

**ISSN:** 2315-7844

**Website:** [www.arabianjbm.com/RPAM\\_index.php](http://www.arabianjbm.com/RPAM_index.php)

**Publisher:** Department of Public Administration Nnamdi Azikiwe  
University, Awka, Nigeria and Zainab Arabian Research Society  
for Multidisciplinary Issues Dubai, UAE

## **SOCIAL STUDIES AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR GLOBAL PEACE: ANALYTICAL AND PRESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

*Social studies is vital for peace education as well as promotes national and international development. The focus of social studies is essentially man, the society and the environment. Its ultimate aim is to equip individuals with knowledge and understanding for peaceful relationships and living. Through the subject, learners are expected to acquire requisite skills, values, attitudes, and cognition to meet the challenges of a peaceful Nigerian and international society. It has been observed that the nations who used social studies as a corrective measure for reconstruction and rehabilitation of their societies placed high value in the implementation of their social studies curriculum because the subject exposes them to new values and skills necessary for the sustainability of a peaceful nation.*

**Key words:** Social studies, peace, global peace, peace education, social studies curriculum

### **Introduction**

Social studies is that part of the school's general education programme which is concerned with the preparation of citizens for participation in a democratic society. The most important aim of social studies education in a democracy is to help students acquire a store of tested social theory, or body of principles relevant to contemporary social issues and beliefs (Onyabe,1980). According to the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS 1992), as reported by the African Social and Environmental Studies Programme (ASESP) and the United States National Council for the Social Studies (1994), the following position on the nature of social studies is adopted: Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school programme, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, as

appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally interdependent world. Social studies as “a subject which studies man in his environment. It is the study of how the environment influences man and how he in turn influences the physical, social, economic, political, psychological, cultural, scientific and technological environment”. Okobiah (1984) sees social studies as “an interdisciplinary curriculum that attempts to unify the various disciplines of the social sciences in dealing with the social problems of health, family relations, civic affairs, community life, production, recreation, conservation”. Onyesom (1990) defines social studies as “the study which equips man with the tools necessary for solving problems in his emerging social and physical environment in an attempt to make the society a more liveable one”. In order to understand the meaning of social studies at a glance, the following have been put forward by Iyamu (1991) that: (a) social studies focuses on the relation of man to the environment in which he lives and the world, (b) social studies is concerned with the relation of man to other human beings as a member of the family, peer group, community, school, work place, church and so on; (c) social studies is concerned with the relation of human beings to themselves; (d) social studies is basically a programme of citizenship education; and (e) social studies is a problem-approach discipline.

According to Ezeoba (2012), the ultimate aim of social studies is to equip individuals with knowledge and understanding for peaceful relationships and living. Similarly, she argues that nations which used social studies as a corrective measure for reconstruction and rehabilitation of their societies place high value in the implementation of their social studies curriculum so that the subject exposes them to new values and skills necessary for the sustainability of a peaceful nation.

The structure of this paper is organized as follows: The next section examines the concepts, dimensions and paradigms of peace. Section 3 considers peace education and its effective components as well as John Dewey’s thought on relativistic peace education and the bargaining theory of peace education. Section 4 explores social studies as an instrument of global peace from the analytical and prescriptive perspectives. Section 5 concludes the paper.

### **1.0. The Concept of Peace**

Conceptions of peace span religions and culture, incorporating such values as security and harmony as well as justice and human dignity. Every major system of faith and belief, whether religious or secular in character, has in one way or another promised peace as an outcome of the implementation of its precepts. Peace is conceptualized simply as an absence of war or, more precisely, as a temporary suspension of hostilities secured by military power (Funk, 2002.). Wulf (1991) asserted that peace must not only be conceived as the absence of war and direct violence (concept of negative peace), but rather, working towards peace as the means to the realization of conditions leading to a maximal reduction in “structural violence” (concept of positive peace).

According to Danesh (2006) in his “integrative theory of peace”, peace is a psychological, social, political, ethical and spiritual state with expressions at intrapersonal, inter-group and international areas of human life. According Osemene (2012), peace means a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices, and norms. Several conditions must be met for peace to be reached and maintained: (1) balance of political power among the various groups within a society, region, or, most ambitiously, the world; (2) legitimacy for decision makers and implementers of decisions in the eyes of their respective group, as well as those of external parties, duly supported through

transparency and accountability; (3) recognized and valued interdependent relationships among groups fostering long-term cooperation during periods of agreement, disagreement, normality, and crisis; (3) reliable and trusted institutions for resolving conflict; (4) sense of equality and respect, in sentiment and in practice, within and without groups and in accordance with international standards; (4) mutual understanding of rights, interests, intents, and flexibility despite incompatibilities.

