

## Quest for a Space for Co-curriculum as an Alternative Peace-building Mechanism: Analysis of the Legal Frameworks of the Ethiopian Higher Education System

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**Abstract:** *There are several platforms to build peace within higher education institutions (HEIs). Out of these, co-curricular programs (CoCPs) received considerable attention for obtaining peace-promoting effects. However, it is rare to find literature that analyzes the legal frameworks (proclamations, legislations, and regulations) that enable CoCPs to play a significant role in peace-building. This is also true in the Ethiopian HEIs context. This article attempts to find out whether the legal arrangements leave space for CoCPs so that it could acknowledge their possible contributions to promote peace within the public of the HEIs. In so doing, the Education and Training Policy (ETP), the three higher education proclamations, the Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap, HEIs 10 Years Development Plan and five selected university senate legislations were examined. The qualitative content analysis revealed that the proclamations, the road map and senate legislations indeed leave some room for CoCPs to contribute to the efforts of building peace. However, the significance of CoCPs is not explicitly stated in relation to peace. Hence, the contribution of CoCPs under the legal frameworks of Ethiopian Higher Education System (HES) as alternative peace-building mechanism is inferred.*

**Keywords:** co-curricular programs, higher education, peace-building, and legal frameworks

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## Introduction

Universities can be assets for peace-building. The World Conference on Higher Education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1998) urged university students to defend universal values like 'peace' and take an active role in the community. The 2018 *Seminar on Peace and Global Civil Society* further advised universities to take part in national and international peace-building initiatives (West, 2018). Unfortunately, students seem to find it difficult to live in harmony with each other let alone contribute positively to national development (Almerab, 2017; Alshoraty, 2015; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014). Ethiopian regular undergraduate students within the public HEIs are no exception.

Access to HES is being improved in Ethiopia and this is thought to open up opportunities for improved cross-cultural communication. Yet, students' failure to tolerate 'others' based on their ethnic identity over time turned HEIs' once-peaceful environment into a hostile environment (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010). Mistrust, hostility and direct violence have become very common (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Mekonnen, 2013) and deadly (Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020). These undermined student cohesion, cast doubt on their intelligence (Abera, 2010), and harmed university reputations (Abebaw, 2019; Yonas, 2019). Hence, (re)building ties among a varied student body is required.

Through discourse, negotiation, and mediation, peace-building aims to mend connections between individuals and communities (Galtung, 2007). Universities have made improvements in a variety of areas, such as the addition of new courses like human rights education (Delgado, 2008), the integration of peace education topics into existing curricula (Shehi, Ozcan, and Hagen, 2018), and the introduction of critical pedagogy to examine the transformative learning potential of teaching approaches towards peace-building (Fethers). Legal frameworks typically assisted HEIs in administering such projects.

Another alternative to building peace in HES is through the support of non-academic programs commonly called- CoCPs. Even though such programs have a proven track record in promoting diversity and reinforcing peace (Denson, 2009; Dhanmeher, 2014; Rockenbach, Mayhew, Morin, Crandall & Selznick, 2015; Savchits, Ismailova & Turebayeva, 2017; Ward, 2017), and received strong legal support in some countries like America (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Ward, 2017), Vietnam (Nghia, 2017) and Canada (Elias & Drea, 2013), their impact on peace is not thoroughly studied compared to that of curricular learning.

Particularly in the Ethiopian context, where intolerance and violence have become a common feature of HEIs students and no single intervention has been fully successful in mitigating the problem so far, it is pivotal to analyze the potential of alternative mechanisms such as the CoCPs in promoting peace. However, the basis for the implementation of any intervention emanates from the legal framework that legitimizes it. Hence, it is essential to answer the question *do legal frameworks in the Ethiopian public HES leave room for such an alternative peace-building mechanism?*

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Learners have different perceptions and interpretations of identity, common good and peaceful co-existence depending on their upbringing and social life. Hence, there is a higher chance for students to bring thinking habits and even stereotypes into HEIs (Hurtado, 2007). This resulted in disagreements and violence in Saudi Arabia (Almerab, 2017), Jordan (Alshoraty, 2015), Pakistan (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014), Russia (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015), Dominican Republic (Lewis, 2016) and African (Fomunyan, 2017; Mohamedbhai, 2010) HEIs among others. Hence, students' inter-group relationships is deteriorated and peaceful co-existence on campuses is disrupted.

As social, economic, ethnic and religious differences prevail, institutions should reform their structures, processes and procedures to accommodate the needs of individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds. As an institution, universities are spaces for diversified interests and the values of students are

negotiated. Hence, they are expected to go through a comprehensive reform to produce the next generation of leaders who are not only competent academically but can contribute to democracy, social justice, peace and development (UNESCO, 1998). This is particularly important in multicultural settings (Hurtado, 2007) like Ethiopian public universities.

In Ethiopia, public universities have become conflict sites where students from multi-ethnic and multi-lingual groups fail to co-exist. Even though violent episodes seem to be caused by the intolerant attitude of students, the problem is rooted in the contested ethno-federal political structure of the nation underpinned by oppressor-oppressed discourse (Abebaw, 2014; 2019; Abera, 2010; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020). Sometimes, students mobilize in groups because they feel 'the cultural group they belong to' is attacked by another university as observed in Bahir Dar and Haromaya in 2009 (Abebaw, 2014) and in Dire Dawa, Woldia and Wollega in 2019 (Yonas, 2019).

