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PEACE EDUCATION IN AFRICA FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Cases Studies from Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia

A Study Undertaken for UNESCO

By

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Introduction

1.1 Background

There is consensus amongst African scholars in the area of conflict prevention and resolution that Africa possesses various cultural and traditional systems that can be used as educational resources and good practices in peace education and conflict prevention/resolution programmes. The implementation of the Gacaca model in post genocide Rwanda as a traditional method of post-conflict justice and the “Mato Oput” model as a method of post conflict peace building following the more than two decades of war in Northern Uganda has highlighted the importance of cultural practices in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building in the Eastern African region.

However most of these cultural/traditional practices of conflict prevention/resolution and peace building have not been adequately studied and disseminated to increase the possibility of replication or the promotion of other cultural methods in other parts of the continent to achieve long lasting peace.

The UNESCO constitution states in categorical terms that *“since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed”*.¹ Therefore the construction of peace through education must include the harnessing of relevant cultural and traditional perspectives to complement western methods of conflict resolution predominantly employed in the educational sphere and practice in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

¹ Preamble of UNESCO Constitution. www.unesco.org/history/constitution. Accessed on 20/12/2013

Contemporary Africa is faced with the reality of numerous evolving states that have to grapple with the inevitability of conflict. On their own, the fledgling institutions in these states cannot cope with the huge demands unleashed by everyday conflict. This therefore calls for complementarity in the teaching of peace education.

The continuing role and influence of traditional leadership and traditional conflict and post conflict peace building system in modern Africa is hard to miss. Nonetheless, the relationship between the state and traditional institutions should not be taken for granted for it is a contested terrain fraught with complexities. While traditional institutions are rooted in the culture and history of African societies, the modern state exerts a large amount of influence on these institutions².

In some cases the traditional institutions are politicized and have become instruments of propagating state ideology. In other cases, especially where they express dissent with the state, these traditional institutions have often been undermined or usurped by the state. However, the uniqueness of traditional institutions, by virtue of their endogeneity and use of local actors, cumulatively enables them to either resist or even sometimes subvert the state. These traditional institutions and mechanisms at other points have been adopted by the state when it fits the circumstances. These mechanisms also known as endogenous conflict resolution systems continue to demonstrate their relevance in post-conflict states. This is especially true in the context of weak states that are overwhelmed with ongoing state-building processes.

Therefore in order to further entrench the value and importance of traditional and cultural methods of conflict resolution to complement western methods, it is immensely important to document best practices undertaken by African personalities (Women and men) and identify examples of cultural heritage sites that could serve as sites for future generations in the countries under study. While undertaking this study, it is important to note that, studies of traditional methods of conflict resolution

² Mutisi, M. & Kwesi Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Integrating Traditional and Modern Conflict Resolution: Experiences from Selected Cases in Eastern and the Horn of Africa*. Africa Dialogue Monograph Series No:2/2012

are not a new phenomenon. In addition to identifying the traditional methods of conflict resolution, the study will also identify proverbs, legends and tales conveying the values of a culture of peace. However, the extant literature on these institutions and processes is inward-looking, and often presented as if they existed in a political and structural vacuum.

1.2 Methodology

The four case studies countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia geographically are situated in the Greater Horn of Africa that remains one of the most conflict ridden regions of the world. in the Greater Horn of Africa region namely: Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia. The methodology employed is an in-depth documentary study of two traditional and cultural methods of conflict resolution in each of the countries under review. The documentary studies were supplemented with interviews with people substantially knowledgeable on issues of indigenous methods of conflict resolution in the countries under study. The importance of the interviews was for the purposes of data validation considering that most African traditional practices are inherently oral in nature. The interviews enabled the feeling of gaps in literature and enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the various cultural and traditional methods of conflict resolution in the different countries and how they relate to each other. In examining these practices the study looks at the implication of ethnic group formations, compositions, resettlements, social welfare characteristics, materiality and spirituality in relation to conflict prevention/resolution and post conflict peace building.