According to Rummel (n.d.), peace is seen as concord, or harmony and tranquility. It is viewed as peace of mind or serenity; it is defined as a state of law or civil government, a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of powers. Peace may be opposed to or an opposite of antagonistic conflicts, violence or war. It may refer to an internal state (of mind or of nations) or to external relations. Peace may be narrow in concept referring to specific relations in a particular situation (like a peace treaty), or over-arching, covering a whole (as in world peace). Peace may be a dichotomy (it exists or it does not) or continuous, passive or active, empirical or abstract, descriptive or normative, positive or negative. According to Rummel (nd) , peace derives its meaning and qualities within a theory or framework. He thus sees peace as a phase in a conflict helix, an equilibrium within a social field. Funk (2002) is of the opinion that peace is undoubtedly one of the most universal and significant of human ideals, it is however one of the few positive symbols having meaning for the whole of humanity. Implicitly, we circumscribe the meaning of peace to accommodate a system of largely implicit beliefs about how the world works, about what power consists of, and about what is expedient. As a result, the peace ideal is either co-opted by competing value priorities or remains distant from our daily activities and experiences. The “ideal” becomes separated from the “real”, and peace becomes a pious invocation, a means to an end, or an empty term of rhetorical self-justification.

### **Dimensions of Peace**

Chhaya Rai, Vidyalyaya, Jabalpur and Pradesh (nd.) identify the different dimensions of peace such as: **Personal or Mental peace:** This refers to the inner state of calm or tranquility. Mental peace reveals a state of unshakable quietness and composure which is achieved through the inculcation of such creative virtues as friendliness, compassion, mercy, moderation, modesty, forgiveness, non-violence, love and so on. **Social Peace:** This refers to the state of social justice and development. Peace at national level or national states of stability, progress and freedom from evil disorder. **International peace** or peaceful relation among all nations. **Global Peace:** This refers to the peaceful co-existence of all existent.

Other forms of peace identified by Pureza & Cravo (2009) include: **World Peace:** This is an ideal of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and/or people. World peace is an idea of planetary non-violence by which nations willingly cooperate, either voluntarily or by virtue of a system of governance that prevents warfare. The term is sometimes used to refer to a cessation of all hostility amongst all humanity. **Democratic Peace:** This is a theory which posits that democracies are hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other identified democracies. It is assumed that democracy is a cause of peace. Democratic peace hypothesized that democracies do not go to war with each other and are more prone to peace.

**Capitalist Peace:** This posits that according to a given criteria for economic development (capitalism), developed economies have not engaged in war with each other and rarely enter into low-level disputes.

**Perpetual Peace:** This is a condition that needed to be maintained by politics between states with governments which represented society and separation of power (Kant, 1975).

## **The Paradigms of Peace**

Funk (2002) identifies five approaches to peace. These include:

### **1. Power Politics: Peace through coercive power**

This paradigm promulgates a pessimistic reading of human nature and a competitive model of international politics. Advocates of this paradigm contend that there are no universal values that can be held by all actors in the international system. Furthermore, the absence of a world government or “higher power” to which states must submit themselves renders politics among nations anarchic and unpredictable, characterized by shifting alliances and the ever-present threat of violence. According to the proponents of the power politics paradigm, “if you want peace, prepare for war”. Violence arises inevitably from human competitiveness and covetousness; peace is secured through the forceful imposition of order. Power politics equates power with the ability to hurt and therefore regard it as the exclusive possession of governments and armed militant groups.

### **2. World Order: Peace through the Power of Law**

This paradigm views the “order” created by practices of power politics as a form of disorder, proposes that sustained cooperation among states and other significant actors such as non-governmental (activist) organizations and intergovernmental organizations, is both possible and necessary. It is precisely because of the failure of competitive, state-centered models of international relations to secure human interests that advocates of the world order paradigm argue that broader and more intense efforts to achieve international cooperation are necessary. According to the world order paradigm, “if you want peace, prepare for peace”. Peace can be actively sought through policies and efforts that build consensus, reduce injustice, create opportunity, and provide multilateral frameworks for responding to common challenges.