It is hard for students to fit in with "familiar ways of thinking and acting" in culturally diversified settings (Hurtado, 2007, p.189). Over the years, HEIs have adopted different strategies to produce peace-loving, non-violent, and culturally sensitive professionals. These include the introduction of human rights education (Delgado, 2008), peace education (Shehi, Ozcan & Hagen, 2018) and transformative pedagogy (Fetherston & Kelly, 2007). These initiatives received policy support and academic literature widely discussed the legal architecture behind them.

Then again, out-of-classroom endeavours (CoCPs) like involvement in unions, social networking and community service are advocated to nurture critical thinking, reasoning, intercultural cooperation and non-violence in HEIs (Dhanmeher, 2014; Rockenbach et. al., 2015; Savchits et. al., 2017; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). Their potential to respond to diversity challenges in educational settings is also recognized by UNESCO (1994). Yet, legal frameworks that legitimize CoC as an alternative peace-building tool within HEIs are hardly analyzed in academic literature.

In the context of Ethiopian public HEIs, CoCPs are thought to bridge the broken unity among students (Abera, 2010), and this brings about positive inter-cultural relationships (Misrak & Addisu, 2011), strengthens inter-group relations (Abebaw, 2014), promotes tolerance (Abebe, 2015), enhances students' team spirit (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017), teaches ethnic tolerance (Miressa, 2018), imparts peace values and transforms dysfunctional relationship along ethnic lines (Zekarias, 2020). However, none of these studies examines whether CoCPs role in peace-building receives legal support. Hence, there is a gap in the literature. This study therefore attempts to find out whether there is a legal basis for CoCPs as an alternative peace-building mechanism within public HEIs.

Accordingly, this study tried to answer the following three basic questions:

1. How do legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES entertain CoC issues?
2. How do legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES entertain peace-building elements?
3. What types of CoCPs are implied to build peace within the legal contexts of Ethiopian HES?

#### *Objectives of the Study*

The overarching objective of this study was to examine whether CoCPs are integrated within the HES legal frameworks as alternative peace-building mechanisms. The specific objectives are to:

- Describe how legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES entertain co-curricular issues;
- Analyze how the legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES accommodate peace-building elements, and
- Identify the types of CoC activities suggested to build peace within the legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The purpose and application of CoC as well as the relationship between CoC and peace-building are covered in this section.

### *The Essence and Practice of Co-curriculum*

Over the years the traditional curriculum has stretched towards informal lessons and holds a prominent place in supporting students' holistic development. The informal curriculum entails hidden and extra-curriculum (ECAs). While the former implies unintended lessons, the latter involves activities related to academics or goes beyond them (Kridel, 2010). The latter version, which is commended to prepare students for the real world, is the focus of this study.

### *Meaning of Co-curriculum*

Co-curricular activities are non-academic activities with pro-social potential through engagement in community service, clubs, sports, student council, training, workshops, conferences, and field visits (Stirling & Kerr, 2015). However, the similarity between ECAs and CoCPs creates confusion. Dhanmeher (2014) posits that the term 'extra' is given because there is no shared belief they are beneficial. Through time, however, their role in enhancing democratic behaviour, reasoning ability, cooperation, inter-cultural understanding and peace become evidenced in various studies (Dhanmeher, 2014; Savchits et.al., 2017; Siddiky, 2019; Thornton, Tarrant & Williams, 2009; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). To date, the term CoC is more common because the term 'extra' undermines the value of out-of-classroom activities (Dhanmeher, 2014).

### *The Place of Co-curriculum within Higher Education Legal Frameworks: Experience from Other Countries*

American institutions are the primary implementers of CoC. The paper *Greater Expectations* by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in

2002 for instance focuses on students' empowerment through taking responsibility for their learning and being informed of societal challenges. *Internationalizing the Co-curriculum* by the American Council on Education in 2017 further created a platform for global students' connectedness. These documents, along with many others, help US HEIs to adopt the CoC model and manage diversity-related conflicts.

In Vietnam, developing generic skills (like working in teams, critical thinking, resilience, creativity and problem-solving) through ECAs for university students, received a central place in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in 2010 and Vietnamese National Congress in 2012 (Nghia, 2017). Accordingly, the Ministry adopted a national guideline for universities in Vietnam to engage in generic skills development (Nghia, 2017). Hence, ECAs hold a legal basis in HEIs.

Most Canadian HEIs formed a program commonly called the Co-curricular Record (CCR) policy. Accordingly, HEIs like the University of Toronto, University of Alberta and McGill University provide a range of CoC options students can take part (Elias & Drea, 2013). Students therefore gain a robust academic experience and develop a peaceful attitude towards 'out-groups'. The government even accredited a professional association named the Canadian Association of College and University Students Services (CACUSS) that promotes engagement and excellence in CoC.

In South Africa, the University of the Western Cape issued a CCR policy, which intended to broaden students' experience and produce responsive citizens through self-awareness development, value exploration, intellectual growth, and diversity management (University of the Western Cape, 2013). Similarly, Stellenbosch University issued a procedure on how CoC is undertaken through its Co-curriculum Office based on experiential learning theory and envisioned to foster inter-cultural understanding of students and social impact (Stellenbosch University, 2019).