1.3 Description of Case Studies Countries

The four case studies countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are geographically situated in the Greater Horn of Africa which remains one of the most conflict ridden regions of the world. All the countries including Kenya have over the past three decades suffered from protracted political strife, arising from local and national grievance, identity politics and regional inter-state rivalries. Furthermore one of the characteristics which cuts across the entire region is the existence of pastoralist communities in all the countries under study with specific conflicts derived from their way of life. It is ostensible that such conflicts which are mainly of local nature cannot be adequately resolved through the use of

western methods of conflict resolution. Therefore the promotion of indigenous methods of conflict resolution to deal with specific and relevant conflicts is immensely important. More importantly is the similarity in traditional conflict resolution methods with mild variation taking into account the trans-border ethnic complexion of the people. A case in point, there are Ethiopian Somalis with similar practices with people and in some cases clan affiliation to the clans from Somalia. Similarly, there are Afars in both Ethiopia and Djibouti. In terms of practices, the Gurti practices of a council of elders who undertake the responsibility of resolving conflicts exists in certain areas of Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. Consequently the traditional practices cut across geographical, national and regional boundaries.

2. Case Studies

2.1 Case Study No 1: Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution in Kenya

Before the advent of colonialism communities living in Kenya in particular had their own conflict resolution mechanisms. Whenever a conflict arose negotiations could be done by the disputants. In other instances the Council of elders or elderly men and women could act as third parties in the resolution of the conflict. Moreover, disputants could be amicably reconciled by the elders and close family relations and advised on the need to co-exist harmoniously. As such traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were geared towards fostering peaceful co-existence among Kenyans. The importance of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Kenya has been given recognition by Article 159 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Article 159 (2) (c) of the Constitution provides that in exercising judicial authority, the courts and tribunals shall be guided by certain principles. One of these principles is that alternative forms of dispute resolution including reconciliation, mediation, arbitration and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms shall be promoted provided that they do not contravene the Bill of Rights, they are not repugnant to justice and morality or result to outcomes that are repugnant to justice or morality and if they are not inconsistent with the constitution or any written law. In a way,

therefore, the existence of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as negotiation, reconciliation, mediation and others in Kenya is enough evidence that these are practices that have been in application for a very long period.

2.1.1 Conflict Resolution through the Council of Elders

This is a common mechanism that has been used in resolving conflicts in many areas in Kenya. It is also a common institution in almost all communities in Kenya. The institution of Wazee exists in almost all communities in Kenya. It is ordinarily the first point of call when any dispute arises in a community and since most Kenyans lives are closely linked to environmental resources, it is not surprising that most of the issues the elders deal with touch on the environment.³

Among the Pokot and Marakwet the council of elders is referred to as kokwo and is the highest institution of conflict management and socio-political organization. It is composed of respected, wise old men who are knowledgeable in the affairs and history of the community.⁴

The council of elders among the Agikuyu community was referred to as the „Kiama“ and used to act as an arbitral forum or mediator in dispute resolution. These elders and institutions were accessible to the populace and their decisions were respected. This notion is in consonance with the earlier assertion that mediation has been practiced by Kenyan communities for centuries only that it was not known as mediation. It was the familiar way of sitting down informally and agreeing on certain issues, such as the allocation of resources.

³ Patricia Kameri-Mbote, “Towards Greater Access to Justice in Environmental Conflicts in Kenya: Opportunities for Intervention,” IELRC Working Paper 2005-1, p. 3, available at <http://www.ielrc.org> (accessed on 18/12/2013). p. 8

⁴ See generally, a Report by Ruto. P, Mohamud .A, & Isabella .M (eds. Betty Rabar & Martin Karimi) *Indigenous Democracy: Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms. The Case of Pokot, Turkana, Samburu and Marakwet Communities*, (ITDG, Nairobi, 2004)

2.1.1.1 Approach to conflict resolution by the Council of Elders

Traditionally, the consensus approach is used where resolutions were attained on the basis of consensus rather than on winner-takes-all approach. Consensual outcomes were highly regarded as they created confidence as party had autonomy over the process. Thus the decision of the elders was effective, durable and long lasting. An agreement reached through consensus could be communicated to the whole community and affirmed as a social contract in a ritual way. This was done to pass the news of the satisfactory conclusion of the conflict resolution process. In terms of implementing the agreement the parties and the entire community followed up to confirm compliance with the agreement.⁵

2.1.1.2 Rules Adopted in traditional method of conflict resolution by the Council of Elders

In most cases when there is a conflict between parties, the Council of elders in the disputing or conflicting parties meet separately to discuss the possibility of agreeing to meet the opponents at a joint forum. A peace emissary usually adorned in a manner that portrays him to the enemy that, he is bringing a message of reconciliation. Conflicting parties are forbidden from attacking or killing such an emissary as this is perceived as taboo.

