Endline assessments. A comprehensive baseline assessment will be conducted at the beginning of the project to establish a benchmark against which progress can be measured (Balode, 2024, para.6). An end line assessment will be conducted towards the end of the IGAs to evaluate the overall impact and outcomes achieved. For this perspective, an impact evaluation will be conducted to assess the project's contribution to youth's representation in existing and new peace and security decision-making positions at community and sub national levels in crisis affected regions. This will involve a rigorous analysis of data using appropriate evaluation methodologies, such as comparative analysis, case studies, and outcome mapping.

In ensuring that the IGAs infrastructure is sustainable the youths must carry out risk assessment, mitigation measures as well as gender and conflict analysis. A comprehensive risk assessment will be conducted to identify potential risks and unintended negative consequences associated with IGAs (M& E Academy of Excellence, 2024, para. 1). This will involve an analysis of contextual factors, power dynamics, and potential social and cultural impacts. It is a logical imperative that after any risk assessment mitigation measures should follow suit so as to ensure sustainability. Mitigation measures will be developed and implemented to address identified risks and minimize potential harm. This may include community consultations, conflict sensitivity training, and the establishment of feedback mechanisms to address concerns and grievances. Of paramount importance in peace building processes is a gender and conflict analysis that should be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation process to understand the gendered impacts of IGAs and ensure that the do not exacerbate existing tensions or inequalities.

Enhancing Youths and Women's Representation in Peace Building and Decision-making Processes.

The representation of women, youths especially the girls in peace building processes can be improve to create a sustainable infrastructure for peace. The understanding is that, if women in their diverse capacities and roles in the various communities in the world as mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, girlfriends or fiancées gain increased capacity on local countering violent extremism and radicalization techniques, and if these women are supported to assume active positions in existing or new peace and security decision-making structures at community and sub-national levels, then they will be able to sensitize youths to adopt positive attitudes that counter violence extremism leading to a reduction in violence and youth radicalization. Let us examine youth and women's representation in peace building and decision making positions in the on-going crisis in the North West and

South West Regions of Cameroon. But, it is crucial to give a background over view of the situation in the two restive regions presently so as to logically link the poor representation of youths and women in peace building processes.

Since 2016, armed conflict in the English-speaking Regions of the Republic of Cameroonhas led to profound humanitarian needs. Hundreds have been killed, thousands injured, over 250,000 have been internally displaced, and over 34,000 have fled to neighbouring countries likeNigeria (African Union, 2020, para 1). In these areas, conflict erupted when the political and economic grievances of some Southern English-speaking groups coalesced in calls for greater autonomy. This displacement has led to additional poverty, trauma, and difficulty accessing education, health care, and livelihoods. Violent conflict in the North West (NW) and South West (SW) regions of Cameroon has had far-reaching and long-running impacts, particularly on women and youths, especially girls, and represents a significant human rights and security challenge for the country and the sub-region.

Many women and youths in the conflict-affected communities in the NW and SWRegions of Cameroon play leadership roles in various sectors, influencing the economy, spiritual beliefs, family ties, and social systems. However, the capacities of women to effectively participate in peace building, transitional justice, and decision-making processes during and afterconflict are yet to be explored and exploited. The Anglophone crisis and the situation of women and youths related to conflict have been subjects of discussions at various national and international levels. National and international organizations that advocate for the involvement ofwomen and youth in peace processes, including conferences held by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family in Cameroon, endorsed and adopted a National Action Plan to increase the representation and broaden the participation of women and youth in existing conflictresolution mechanisms, peace building strategies, and decision-making processes. However,little progress is noticeable as voices of women and youth, especially those living in conflict- affected communities; remain weak or non-existent in discussions leading to peace and in vital political and decision-making spaces. Women and youth's meaningful engagement in peace building and decision-making processes is essential. According to the International Crisis Group,the current failure for gender to be included in peace plans for the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon (English-speaking regions) will seriously hamper the dialogue process (International Crisis Group, 2021, pp. 28-29). Women demanding inclusion in peace processes are not simply asking for an extension of the right to equality for which so many have long struggled. They understand that inclusion of gender in dialogue processes is a priority for the safety, security, and basic rights of women, but it is also for the security and safety of their communities, society, and the whole state.