In Australia, the Australian National University's CoC schedule clearly states the skills (community engagement, diversity, teamwork and critical thinking)

attained through engagement in CoCPs (Australian National University, 2022). In a Green Paper to enhance student life at the University of Melbourne, CoC platforms like clubs, societies, sports, fitness and cultural activities are identified as viable platforms to improve students' higher education experience.

Experiences from different HEIs demonstrated that the potential of CoCPs in nurturing multicultural understanding, tolerance, rational thinking, and non-violence has a legal basis. What about in Ethiopia? Before an analysis is made of the legal frameworks, which is the central thesis of this study, it is important to discuss how CoC fit into peace-building frameworks.

#### *Peace-building through Co-curriculum: A Top-down or a Bottom-up Approach?*

Peace advocates non-violence, transformation of unpleasant relationships, and creation of a new reality through joint efforts of conflictants (Galtung, 2007). This necessitates a people-centred and participatory approach to analyze causes of conflict, rebuild relationships and lay a foundation to prevent future violence and build a stable society (Yonas, 2018). This process is called peace-building. Peace-building through education enriches the education process with concepts of peace, human rights, tolerance, social justice, diversity, and critical thinking (Agnihotri, 2017; West, 2018). These make learners responsible, respectful and peace-loving citizens (Yonas, 2018).

The liberal approach to peace-building calls for international standards that promote democracy and human rights (Paris, 2010). Yet, this top-down approach overlooks underlying structural dimensions that initiate the conflict, and local initiatives and even considers a means to extend Western imperialism (Pugh, 2008). Such an approach therefore lacks a comprehensive understanding of the educational process. Thus, Žižek argues blindly applying liberal peace notions leads to *violence that sustains our very efforts to fight violence and promote tolerance* (2008, p.1).



Instead, bottom-up peace-building aims at transforming individual prejudices and emphasising peaceful relations. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall (2016) argue that for peace-building to be successful, it should move towards the inclusion of conflict-affected communities. This develops responsibility (Lefrance, 2011), top and local actors partnership (Ramsbotham et al., 2016) and response to *everyday needs and concerns* of those in need of peace (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016).

Co-curricular intervention in peace-building aims at developing the physiological, psychological and social skills of students so that they can be responsible citizens. In other words, they develop *self-restraint, concern for others, tolerance to difference, and public-interestedness* (Kymlicka, 2005, p.55). If students learn these virtues, this paves the way to peaceful co-existence in a culturally diverse environment. So, the question is to which category CoCPs fit.

In Ethiopian public HEI conflicts, students are the main actors. Top-down initiatives like tripartite agreement (Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE, 2019d), imposition of curfew (MoSHE, 2019a), government peace dialogue (MoSHE, 2019b), and deployment of federal police, suspension, detention and expulsion, and closure of campuses (MoSHE, 2019c) cannot prohibit re-occurrence of conflicts. Hence, a bottom-up approach that champions the major actors to take greater responsibility for their own peace and peaceful co-existence with 'out-groups' is needed. Fortunately, CoCPs qualify for this category.

#### *Peace-building Role of Higher Education System: Legal Frameworks Support*

Peace-building is among the evolving roles of HEIs. Universities can contribute to peace-building by opening safe spaces for dialogue, conducting evidence-based research to influence policy, empowering the local population and creating space for marginalized groups, educating students to be future peace-builders, and working towards shifting societal educational profile through creating access to higher education (West, 2018).

Universities further introduce the internationalization of HE that allows students to develop multicultural competence (West, 2018), the introduction of conflict-sensitive curriculum and pedagogy and co-curricular interventions to broaden students' knowledge base and cross-cultural interaction (Ward, 2017). In light of this, studies in Ethiopia recommend the need to design courses that promote multiculturalism (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010), endorsement of language diversity (Tesfaye, 2012), develop of integrated curriculum intended to build a culture of peace (Abebe, 2015) and bringing back Ethiopian History course to dismantle the oppressor-oppressed discourse in Ethiopian public universities (Yonas, 2019) to enhance role of HEIs in peace-building.

Generally, policy documents issued by international institutions like UNESCO usually give a framework on how governments should reform their HES in a way that promotes inclusion, democracy, social justice, peace and reconciliation and produces peace-loving, socially responsible and cosmopolitan youth. Hence, legal arrangements on HES take significant input from such deliberations which makes universities peace-building agents among other things. This works for Ethiopian HES. This study therefore tried to reflect on whether legal frameworks entail peace-building elements and make public HEIs peace-building legal persons. Such discussion was not addressed in previous studies.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

In this sub-section, research design, data collection tools and sampling and data analysis techniques are discussed.

#### *Research Design*

Legal frameworks are found in the form of policy documents. Hence, qualitative design was found more appropriate to examine the contents thoroughly. A case study was selected as it explores “in-depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2009. P.30).

Moreover, cross-case analysis was employed in analyzing the legal frameworks.

#### *Sources of Data*

Relevant policy documents were employed as data sources in this article. In particular, the Education and Training Policy of 1994, Ethiopian higher education proclamations, the Education Development Roadmap, the Higher Education 10 Years' Development Plan, as well as selected Ethiopian public university senate laws.