Once both parties agree on the date and venue which is often under a tree (See photo below), for the resolution or reconciliation meeting, elders of the involved groups come together for a dialogue. Usually such encounters result in a peace deal and agreements for coexistence. While coming to such negotiations, both groups bring food and drinks. A white and blameless animal is then slaughtered by the offending party, to be shared across the divide. Symbolically there are traditional objects among communities usually used during such peace negotiations.

⁵ 3Karugire S.R, A Political History of Uganda, (Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2010), pp. 1-16; See also Ayot H.O, A History of the Luo-Abasuba of Western Kenya from A.D. 1760-1940, (KLB, Nairobi, 1979), pp. 177-190



Turkana Gourd

This is a gourd used by the Turkana to carry milk during peace negotiations. This milk is usually shared among the conflicting parties. The Turkanas believe that milk is a symbol of peace.

Source: National Museum of Kenya



A peace meeting between the Turkana and the Samburu in Kenya. (Source: National Museum of Kenya)
The above photograph represents a peace meeting between two Kenyan communities to resolve their differences. Such meetings are usually concluded with either reconciliation of the communities or in some instances with a compensation meeting.

2.1.2 Context of Conflict Resolution through the Wajir Peace Initiative

The Wajir peace initiative is a women driven initiative aimed at resolving inter-communal conflicts in Northern Kenya. Inter-communal conflicts pose a problem for the stability among pastoralist societies especially in northern Kenya, and it was these specifically that fostered the development of innovative

solutions in order to pacify the communities of the arid lands. In order to bring an end to ongoing conflicts in the 1990s between arid lands communities or ethnic groups, local actors started ad hoc peace initiatives. Perhaps the most well-known is the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC). During years of intense conflict in Wajir District, a small group of educated Somali women began to meet with local market women to discuss conflict prevention. These women formed Wajir Women for Peace, which later joined with a group of other educated Somalis to form the Wajir Peace Group. This group first approached elders in warring communities, gradually expanding their peace building and mediation efforts to youths, sheiks, business leaders, civil servants, and the District Commissioner⁶.

2.1.2.1 Approach of the Wajir Peace initiative

Through this initiative committees are formed to facilitate meetings, in which the conflicting parties can carefully negotiate common ground rules that comply with each of their own paradigms. A good example of one of the outcomes is the so called 'Modogashe'. A good example of one of the outcomes is the so called Garissa Declarations'. In April 2001, the government's security committees and community elders of the districts of Isiolo, Marsabit, Moyale, Wajir and Garissa met with stakeholders of the districts and provinces, such as the respective Provincial Commissioners, District Commissioners, Police, Members of Parliament, county councils, and chiefs with the purpose of negotiating solutions for the frequent conflicts in the area. Jointly they discussed and outlined the modes of a peace agreement, which resulted in a document called the 'Modogashe Declaration'. The Declaration sets out the overall issues that threaten to erupt in conflict, such as cattle rustling, disputed use of pasture and water sources, and trafficking of illegal firearms. Its provisions further spell out ground rules to solve each specific problem. For example, one provision regarding disputed use of pasture and water establishes

⁶ S. S. Krätli and J. Swift, 'Understanding and managing pastoral conflict in Kenya: A literature review,' IDS, University of Sussex, UK, 1999; D. Ibrahim and J. Jenner, 'Wajir community based conflict management,' presented at USAID Conference on Conflict Resolution in the Greater Horn of Africa, June 1996

that all unauthorized grazers shall return to their home area; that they have to seek prior consent from the respective elders and chiefs if they wish to migrate to that area; that they are not allowed to enter strange grazing areas carrying firearms; and that they must return to their home district at the end of a drought.