Conflict persists in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, greatly affecting women and youth who face limited access to decision-making and peace building processes. Despite their proven capacity to contribute positively to conflict resolution and sustainable peace, women and youths are often marginalized. In setting up infrastructures for peace in the world the underrepresentation of youth and women need to be considered seriously. They should be empowered and concrete actions taken to ensure their participation in peace building and decision making processes. The acknowledgement and recognition of youths and women's representation and effective participation in peace building can reduce the lives that arewasted daily in this fratricidal war in Cameroon. Despite the vital roles youth and women can play in promoting peace and stability, they often face barriers that hinder their active involvement in these processes. We need to amplify the voices of youth and women in the pursuit of sustainable peace and security in African and the world.

In November 2017, Cameroon adopted its first ever 1325 National Action Plan forWomen, Peace and Security (Cameroon's National Action Plan on 1325, 2017, para.6,) aligned with the Cameroon's 2035 development vision. The plan's strategic objectives include achieving peace and security through the leadership and participation of women in conflict prevention and management, as well as peace building and social cohesion.

The focus on enhancing youth and women's involvement in national and local peace building can greatly prevent violent extremism in the world. It will also prioritize promoting peace and social cohesion by mobilizing communities to embrace a culture of dialogue and by strengthening the capacities of National and Local Political institutions to fully integrate youths women's rights and gender equality principles for inclusive and sustained conflict-prevention in Cameroon and the world. Revival social programs such as sports for peace and dancing

competition can be developed to engage youths in constructive activities and platforms for dialogue where youths can express their concerns and aspirations. By enhancing youth and women's representation in the English speaking Regions of Cameroon, and other Regions in the War this infrastructure of peace can create a more inclusive and effective peace building process.Through comprehensive training, advocacy, and community engagement, youth and women would actively contribute in shaping a peaceful and prosperous future for their communities in the world. This action can bring a tremendous change in the lives of many youths and women in the crisis Regions, since it will improve their stability and resilience, while reducing their vulnerability to violence. It will also create a more inclusive and secure space for the target group, hence paving the way for lasting peace and stability. Bearing in mind that violence has many ramifications, let us all shun it and embrace peace, for more inclusive, sustainable and developed communities.

Psychosocial Support and Trauma Healing in Peace Building Processes.

In establishing sustainable peace infrastructures we need to consider psychosocial support as an essential component since war victims experience trauma and psychological torture. The youths who play the role of combatants as well as women suffer a lot from the destruction and other calamities of war**.** Some women who are survivors of war witness the way the lives of their husbands and children are being wasted. This creates a mental picture of agony in their minds which is indelible such that when you engage in a focus group discussion they make shocking revelations about the pain and trauma they go through. As such, war victims needto be given a new and noteworthy nurturing psychologically to relieve them of their frustration thereby enhancing hope and peaceful coexistence. The word Psychosocial refers to the link which connects the individual to his environment, his immediate surroundings, his community and/or his culture. In this circumstance, when we observe the context of war, we can quickly discern the magnitude of the trauma women, children and youths go through. They need love, compassion, and empathy so as to relief them of pain, mistrust and frustration. In some cases whereby conflict led to atrocities and many casualties victims usually recount a shocking picture of how the witness the demise of their loved ones like husbands, wives, children, family members, and other members of their community. To international Federation of Red Cross, the term psychosocial refers to "the dynamic relationship between the psychological and social aspects of a person, where one can influence the other (International Federation of Red Cross, 2014, p.11). In building infrastructures of peace the psychological aspects of development needto be understood before engaging with war victims so as not to create more injuries rather than trying to heal them. Those aspects of development are thoughts, emotions, behaviours, memories, perception and understanding of an individual. As for the social aspects of development, they refer to interactions and relationship between the individual, the family, peers and the community (UNRWA, 2016, p.4). In the same light, psychosocial support refers to the processes and actions that promote the holistic well-being of people in their social world. In the process of peace building, it includes the support provided by family and friends. It can also be considered as a process to facilitate the resilience of individuals, families and communities. It is vital in peace building because at the individual level it is meant to help people recover from a life-threatening crisis and to increase their ability to return to normalcy after experiencing adverse events. It strengthens psychosocial balance and is essential for maintaining good physical and mental health. In fact, it is an essential coping mechanism for people facing difficultsituations like those in the two restive regions in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