#### *Sampling Techniques*

To review senate legislations, five universities - Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ambo University (AU), Bahir Dar University (BDU), University of Gondar (UoG) and Haromaya University (HU) are selected purposefully. This is due to their extensive engagement in Sustained Dialogue (SD) project that champions tolerance and dialogue through supporting CoC clubs (PDC, 2019). Hence, the legislation of these HEIs likely incorporates CoC issues that might be shared by other HEIs. Even though Jimma University was part of the project, it is not included in this study because the 2018 legislation focuses on academic and technical staff issues (Jimma University, 2018).

#### *Data Collection Techniques*

In this article, thematic document analysis (Best & Kahn, 1992) is used to examine the higher education legal documents - namely ETP, the three proclamations, the education Development Roadmap, the 10-year Development Plan and selected universities' senate legislations.

#### *Data Analysis Techniques*

The qualitative content analysis technique aids in locating words pertinent to the research inside written documents and looks at the relationships and patterns of words and concepts (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Silva, Healey,

Harris & Broeck, 2015). Since legal papers are used as analysis units in this study, qualitative content analysis is deemed appropriate. Thus, from the larger body of literature, terms like student organization, student union, clubs, learning outside of the classroom, and campus are identified to represent co-curriculum, and relevant terms like training, workshops, conferences, community service, panels, art, debate, field trips, and leisure activities are identified to represent CoCPs. In terms of peace-building, terms like respect, tolerance, fairness, truth, ethics, unity, diversity, discrimination, harassment, and defamation are pinpointed.

Even though terms and concepts that represent CoC and CoCPs and peace are found in various paragraphs and articles within the legal documents, in this study, the contexts sampled were those (a) that acknowledge the presence of CoCPs, (b) that encouraged participation of students in CoCPs, and (c) that directly or indirectly link CoCPs with peace. Finally, key terms and concepts are then referred to within legal documents, meanings are drawn and the relationships between words and concepts are analyzed.

## **Results and Discussion**

Under this section, major legal and policy documents in the HE sub-system are analyzed and interpreted in three different manners: (a) whether CoC issues are raised, (b) whether peace-related issues are discussed and (c) whether particular CoC activities are implied to build peace.

### *Co-curricular Issues in Higher Education Legal Frameworks Education and Training Policy (ETP)*

The Education and Training Policy was issued in 1994 to develop citizens' physical, psychological, problem-solving and resource utilization capabilities from preschool to HEIs (MoE, 1994) among other things. [Such objectives were meant to be achieved through formal and non-formal means (MoE, 1994). In the Ethiopian context, non-formal education targets adult literacy (Education Sector Development Program IV [ESDP IV], 2010).

Yet, ESDPs, to translate the ETP at different levels, discussed the role of CoC. For instance, CoC engagements like HIV/AIDS clubs, and radio and TV programs organized by the Education Media Agency are considered suitable to reduce vulnerability and risky behaviors at school and tertiary education level under ESDP II (MoE, 2002). Under ESDP III (MoE, 2005), CoC are linked to decreasing dropouts and retention rates in schools and are commended as part of improving primary and secondary school students' achievement under ESDP IV (MoE, 2010). [The fifth ESDP indicated that curricular revision in general education will include CoC to deliver life skill training (MoE, 215). Hence, the establishment of CoC clubs at all schools was an agenda to stimulate a safe and healthy school atmosphere (MoE, 2015).

*Higher Education Proclamations: 2003, 2009 and 2019*

Hereunder, how the three proclamations entertain CoC issues is explained along with the context it was used.

**Table 1: Co-curricular related words/concepts in HEIs Proclamations**

Co-curricular related terms	Contexts used		
	2003 proclamation	2009 proclamation	2019 proclamation
Student organization	-	-	-
Student union (SU)	-	Students have the right to join SU (p.5002)	Students have the right to join SU (p.11475)
Entry points for CoCPs	<b>2003 proclamation</b>	<b>2009 proclamation</b>	<b>2019 proclamation</b>
Trainings/ workshops/ conferences	Short-term training are viable educational program (p.2238) and is expected to align with economic, social and other relevant policies of the country (p. 2257)	Short-term training are viable educational program (p.4987) and is expected to align with economic, social and other relevant policies of the country (p. 5040)	Short-term training are viable educational program (p.11458) and is expected to align with economic, social and other relevant policies of the country (p. 11516)
Community service	Community service in national or local priority areas is one duty of institutions (p.2242)	Community service in national or local priority areas is one duty of institutions (p.4981)	Community service in national or local priority areas is one duty of institutions (p.11451)
Learning out-of-classroom and outside campus	-	Students can learn out-of-classroom and within the community (p.5001)	Students can learn out-of-classroom and within the community (p.11474)

Source: FDRE HEIs Proclamations (2003, 2009, 2019,) (Summarized by the Researchers)

According to Elias and Drea (2013), a student-run organization seeks to foster an engaging campus culture where students can become involved, be inspired, and learn things unrelated to their immediate fields of study. Student organizations primarily refer to these associations, clubs, and SUs. According to the 2019 and 2009 declarations, which are a non-academic platform, students have the right to join SU, as shown in *Table 1*. CoCPs may use short-term training programs, workshops, conferences, and community services to share knowledge, address real-world societal issues, and offer support (Siddiky, 2019; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2016; Ward, 2017). Ethiopian society today is saddened by the growth of identity-based disputes at the national and college levels (Zekarias, 2020). Therefore, to counteract the

dismal scenario, knowledge and skills in diversity are crucial, as are volunteer exposure to areas affected by conflict. Training, workshops, and community programs that have been well-designed can help with this.