Furthermore, in order to stop the practice of cattle rustling which is a major conflict element in the region, the initiatives require that peace committees and community elders should cooperate with the authorities in the recovery of stolen cattle; that complainants have to give correct information about the number of cattle stolen – or they should be prosecuted by the law; that the complainants should not track the animals themselves, but should let elders and security personnel pursue them; that the elders and security personnel should hand over the animals to the authorities of the neighboring district if the cattle has crossed the district boundaries; and most importantly, that each head of livestock not recovered should be compensated by five, and the death of a man should be compensated by 100 cows/camels, and that of a woman by 50 cows/camels.

Peace committees are said to have been useful in inter-ethnic or cross-district conflicts. They allow for peaceful interaction between representatives of different groups, even across district boundaries.

In the case of cattle theft, for example, the peace committees send rapid response teams to pursue the footprints of the cattle. They follow the tracks and report to the police, district officers and the chiefs. If the cattle have been herded across district boundaries, they contact the peace committee of the neighboring district and seek their cooperation. Once the location of the stolen cattle is identified, they request the return of the cattle from the committee in the other district. In case the cattle are not returned, the peace committees from both sides mediate and negotiate the compensation for the victim's group.

2.2 Case Study No 2: Traditional Method of Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia

2.2.1 The Gaada System

The Gaada system is a traditional system among the Oromia people in Ethiopia to guide the social, economic, political and religious life of the people especially in managing resources thus preventing and resolving conflicts among the people. Gaada is a system of social organization based on age grade classes of the male population that succeed each other every 8 years in assuming economic, social, political and military responsibilities. The Gadaa System divides the men in the community into 5 main age groups in which each group has a role to play in maintaining the flocks, the water, the land and the peace (there are additional groups but they play a more symbolic role:

1. FOOLLEE (ages 9-16) - duty is to look after small stock around their area.
2. QONDAALA (ages 17-24) - duty is to take livestock away from their area and begin drawing water from wells.
3. KUUSAA (ages 25-32) - duty is politically significant; nucleus of Gadaa leaders emerge.
4. RAABAA DOORII (ages 33-40) - duty is an extension of Kuusaa grade; prepare for the assumption of full authority; important military services; conducts raids; protects Boran land and resources; men allowed to marry at this stage.
5. GADAA (LUBA) (ages 41-48) - duty is most politically active; most important of all stages; assumes power/office; visit all Borana regions, judge on serious disputes; this stage is marked by a leadership ceremony.

Those over the age 48 are considered the YUBBA. They are considered to be old and wise with the responsibility of taking on an advisory role. Any boy under the age of 9 has only a symbolic role as a mediator between God and human. Then there is the ABBAA GADAA who is the leader of the Gadaa. He is like the president of the Boran. He is called to pronounce judgment in conflicts between communities within the Borana Zone. If there is a conflict between ethnic groups, then the Abbaa

Gadaa will be called to mediate between the conflicting communities. This is in a sense a traditional legal or customary law system.

2.2.1.1 Method of conflict resolution under the Gadaa system

This is basically a traditional justice system based on the application of customary law with implications for regulating conflicts and preventing violence. The conflicts usually resolved under this system relate to conflicts over access and use of water resources. Some of the customary practices regulated under customary law include:

- During the wet seasons, only open water sources such as rivers, natural ponds are used and all wells are closed.
- During dry seasons, herds are moved to ponds farther away and traditional wells are re-opened
- During extreme dry seasons, when water is scarce, drinking frequency of cattle is gradually reduced to ones a day, then to ones every two days and then ones every three days.

The men in the RAABAA DOOR II age group watch to make sure these laws are upheld. The most highly protected sources of water are hand dug shallow ponds and wells.

2.2.2 The Michu and Luba Basa Systems in Western Ethiopia

The Gumuz people predominate in the Metekkel area of western Ethiopia next to the Sudan border. In this isolated part of Ethiopia, neighboring Amhara and Oromo peoples have moved into Metekkel over the years, resulting in disputes over land and resources. As a consequence, a mechanism known as *michu*, or friendship, developed to resolve ethnic conflicts and to create an environment of tolerance and mutual coexistence. The conflicting parties invoke *michu* when serious problems arise. It establishes the free movement of people and is used by all the inhabitants of the region. Ethnic groups living in Metekkel prefer to entrust their differences to the *michu* mechanism than to a government court. To this day *michu* plays an important role in preventing conflicts in the region. It is not a substitute for established legal systems but stands as a creative complement to them.