At the community level as observed in the North West and south West Regions of Cameroon, Psychosocial support targets the resilience of families and communities while respecting independence, dignity and coping mechanism. Psychosocial support encourages the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructures of peace. Psychosocial support can have both preventive and curative benefits as our field visits in the restive Regions in Cameroon reveals. It is preventive since it is used to prevent the development of psychiatric problems face by victims of the ongoing crisis. It is curative when it helps war victims, individuals and communities overcome and manage psychosocial issues that have arisen as a result of shocks and impacts of crisis. There are two psychosocial supports that make it possible for war victims to face new crises or other difficult circumstances in life with more serenity. The first aspect is *wellness* which can be defined as a condition of holistic health and the process of achieving this condition.It is holistic because it involves physical, emotional, social and cognitive health. Well-being includes what is good for a person, that is having a meaningful social role, feeling happy and hopeful, living by good values-having positive social relationships and supportive environment, doing face

challenges through the use of positive life skills and having security, protection and access to quality services (ACT Alliance & Church of Sweden, 2015, p.2). Apart from wellness, we have resilience which is often referred to as an outcome. It refers to a process by which individuals in adverse contexts recover and even thrive. It is the adaptability of a system, a community or a person potentially exposed to dangers. This adaptation in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon means resisting or changing to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. Resilience depends on coping mechanism and life skills such as problem solving, the ability to seek support, motivation, optimism, faith, persistence and resourcefulness (The Sphere Project, 2017, p.6). It is important to note that individual resilience in the two restive Regions of Cameroon is often stimulated by community help, including interactions with peers, family, teachers, community leaders, churches, municipal authorities, Youth associations, women's associations and community based organizations coordinated by Civil Society Organizations like WAA Cameroon.

Community Participation taking into account Habits and Customs of War Victims.

In peace building processes humanitarian programs are most effective when the victims the Civil Society Organizations aim to help are involved from the start of the program. The people and the communities concerned must be consulted to best define their needs and interests and be involved in the action. This is exactly what Women in Alternative Action is doing in the North West Region of Cameroon in collaboration with the **Fon of Weh** a traditional leader so, much is been done on psychosocial support. This is within the frame work of the project titled; "Transforming Mind-sets for Youth Engagement in Crisis Prevention and Inclusive Peace Building in Menchum Division of the North West Region of Cameroon" (phase 1&2), funded bythe Open Society Foundation (OSF). (Transforming Mind sets…2021-2024). The community's specific value system and vulnerabilities, as well as the perception that these people and communities have of their needs are taken into account. Implementation of programs in this Communities must use methods that respect human dignity, promote the active participation of beneficiaries; who become actors in their recovery. Note must also be taken of Local, Religious and Cultural practices that strengthen the general well-being of the communities. Community participation is a cornerstone in constructing peace infrastructure because it helps integrate the cultural dimension by engaging in dialogue with key community members, including traditional and religious leaders, teachers and health professionals. Cultural relativism and respect in those Communities is apparent because beliefs that seem obvious and "natural" in one culture may be seen as strange in another culture. Cultural differences between team members and alleged victim can lead to communication problems or even misunderstanding. It is essential not to fall in the trap of enthno-centricism, that is to say not to "consider other people and other ways of life according to the ideas, custom and values of one's own culture" (Tempels, 1959). Although human rights principles such as the prohibition of torture, are universal, advice should be sought from local partners prior to the review on what is being done and what is not being done. Each team member to embark on psychosocial support must be properly informed about the cultural context and behavior to adopt during the trip to the field to meet victims. Sometimes, mainly when the person being examined belongs to a specific ethnic group, it may be helpful to consult an anthropologist or an expert on that particular culture to obtain information on indigenous cultural behavior, common illness, beliefs and ways of expressing feelings and emotions.

REALISTIC STRATEGIES TOWARDS THE CULTURE OF PEACE IN REGIONS AFFECTED BY WAR.

i) Advocacy and Awareness Raising:

Empowering women and youths in conducting advocacy campaigns to raise awarenesson the importance of their representation in peace-building and decision-making processes is a fundamental infrastructure of peace. It is appropriate to engage with policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to advocate adopting policies and frameworks that promote women's representation in Peace Building and Decision-Making Processes. This can be enhance rapidly with the use of Youth Think Tank Clubs created in communities affected by war and the various social media networks such as Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tweeter, Youtube, linkedin, Newsletters and Telegram. It could also be possible via other traditional Medias like Community Radios, Newspapers, and the television. The youths are very active nowadays in the social media space; (Dze-Ngwa, 2009, p.12). This will be helpful because the idea of polarize language and hate speech can

be regulated and controlled.

ii) Capacity Building and Training. Youths and women need to be provided with adequate training and skills to develop programs for women and youth led civil society organizations, and female and youth community leaders to enhance their knowledge, leadership, and skills in peace-building and decision-making.

iii) Inclusive Dialogue and Participation:

Peace building requires humanity in all communities to facilitate inclusive dialogues and consultations that bring together women, youth, and diverse community representatives to discuss peace building priorities and strategies; in a bid to ensure the meaningful participation of women and youths in decision-making processes (GPAAC-ECCA Desk Review Report 2018) related to conflict prevention and peace building at the local and national levels.