#### *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)*

The education development roadmap was drafted to review policies, strategies, plans and practices of the education system and set improvement goals (MoE, 2018). Accordingly, HEI performance was under review. Co-curricular activities are therefore recommended to strengthen the 'unity in diversity' within campuses (MoE, 2018).

#### *Higher Education 10 Years Development Plan*

The 10-year plan, from 2021-2030, was designed by MoSHE. Accordingly, four goals are identified. Out of these, goal two is *producing graduates whose holistic development is ensured through quality and relevant higher education* (MoSHE, 2021). Implementation strategies for this goal include but are not limited to revision of the curriculum, setting up a quality assurance system, labour market assessment, program audit, student evaluation system revision and internship program for capacity building (MoSHE, 2021). Hence, CoC was not listed among the strategies.

#### *University Senate's Legislations*

Hereunder, how the legislations of AAU, AU, BDU, UoG and HU entertain CoC issues is analyzed along with the context it was used.

**Table 2: Co-curricular related words/concepts in Senate Legislations**

CoC related terms	AAU		AU		BDU		UoG		HU	
	Stated under	Context used	Stated under	Context used	Stated under	Context used	Stated under	Context used	Stated under	Context used
Student organizations	Policy premise on student organization	Serve beyond curricula(p.160)	Policy premise on student organization	Serve beyond curricula (p.248)	Policy premise on student organization	Enrich university experience (p.193)	Student organization	Promotion of personal development (p.210)	Policy premise on student organization	Promote personal growth (p.168)
SU	Students' code of conduct	SU is present (p.160)	Senate Membership	SU is present (p.9)	Rights of Students	SU is present (p.188)	Student organization	SU is present (p.210)	Definitions in the legislation	SU is present (p.2)
Training Workshop	Duties of students	Open for students (p.155)	Responsibilities of students	Open for students (p.242)	Duties of registrar	Open for students (46)	Duties of students	Open for students (p.206)	Rights of Students	Open for students (p.165)
Community Service	Consultancy principles	Commit to serve the public (p.136)	Community service Directorate	Unpaid engagement to serve the public (p.213)	Community Service	Commit to serve the public (p.71-72)	The responsibility of the community services unit	Commit to serve the public(p.162)	Definition, scope and interpretation	Commit to serve the public (p.2)
Art/sport/field trip/debate/	Objectives of student organizations	panels, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibitions, leisure events (p.161)	Duties and responsibilities of student organization	panel, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, leisure events (p.249)	Policy premise on student organization	panels, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibitions, and leisure events (p.193-194)	Objectives of student organization	panels, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, and leisure events (p.211)	Objectives of student organization	panel, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, leisure events (p.168-169)

Source: FDRE HEIs Proclamations (2003, 2009, 2019, Summarized by the Researchers)

Student organizations are associations or clubs created to enrich students' experience beyond the formal curriculum (Stellenbosch University, 2018). In targeted universities for this study, it is possible to say that student organizations in universities are formed to promote the academic, personal, social and cultural development of their learners (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; BDU, 2020; HU, 2013; UoG, 2013). The student organization wing which stands for students' rights - SU is also available in all selected universities, expected to



be representative of the student population, and is represented in the senate in AU and HU, Cultural and Social Affairs Committee in UoG and discipline committee in AAU that gives it a chance to voice students concerns and interests.

Co-curricular outlets include but not limited to physical activities (e.g. sports game), literary works (e.g. storytelling, poetry), community service (e.g. voluntary and charity), artworks (films), moral and civic development (trainings, panels, lectures on peace, ethics, tolerance, etc.), leisure activities (e.g. field visits for socialization) (Siddiky, 2019; Stellenbosch University, 2018; Nghia, 2017; Ward, 2017; Dhanmeher, 2014; Denson, 2009). Selected universities in this study also list out panel discussions, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibitions, and leisure events as platforms to achieve the objectives of student organizations. This fits the literature.

In another vein, training/workshops and community services received credit in senate legislation. Generally, community service in HEIs aims towards addressing the needs of the community through services and development programs by utilizing the expertise of academics, students and other campus members and resources outside campus (Stellenbosch University, 2018). However, the focus on community engagement topics within senate legislation is mostly on the contribution of academic staff (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; BDU, 2020; HU, 2013; UoG, 2013).

Training/workshops can be integral to the formal curriculum or undertaken separately. However, there is no clear indication of whether training is integral to classroom activities or not in the senate legislation (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; BDU, 2020; HU, 2013; UoG, 2013). Hence, it is difficult to know whether the training/workshops within public universities qualify for the CoC category.