2.2.2.1 The Process of conflict resolution under the Michu system

The Michu conflict resolution mechanism employs the use of rituals in the process of conflict resolution. At the end of the ceremonies, a bull or more frequently goats and fowls are slaughtered, followed by traditional merry making. The Gumuz usually prefer a fowl and if the parties involved slaughter a fowl, it is considered a sign of friendship. At the end, songs, traditional merry making, hugging and invocation of spirits continue. The ceremony is concluded after the elders and clan chiefs shake hands as a sign of peace and future cooperation.

Neighboring Oromo developed a similar concept known as *luba basa*, literally, “to set free.” As the Oromo migrated into territory occupied by other ethnic groups, they created *luba basa* as a traditional system to reduce conflict. The Oromo considered the non-Oromo groups castes and treated them as inferiors, sometimes harshly, until they are assimilated through the *luba basa* institution. *Luba basa* “set them free” so that they could become equals to the Oromo. *Luba basa* rituals vary from place to place. One common practice involves mixing the blood of conflicting parties and breaking a bone, a symbolic gesture signifying that old conflicts are broken and new friendships formed. They then pledge an oath not to fight each other. In some cases, *luba basa* even resulted in ethnic integration.

2.3. Case Study No 3: Traditional Conflict Resolution in Somalia

2.3.1 Diya-Paying system

Somali social organization comprises a complex web of affiliations and identities, including class, regional, and occupational cleavages. But none has been revitalized in the current crisis in Somalia as lineage, or clan identity. Somalis identify themselves within a vast family tree that is defined at the highest level by six large clan families, each of which breaks down into clans, subclans and primary lineages. This fluid, cascading lineage identity can be mobilized at different levels, depending on the

nature of the conflict at hand. The most stable lineage unit is the *Diya-paying group*, which can number between several hundred to several thousand close relatives, bound to collectively pay or receive blood compensation, or *diya*. If one of their members commits or is a victim of a crime.⁷

Even during the period of colonialism and this era of post colonial judicial system, the *diya* system has continued to serve as the primary structure through which personal grievances from livestock raiding to murders are peacefully resolved through compensation rather than retaliation. Typically, for instance, the murder of a man would be compensated by the payment of one hundred camels by the *diya-paying group* of the accused murderer to the *diya* group of the victim. Such an exchange would entail lengthy negotiations between elders of the two groups and in cases when agreement could not be reached a blood feud leading to retaliatory attacks was usually the result. But the fear of revenge attacks and the opportunity to prevent or terminate cycles of revenge killings through the *Diya*-payments, permitted a modicum of order and security in historically stateless Somalia and continued to function even after the defunct regime of Siade Barre outlawed *diya* payments. The high cost of compensation also served as a deterrent for potential miscreants since their clansmen bore the collective costs of compensation, peer pressure to observe social contract was strong within the *diya* groups.

2.3.2 The 'Shir' System

These is a system of traditional clan assemblies known as *shir* representing the consultative processes that make traditional Somali peacemaking so relatively democratic and open. These assemblies can either call adult male members of a lineage at any level of segmentation to discuss and ratify a position, or can involve a meeting between elders of two or more lineages. *Shir* are lengthy processes in which all present have the right to express their views. Because they are held in the midst of the community and are open for all to observe, and because they ensure a thorough process of consensus building and

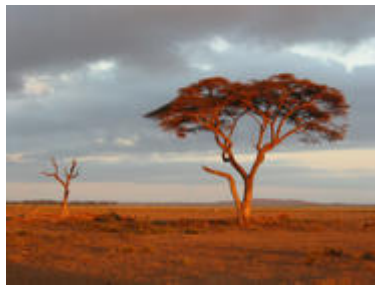
⁷ Lewis , I.M (1988) A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

consultation, traditional assemblies produce accords that possess a high level of legitimacy and binding power⁸.