IV) Networking and Collaboration:

In peace and development studies (WAA Cameroon's National Survey, 2019) networkingand collaboration between women-led and women centered organizations and networks, peace- building actors, youths and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge, best practices, and coordinate efforts is essential.

Efforts on Building the culture of Peace made by Women in Alternative Action Cameroon in Partnership with International Civil Society Organizations in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

Collaboration in peace building processes is inevitable that is why WAA Cameroon is working with relevant local and international Organizations on projects like "Building Open Spaces to Prevent Youth Re-radicalization and Recruitment into Radical Groups in Cameroon" (WAA Project Report, 2020-2022) implemented by WAA Cameroon in partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), funded by the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and "Transforming Mind-sets for YouthEngagement in Crisis Prevention in Menchum Division of the North West Region of Cameroon" (phase 1&2), funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF); as well as the ongoing "Voices of Youth in Cameroon for Peace for the Prevention of Youth Radicalization and Re-radicalization in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon (WAA Project Report, 2024) project funded by the European Union. WAA Cameroon has a wealth of experience in terms of engaging target groups in peace building processes, as well as empowering them to ascend to Peace Building and Decision making positions. WAA Cameroon is part of a plethora of women-led and women-centered networks; which is an added advantage for mobilization, empowerment,partnership and even advocacy to achieve the sustainable culture of peace. Some of thesenetworks include, but are not limited to the Southwest Northwest Women's Taskforce (SNOWT), Cameroon Women Peace Movement (CAWOPEM), and the Cameroon Peace Convention (National Women's Convention for Peace). WAA is also a member of Cameroon Action Network on Small Arms (CANSA). Her mission is concertation with the State of Cameroon and all other stakeholders towards the eradication of the phenomenon of light weapons and the proliferation of arms in other categories in view of a Cameroonian society thatis stable and more secured. Some active members of the network are Women in Alternative Action (WAA), Ecumenical Service for Peace (SeP), Women International League for Peace andFreedom (WILPF), World Beyond War (WBW), and Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP). Added to these networks are partnerships with relevant ministries,especially the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) and the Ministryof Social Affairs (MINAS) for inclusion and empowerment of women with special needs,Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), Ministry of Youths Affairs and Civic Education (MINJEC), Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) and Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUC). By so doing, a great number of women and youths will be targeted with the influence of the government. The combined efforts of diverse stakeholders are critical to the infrastructure of peace. Collaborations with pertinent Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Religious institutions will be essential in the peace culture. Working together with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and the Ministry of Defence is essential above all else. These governmental entities possess the power and resources required to assist and incorporate the peace culture within the current educational system.

CONCLUSION

Developing peace infrastructures in the contemporary world is necessary because violent extremism has deeply disrupted peace, stability, and collective security in the world at large and in Cameroon, propelling the country to the 12th position on the 2024 Global Terrorism Index (U.S. Embassy Yaoundé, 2024.) In Cameroon's North West and South West Regions, peaceful protest against the political marginalization and economic hardships faced by the Anglophone population in 2016 were met with a forceful government crackdown, escalating to armed violence by 2017. The sustained military presence and violence have stirred up resentment and a profound sense of injustice among Anglophones, especially youth and women, rendering them vulnerable to recruitment by Non State Armed Separatist Groups advocating for independence from Francophone Cameroon. These groups, often seeking revenge for losses or a sense of belonging, have employed violent tactics, such as bombings and kidnapping, pushing this conflict into the realm of violent extremism. This same atmosphere prevails in some countries of the African Continent and the entire world as a whole. We need to build resilience at the War affected areas of the world through peace cultures and infrastructures of peace by focusing on Positive parenting, psychosocial support, advocacy and Awareness creation, Education and trainings and introducing youths to Income Generating Activities which is vital for their individual autonomy. To consolidate peace infrastructures synergy of actions is imperative. In Cameroon and other regions in the African continent we can directly reach and affect a large number of women and youths by working with churches and other religious institutions. Working with the wives of Traditional and Religious rulers; involving wives of religious authorities is another crucial component of partnership in peace building processes. Collaborating with pastors, Imans, group leaders, and officials will guarantee that in constructingthe peace infrastructures they are directly involving the youths and women. By so doing, we willbe able to have impact with the women and youths in these communities.

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