*Peace-building Elements in Higher Education Legal Frameworks**Education and Training Policy (ETP)*

Peace can be regarded as the development of a common goal, standing for social justice and non-violence (Galtung, 1969). Some of the general objectives of ETP include the enhancement of basic human rights, justice, democratic culture, appreciative potential and peaceful attitude of students from pre-school to HEIs (MoE, 1994). Since these issues are related to peace, it is possible to say that building peace was on the agenda within ETP. In another vein, one of the assumptions for the implementation of ESDP IV was the presence of a peaceful and stable environment (MoE, 2010). However, intolerance and peace-less situations have occurred before and after the issuance of ESDP IV in public universities (Abeba, 2014; Abera, 2010). However, such problems are not mentioned as major challenges within HES (MoE, 2010)

*Higher Education Proclamations: 2003, 2009 and 2019*

Hereunder, how the three proclamations entertain peace values is explained along with the context it was used.

**Table 3: Peace-related words/concepts in HEIs Proclamations**

Peace re- lated terms	2003 Proclamation		2009 Proclamation		2019 Proclamation	
	Stated under	Contexts used	Stated under	Contexts used	Stated under	Contexts used
Peace	-	-	Students Responsibilities	Seek redress through peaceful means (p. 5003)	Objectives	Instil knowledge of peace (p. 11448)
Respect			Duties of Students	Respect academic staff and management (p.5002)  Respect the rights of others in or outside the classroom (p.5002)	Duties of Students (#39)	Respect academic staff and management process (p.11475) Respect the constitutional rights of academic and support staff and other students (p.11476)
Fairness	-	-	Rights of Students	Treated fairly in teacher-student relationship (p.5001)	Rights of Students	Treated fairly in teacher-student relationship (p.11474)
Truth	-	-	Rights of students)	Search for truth in the teaching-learning and research processes (p.4981)	Rights of Students	Search for truth in the teaching-learning and research processes (p.11474)
Ethics	Duties of students	Refrain from unethical acts (p.2242)	Duties of students	Refrain from unethical acts (p.5003)	-	-
Discrimination/ Harassment	-	-	Rights of Students	Free from discrimination or harassment (p.5001)	Rights of Students	Free from discrimination or harassment (p.11474)

Source: FDRE HEIs Proclamations (2003, 2009, 2019, Summarized by the Researchers)

According to Galtung (1969), 'positive peace' is the absence or diminution of all types of violence and the existence of justice in any social connections. Ethiopian public universities have recently seen an increase in violence and homicides (Abebe, 2019, Yonas, 2019). Thus, for HEIs to achieve their academic, research, and community service objectives, there must be positive peace. Respect, tolerance, democracy, multiculturalism, ethics, justice, fairness, logic, and the lack of discrimination are essential for achieving this. The inputs for peace are stated differently in each proclamation: students are to seek redress through peaceful means (FDRE, 2019; 2009); know peace and democracy (FDRE, 2019); respect others regardless of their identity (FDRE, 2019; 2009; 2003); seek out and live by the truth (FDRE, 2019; 2009);

and refrain from unethical behaviour (FDRE, 2009; 2003). The proclamations therefore give the right as well as the responsibility for students to know and practice peace-related virtues.

#### *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)*

Unity in diversity is a manifestation of harmony among diversified individuals. This requires exposure of the youth to a culturally diversified environment, deepening their knowledge about out-group culture and the benefits of living in diverse settings which pave the way to positive inter-ethnic and cultural dialogue (Savchits et.al., 2017). This will result in growing tolerance, which is integral to peace (UNESCO, 1994). Unity in diversity is becoming a missing element among students within HEIs (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Mekonnen, 2013; Miressa, 2018; Misrak & Addisu, 2011). Thus, its inclusion in the roadmap likely indicates commitment towards peace.

#### *Higher Education 10 Years Development Plan*

One of the goals of the 10-year development plan was to ensure holistic student learning (MoSHE, 2021). Holistic student development acquires problem-solving ability, interpersonal competence, humanity sentiment, leadership capacity, ethics, civic virtues, and adaptability (Kuh, 2001, as cited in Stirling & Kerr, 2015) that result in understanding and positive interaction among the diversified student population. Galtung (2007) argued that forsaking the 'we vs. them' attitude, polarized behaviour, hatred and aggression are required to transform violent situations peacefully. One challenge in Ethiopian public HEIs is also failure of students to go beyond narrow and violent ways of thinking (Yonas, 2019). Hence, aiming to impart humanity sentiment, multicultural competence, ethics and civic virtues in the minds of students MoSHE is a pro-peace approach.

### *University Senate's Legislations*

Senate legislations are drafted based on the proclamations and policies. Accordingly, terms related to peace and conflict like - peace, respect, handling grievances, tolerance, multiculturalism, truth, ethics, fairness, rationality, and avoidance of discrimination are discussed in each university senate legislation related to students in varying degrees. Particularly, resolving issues through peaceful means, promoting mutual respect, and exemption from unethical practices (like instigation of violence, hate speech, theft, defamation etc.) are identified as duties of students in AAU, AU, BDU, UoG and HU. Generally, these are in congruence with what is stated under the 2003, 2009 and 2019 proclamations. Moreover, tolerance for diversity (AU, 2019; AU, 2019), and engagement in rational discourse at national and global levels (AAU, 2019; BDU, 2020) are outlined as entry points to dismantle limited ways of thinking, promote understanding and build peace.