Collectively, these various practices and social institutions form the core of what Somali observers mean when they refer to traditional conflict management. Importantly, this list underscores a key distinction between traditional processes, such as clan assemblies such as clan assemblies and traditional actors especially elders. That distinction has come to matter in recent years, as elders have sometimes been drawn into nontraditional peace conferences, and traditional assemblies have been used by nontraditional actors⁹.

2.4 Case Study No 4: Traditional Conflict Resolution in Djibouti

2.4.1 The Xeer Gurti



A *guurti* (court) is traditionally formed beneath an acacia tree, where judges arbitrate a dispute until both parties are satisfied. This process can sometimes lead to several days' worth of discussions

This is a system of clan elders who apply customary law both within and between ethnic groups. This assembly or council of elders normally come together under a tree to address conflicts between their clans. Xeer often draws aspects of Islamic Shari'a law although its often viewed by Islamists groups as a deviation from Shari'a. Traditional reconciliation efforts generally produce such a social contract between the reconciling groups. The ensuing contracts derived from negotiations have no political force with punitive capacities to enforce the accords and therefore resemble norms of customary international law but in both cases there are negative consequences for actors who choose to violate

⁸ Menkhaus, K. "Traditional Conflict Management in Contemporary Somalia" in Zartman W.I, Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

⁹ Op Cit,pg 186

the code of conduct. Furthermore both xeer and customary international law provide a certain level of predictability, confidence building and cooperation in an otherwise anarchic environment.

For instance, under the xeer system, someone guilty of homicide may be brought before court for trial under positive law, but if settlement is reached outside the court in accordance with xeer, he or she may be set free without punishment. This is particularly so where law enforcement and the courts are weak or non-existent, where warrants cannot be enforced, and relatives apprehend the offender. When the relatives settle an offense according to customary laws outside the judiciary system, judges and law enforcement officers cannot prevent the release of the offender brought to them by the relatives who now insist on his release.

2.4.2 Trans-border conflict Resolution through a Periodic Meetings with Customary Chiefs

The Afars and Issas are the two dominant ethnic groups in Djibouti. But there are also found on the Ethiopian side of the country bordering Djibouti. These two ethnic groups often clash on issues of cattle rustling from both ethnic groups across the borders. The consequence of this has been the tensions which affect the cohabitation of the Afars and Issas in other parts of the country. In many cases, it is the act of cattle theft or crimes committed from the Ethiopian side of the border by an individual thief who may be an Afar or an Issa that lead to actions of revenge in the Djiboutian territory and jeopardizes peace in the area.

In order to avoid any risk of escalating conflicts in these zones, the administrative authorities of the Region always organize periodic meetings with the notables and the customary chiefs of the different tribes, with a view to maintaining in a sustainable way, peace and security in this region. These leaders of the Afars and Issas tribes are known for their authority and are members of a committee of pastoral conflicts resolution.

2.4.3 Proverbs, Legends and Tales of a Culture of Peace in the Horn of Africa

A/Proverbs

Kenyan Proverbs

(i) *Cia mucii iri gacuguma gacio gatathukagio ni muthuri ungi tiga mwenegwo.*

This is a Kikuyu proverb which indicates that, home affairs have their staff, which cannot be brandished by anyone but the head of the house. The proverb means either that private matters must not be spoken of to strangers or that in each house there must be only one in authority. The implication for peace in this proverb is that disputes should be settled amongst Kenyans rather than by outsiders. In other words Kikuyus do not prefer third party dispute settlement.

(ii) *Ciathanaga ikigua, itiathanaga ikiumbuka (Birds agree when flying down, but do not agree when flying up).*

The is a Kikuyu proverb means that it is easy for a swarm of birds to alight together, while it is difficult to get up together since after eating their fill they will fly up separately. Morally the proverb means that men easily agree when deciding on an enterprise, but will probably quarrel as soon as they have obtained what they want.

B/Ethiopian Proverb

(i)“The most important thing is to lay a foundation for peace”. This is a very common Ethiopian proverb which cuts across many ethnic groups in Africa. It is commonly believed by Ethiopians that the foundation for peace resides in living in brotherliness.

(ii)“The one who is transparent has no one against him.” Transparency is believed to be the cornerstone of living in peace within a family in Ethiopia. Ethiopians from different ethnic groups believe that transparency leads to confidence building in relationships.