### **3. Conflict Resolution: Peace through the Power of Communication**

This paradigm offers a pragmatic approach to peace through the development and refinement of skills for analyzing conflicts and responding to them with effective strategies of communication and negotiation. Whereas the proponents of world order concern themselves primarily with macro-level, structural issues such as distributive justice and the institutionalization of international cooperation, practitioners of conflict resolution focus more on processes of interaction among individuals and groups and on the relationships that characterize them. Conflict resolution paradigm opines that conflict is natural at all levels of human interaction and organization, from the interpersonal to the inter-ethnic and international. Although, it can cause estrangement and great human suffering, conflict does not inevitably lead to violence, and is often necessary for major changes in relationships and social systems. Peace, then, is understood as a continuous process of skillfully dealing with and, whenever possible, preventing or transforming conflict. To the proponents of this paradigm, “if you want peace, train for the processes of peace. Develop skills for communication and coexistence”.

### **4. Non-violence: Peace through Will Power**

This paradigm proposes that the power of any government derives primarily from the consent of the people, and only secondarily from coercion. Non violence is seen as an action animated by principle and informed by the proposition that means and ends are inseparable. This paradigm upholds that, peace cannot be disconnected from justice, and justice entails an absence of

opposition whether perpetrated indirectly by inequitable structures and institutions or directly through the use of weapons. To the proponents of this paradigm, “if you want peace, work for justice... justly”. This entails a commitment to work for peace by peaceful means through training, strategic planning, constructive programmes, and personal discipline.

### **5. Transformation: Peace through the Power of Love**

This paradigm focuses on the centrality of education, cultural change, and spirituality in all genuine attempts to make peace a reality in daily life. It sees peace-making as a profound internal process in which the transformation of the individual becomes a metaphor for and instrument of broader changes. Transformation, then, involves the cultivation of a peaceful consciousness and character, together with an affirmative belief system and skills through which the fruits of “internal disarmament” and personal integration may be expressed. Transformation unites doing with being, task with experience. To the proponents of this paradigm, “If you want peace, be peace. Be an instrument of peace.”

### **3.0. Peace Education**

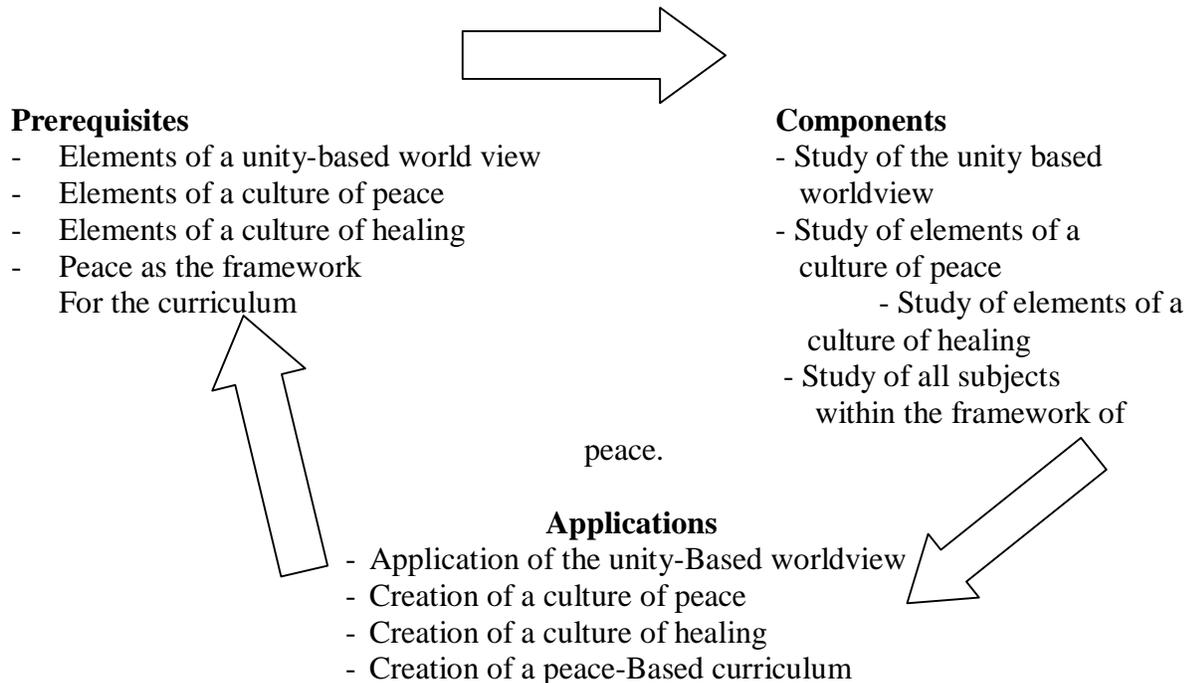
Peace education has to do with training on the avoidance and management of violent conflict, better human relationship, unity and internal cooperation among the various tribes of the country (Ezeoba,2012). Nsikak-Abasi & Nneji (2010) describe peace education as those aspects of formal and non-formal education, in-school and out-of-school learning aimed at the elimination of groups’ prejudice, stereotypes and hatred which make people prefer war to peace, violence to non-violence, exclusion to cooperation, and destruction to construction. Peace education is therefore education for peaceful and non-violent coexistence (Ezeoba,2012). According to Osemene (2012), peace education is the process of acquiring the skills, values, and knowledge that promote harmonious relationship among people in the society. Peace education could be formal or informal. Peace education views the world as one whole, a single community, a fellowship of human beings who have the same instincts of hunger and sex, the same aspirations of generosity and fellow-feeling, and helps people to feel more for other people, enable them to change the exploitative and oppressive society, and to create a non-violent and just society. It is the deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace making skills in homes, schools, and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. It involves the process of proactive enlightenment on the knowledge and skills of observing and responding to early warning indicators.