### *Types of Co-curricular Programs Implied to Build Peace in Higher Education Legal Frameworks*

The 1994 ETP of Ethiopia and the 2021 Development Plan have not incorporated CoCPs as implementation strategies to achieve the objectives stated within the documents. Hence, this sub-section discussed the three HES proclamations, the Education Development Roadmap and selected university senate legislations.

### *Higher Education Proclamations: 2003, 2009 and 2019*

The three proclamations list pro-peace responsibilities, objectives, and guiding values. To guarantee execution, however, different tools and programs would be employed. As briefly discussed in previous sub-sections, CoCPs can serve as one entry point to teach students about respect, tolerance, reasoning, democratic values, multiculturalism, ethics, and peaceful-co-existence (Denson, 2009; Dhanmeher, 2014; Rockenbach et al., 2015; Savchits et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2009; Ward, 2017). Hence, it is important to assess

which CoCPs are identified as possible learning outlets to teach such virtues within the proclamations.

Student unions, training/workshops and community services are identified under the proclamations to achieve the objective of HEIs directly or indirectly. Even though it is difficult to say these CoC platforms are explained in a way they contribute to peace-building, trainings/workshops are considered as tools to impart knowledge on specific issues associated with real societal problems within the proclamations. Since issues of intolerance and diversity are real concerns of HEIs (Abebaw, 2014, 2019; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2019), there might be a possibility to discuss these issues through such CoC outlets.

Community engagements in HEIs like public universities of Bangladesh enhanced the humanitarian sentiment and ethical behaviour of students (Siddiky, 2019). Participation of students in multi-faith community services in the US promoted pluralism (Rockenbach et al., 2015). This in turn will help them to develop a sense of belongingness, and a chance to stand for social justice (Almadi, 2017; Almerab, 2017; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014). Participation in community service is a duty of HEIs under the three proclamations. Even though such engagement has the potential to promote cultural awareness and collaboration, there is no clear indication towards this goal in the proclamations.

#### *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)*

Diversity needs to be linked with the academic and civic mission of universities (Hurtado, 2007). Initially, it is important to have a proportional representation of diverse student groups in universities (Denson, 2009) to achieve this. Ethiopian HEIs responded to this by expanding access to tertiary education by targeting regions as equity groups (Abebaw, 2014). However, to create opportunities for enhanced intercultural communication among students of varying identities, intentionally established structures and programs are necessary.

Non-academic activities (CoCPs) that enhance the frequency of inter-group interaction fit this category (Denson, 2009). However, the Roadmap revealed that *none of the Ethiopian universities have activities to promote unity* (MoE, 2018, p.51). It is recommended that CoCPs (re)build students' inter-group relations to have a peaceful atmosphere. This recommendation is in alignment with studies of Abebaw (2014); Abebe (2015), Miressa, (2018), and Zekarias (2020). However, the significance of each CoC program or activity is not equal (Rubin et.al., 2002). Therefore, the roadmap was expected to show the kind of CoCPs that result in unity in diversity.

#### *University Senate's Legislations*

Senate legislation shows that student organizations play a role in facilitating peace-promoting behaviour by presenting students' concerns peacefully (BDU, 2020; HU, 2013); promoting mutual respect (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; HU, 2013); presenting and involving in deliberations of students grievances and (AAU, 2019; BDU, 2020; HU, 2013; UoG, 2013); promote tolerance for diverse opinions (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; HU, 2013), stimulate democratic culture (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; BDU, 2020; HU, 2013; UoG, 2013); and promote rational discourse in national and global discussions (BDU, 2020; AAU, 2019). These contributions agree with the argument of Elias & Drea (2013) that students can learn more through their engagement in student-run groups.

The possibilities of teaching about peace through panel discussions, lectures, debates, films, art exhibitions, seminars, trips, etc. are further explained by student organization-related articles inside senate legislation. These articles encourage tolerance, respect, collaboration, and adherence to societal concerns. According to Stellenbosch University, 2018, as diversity-related intolerance is a significant issue in public HEIs, it is possible to use these forums to avoid fixed viewpoints and become social change agents. Additionally, the ability to publish the works of student organizations creates space for the recording, publication, and dissemination of CoC engagements on and off campus (BDU, 2020). The chosen university senate legislations, like the Education Development Roadmap, do not expressly tie a certain type

of CoC activity to peace virtues like tolerance, ethics, democratic culture, or rational behaviour.

## **Summary, Conclusion, and Implications**

### *Summary of the major findings*

The purpose of this study was to examine whether CoCPs are integrated within the HES legal frameworks as alternative peace-building mechanisms. To this end, a case study was employed and qualitative content analysis was used to collect the necessary data. The basic questions raised in this study were three. These are the following: How do the legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES entertain CoC issues? How do the legal frameworks of the Ethiopian HES entertain peace-building elements? What types of CoCPs are implied to build peace within the legal contexts of Ethiopian HES? Thus, the following findings were drawn:

### *Co-curricular Issues in Higher Education Legal Frameworks*

It was identified that ETP did not employ CoC as its implementation strategy. However, ESDPs use CoC as a means to ensure efficiency (ESDP I to IV) and even to promote a safe and healthy school atmosphere under ESDP V. On the other hand, the 2009 and 2019 proclamations duly acknowledge the importance of learning outside the classroom as well as the presence of SU to execute the objectives and guiding principles of HEIs comprehensively. Platforms like training workshops, and community services are also identified as a means to discuss/respond to societal issues in the three proclamations. The contribution of CoCPS towards promoting diversity is also acknowledged under the Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap. In selected universities' senate legislations, the management regards SU and student organizations. Particularly, panels, debates, field trips, artworks, exhibitions and leisure activities are listed as viable CoC platforms to deepen students' campus experience. Though training and community services are discussed under senate legislation, the explanations are not in the form of enhancing students' out-of-classroom exposure.