C/Somali Proverbs

Ha dagaalin: minaad raydo reerkaaga waaye; minii lagaa raayo ruuxaaga waaye (Do not fight: if you win, you pay with your stock; and if you lose, you pay with your life).This Somali saying is related to the cost

of conflict. It portrays conflicts as a lose-lose situation where no matter whether you are a winner or a loser in a conflict the parties to a conflict still lose something.

B/ Legends and Tales

Kenyan Legends and Tales

(i)The Origin of Cattle (Maasai in Kenya)

In the beginning, the Maasai did not have any cattle. One day God called Maasinta, who was the first Maasai and said to him: "I want you to make a large enclosure, and when you have done so, come back and inform me." Maasinta went and did as he was instructed, and came back to report what he had done. Next God said to him: "Tomorrow, very early in the morning, I want you to go and stand against the outside wall of the house for I will give you something called cattle. But when you see or hear anything do not be surprised. Keep very silent."

Very early in the morning, Maasinta went to wait for what was to be given him. He soon heard the sound of thunder and God released a long leather thong from heaven to earth. Cattle descended down this thong into the enclosure. The surface of the earth shook so vigorously that his house almost fell over. Maasinta was gripped with fear, but did not make any move or sound. While the cattle were still descending, the Dorobo, who was a house-mate of Maasinta, woke up from his sleep. He went outside and on seeing the countless cattle coming down the strap, he was so surprised that he said: "Ayieyieyie!", an exclamation of utter shock. On hearing this, God took back the thong and the cattle stopped descending. God then said to Maasinta, thinking he was the one who had spoken: "Is it that these cattle are enough for you? I will never again do this to you, so you had better love these cattle in the same way I love you." That is why the Maasai love cattle very much.

(ii)Two Brothers who were Friends (Son of my father) Maasai

There once lived two step-brothers who were such close friends that no one could separate them. One of the boys lost his mother at an early age, so the surviving wife was charged with the responsibility of

taking care of both boys. And this woman, who was the boy's step-mother, had no liking for her step-son. And the boy's duty was to look after cattle, among which was one gentle cow that the boys used to milk each day whenever they became hungry. Each of the boys drew from two of the cow's four teats, and this became a rule which they always observed. The boys referred to each other as "son of my father" because they were the sons of one man.

Their mother, as the surviving wife came to be called by both boys, did not like the idea of the two boys being such good friends, and so tried unsuccessfully to separate them. She said to herself, "I must find a way of killing this boy." So, the next day, as the boys took the cattle out grazing, she told her own son to return home at the middle of the day to have a haircut. The boy did as he was bid, and at around midday he went back home, had a haircut and a drink of milk and returned to the cattle. The next day it was the turn of the other boy to have his hair cut. But before the boy went home, the woman dug a deep hole at the head of the bed. On arrival the boy was sent to fetch a razor from the head of the bed. But as he tried to rummage for the blade he fell into the hole, which the woman quickly covered with a big stone. The other boy waited expectantly for his friend until the evening when he drove the cattle back home, assuming that his friend must have been assigned some other duty at home.

As soon as he got home the boy looked for his step-brother; but not finding him he asked his mother where he was. She categorically denied having any knowledge of his whereabouts, saying: "I gave him a haircut and he went back to the cattle." The people looked for the boy everywhere, and when they could not find him, they assumed he had been eaten by wild animals.

After some time, the villagers moved home and burnt up the old village. When the rains fell, some long grass grew at the old settlement. One day the surviving boy, who had cried for his brother until he could cry no more, took the cattle there to graze. While the cattle grazed he went and sat down on the big stone that covered the hole inside which was his brother. It so happened that the boys had a song they

used to sing when they were milking their cow; and, as he sat on the stone, the boy remembered his step-brother and started singing the song:

Son of my father

The udder of the dapple grey is bursting with milk

But I will not draw from your teats

Son of my father.

When the boy in the hole heard the other one singing he responded in song:

Son of my father

You may draw and let it nurture you

Son of my father

It was your mother who put me into the hole.