*Peace-building Elements in Higher Education Legal Frameworks*

Generally, the promotion of peaceful attitude, democracy, human rights and justice are regarded in the ETP. In addition to these, the three proclamations emphasize the need to uphold respect, tolerance, multiculturalism, ethics, fairness, reasoning and absence of discrimination with varied degrees. Particularly, the need to respect and tolerate out-groups is set as acceptable behaviour for students and due attention is given to solving conflicts peacefully among students and between students and university staff in the proclamations. The Education Development Roadmap (MoE, 2018), of the country states 'unity-in-diversity', which is a sustainable order of peace in a multicultural society like Ethiopia is identified as one aspect to evaluate HEI effectiveness.

On the other hand, the 10 Years Development Plan's objective towards building students' humanism, ethical behaviour, interpersonal skills, problem-solving competence, and adaptable-ness is regarded as a pro-peace approach. Like the proclamations, the senate legislation further states, that respecting peace values like communicating with students and other campus members with respect and refraining from unethical and violent behaviour are major duties of students. These likely oblige students to give high regard to peace and non-violence.

Issues of equality, justice, tolerance, human rights and democracy that are integral to peace-building gain growing importance in attaining HEIs objectives (UNESCO, 1998; West, 2018). The legal frameworks of HES in Ethiopia generally indicate universities shall play a role in building peace by promoting values that make relationships among students harmonious. However, the growing fear, resentment, mistrust, hostility and direct violence among students from varied ethnic backgrounds from time to time (Abebaw, 2014; Abebe, 2015, Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Mekonnen, 2013; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020) imply public universities are dwindling to implement what is expected of them under the legal apparatus.

*Types of Co-curricular Programs Implied to Build Peace in Higher Education Legal Frameworks*

Out-of-classroom engagements received credit under Proclamation 2019 and 2009 as viable means of learning. Cross-cultural diversity, respect and rationality are elements of tolerance and tolerance is identified as a threshold of peace (UNESCO, 1994). This implies the objectives and guiding values of HEIs like multiculturalism, rational discourse and tolerance can be implemented through CoCPs. Student unions, training and community services are identified as possible CoC outlets within the proclamations and there might be a possibility to discuss or engage in peace-related issues through them. However, the peculiar nature of activities within the SU and community services or the topics of training linked to peace are not indicated. Similarly, the 2018-30 roadmap commends CoCP's suitability to achieve unity in diversity; however, the type(s) of CoCP(s) to achieve the objective is (are) not listed.

Intolerance of difference and violence is against the aims of HEIs in general (UNESCO, 1998) and Higher Education proclamations (FDRE, 2019, 2009) in particular. When examining selected university senate legislations about this, some statements encourage peaceful conflict resolution and tolerance for diversity and discourage violence, hate speech, or defamation. To achieve these, student organizations support students to broaden their knowledge base through debate, discussions, lectures, films, art exhibitions, seminars and trips with their fellows, instructors and experts and promote inter-group relationships of students and their relationship with the wider community. However, the senate legislation does not explicitly mention the purpose, nature of students' involvement and outcome of each CoC outlet about building peace.

## Conclusion

The qualitative content analysis revealed that the ETP, the three proclamations, the Education Development Road map, and the Higher Education 10 Years Development Plan include pro-peace elements in varying degrees. This implies, that public HEIs have a legal basis to plan, organize and direct resources at their disposal to promote peace. Since the promotion of peace is among the emerging roles of HEIs globally, the fact that the Ethiopian legal architecture of HES addresses the issue indicates its adherence to the contemporary global order. However, the level of inter-group tension and violence and the absence of viable means of addressing the issue so far suggest public universities are failing to live up to the expectation of legal arrangements locally as well as globally.

Concerning CoCPs, the proclamations, the road map and senate legislation indeed leave some room for CoCPs. However, these documents do not explicitly show the role of particular types of CoCPs in peace-building. Hence, the contribution of CoCPs under the legal frameworks of Ethiopian HES as an alternative bottom-up peace-building mechanism is inferred. This implies, that the legal arrangements leave limited space for CoCPs as an alternative tool to build peace in public higher learning institutions.

## *Implications*

This study lays out the following implications.

- The Federal MoE along with its local and international stakeholders is advised to undertake a national study on the status of CoCPs within public HEIs. Particularly, the potential contributions of each CoC activity for peace-building need to be thoroughly examined.
- The Federal MoE should put clear indicators to link each CoC activity to peace values so that universities, academicians and students know why, how and which non-formal platforms can serve as a bottom-up

peace-building approach. And this will be used to enrich revised or newly issued policy documents in the future.

- To follow proper execution, MoE needs to prepare a national CoC policy that aligns the specific type of CoC activities that can combat diversity-related violence issues in public HEIs. Moreover, a CoC wing needs to be established within the Ministry to execute the policy effectively within public universities.

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