When the boy on the top of the stone first heard the reply he thought his voice was simply being echoed by the forest. He sang one more time, and again his brother sang in response, so he realized that the singing was coming from underneath the stone. On rolling the stone away he was astonished to see his brother, whom he helped out of the hole. He had eaten soil and his clothes were all tattered. He could barely see, for his eyes had grown sensitive to light. The boy gave his brother clothes to put on, and he milked one of the cows for him to drink fresh milk. He first made him vomit all the soil he had been eating, and then fed him with some fresh milk. When evening came, he took him home with him.

On their way home the boy who had been rescued related to his step-brother how their mother had put him inside the hole. His step-brother became furious because he loved his brother more than any other person. When they were about to reach home, he sharpened his spear till it was razor sharp. On arrival he headed straight for his mother, whom he instantly speared to death. He next sought his father to inform him of what he had done. The men were then assembled, and when the story was told the people simply listened without comment. Nothing could be done.

So the boys lived happily without a mother.

Ethiopian Legends and Tales

Among the Oromo, there is a belief in a supreme god called Waka or Holowaka, represented by spirits known as ayana. The ayana are mediators between the high god and human beings and are themselves approached through the kallu, a ritual specialist capable of being possessed by these spirits. The kallu is said to communicate directly with Waka and bless the community in his name.

Belief in the existence of active spirits many malevolent, some benevolent is widespread among Ethiopians, whether Christian, Muslim, or pagan. The spirits called zar can be male or female and have a variety of personality traits. Many peasants believe they can prevent misfortune by propitiating the zar. The protective adbar spirits belong to the community rather than to the individual or family. The female adbar is thought to protect the community from disease, misfortune, and poverty, while the male adbar is said to prevent fighting, feuds, and war and to bring good harvests. People normally pay tribute to the adbars in the form of honey, grains, and butter.

(i) Somali Legends and Tales

Habbad ina Kamas

Habbad ina Kamas was a legendary cruel giant who ruled half of ancient Somalia. His oppressive rule was the complete opposite to the kindness and care that was bestowed upon the other half of the land ruled by the giant Biriir ina Barqo. He was defeated and killed in battle by Biriir when he found out about the abuse and neglect through the mouths of his human subjects.

Biriir ina Barqo

Biriir ina Barqo was a legendary heroic giant in ancient Somalia known for his just rule and kindness. He lived in a cave called Shimbiraale (the cave of birds) and used to wear a heavy ring that no man could

lift. He answered the pleas of those suffering under the rule of the giant called Habbad and defeated him in battle. He then united the two lands and ushered in a long period of peace.

The applicability of traditional conflict resolution in education systems.

There is a growing debate about the applicability of traditional conflict resolution methods in Africa. This debate has been reinforced by the notion regarding how it could be taught in schools in the continent. As one of the cornerstones of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, indigenous knowledge systems including conflict resolution is already being developed and taught in some African countries like South Africa.

However, opposition to these indigenous conflict resolution methods has been very loud. Those who oppose this raise the issues of repugnance to natural justice, good conscience and equity in relation to some traditional practices. It is therefore advisable that these systems should be synergized and regulated by the law to avoid the issues raised by those who oppose them. By harnessing the applicable value systems it is clear that they will complement each other in the areas of conflict resolution and transformation. When viewed as such, these traditional mechanisms can be implemented and also taught just like modern methods of conflict resolution. This could be done through their inclusion in syllabuses in existing conflict resolution programmes or fully fledged traditional or indigenous methods of conflict transformation and resolution programmes can be developed and taught from secondary to tertiary levels of the school system.

2.5 Conclusion

This selection of these examples of African value systems and institutions of conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa are just a few practices from a wide range of other effective traditional methods of conflict resolution normally applied in this region. However they remain relevant and viable towards

promoting peace and security in the conflict ridden areas of the countries under study. It is anticipated that these case studies will underscore the message that certain communities in the region have always and continue to have institutions and mechanisms that are central to the successful resolution of their conflicts. Certainly, traditional institutions will continue to shape the conflict resolution and transformation landscape of the region. Without manipulating or politicizing such entities, the modern post-colonial and post-conflict African state should continue to embrace these traditional institutions. They merit being viewed as a key feature of the African peace and security architecture.