The aim of peace education is to incorporate into the educational process a knowledge of the dangers posed to human life and human social life by war, violence, poverty, and oppression (Wulf,1991). Some of the goals for effective peace education are: (1)to appreciate the richness of the concept of peace; (2)to address fears;(3)to provide information about security systems; (4) to understand violent behaviour; (5) to develop intercultural understanding;(6) to provide for a future orientation; (7) to teach peace as a process;(8) to promote a concept of peace accompanied by social justice; (9) to stimulate a respect for life; and (10)to end violence.

### **Pre-requisites and components of effective peace education**

According to Danesh (2006), the prerequisites of effective peace studies which also constitute the components of effective peace education include the following:

1. truly effective peace education can only take place in the context of a unity-based worldview
2. peace education can best take place in the context of a culture of peace
3. peace education best takes place within the context of a culture of healing
4. Peace education is most effective when it constitutes the framework for all educational activities.



*Figure 1: Prerequisites and component of an effective peace education programme (Adapted from Danesh, 2006)*

Gavriel Salomon (2002) summarises current peace education activities under four categories: (1) Peace education mainly as a matter of changing mindset;(2) Peace education mainly as a matter of cultivating a set of skills;(3) Peace education mainly as a matter of promoting human rights (particularly in the Third World countries); and (4) Peace education as a matter of environmentalism, disarmament, and the promotion of a culture of peace.

### **John Dewey’s relativistic thought on peace education**

John Dewey applied his instrumentalism and progressive education ideas to the advancement of world peace after World War I. Dewey’s peace education was based on the view that teaching subjects like history and geography should be premised on the goal of promoting internationalism. His educational objective was to counter the philistine notion of patriotism and nationalism developed by individual nation-states which had been a basic cause of war. (Howlett,2008). Dewey’s interest in peace education was defined by a curious mixture of moralistic beliefs, democratic values and non-religious ethics. The basic thrust of Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy and peace education efforts after 1918 was formulating the method of intelligence in such discriminating fashion as to minimize the appeal to nationalistic propaganda. According to him, eliminating the institution of war required an educational programme that would reconstruct existing social and political habits.

Dewey insisted that there were two subjects that represented the foundation blocks necessary for building international understanding- geography and history. These subjects according to him are believed to enable students reconstruct the past in order to cope with the present. Teaching geography to impressionable young minds had to become dynamic in order to act as a catalyst necessary for shaping a global picture. The teaching of geography originally appeals to the imagination, while the teaching of history should also promote the goal of peace by divorcing itself from the past emphasis on the study of dates, military heroes, and battles. He stressed that teachers should focus more on the social meaning of history: "History is not the story of heroes, but an account of social development; it provides us with knowledge of the past which contributes to the solution of social problems of the present and the future". Present day problems such as wars, should be examined in their historical setting in order "to determine the origin of the problem; find out what sort of situation caused it to become a problem".

Dewey's peace curriculum was designed around promoting an attitude of world patriotism. The real key to Dewey's peace education programme is transforming the notion of nationalism into a more transnational perspective. In calling for a peace education programme in schooling, Dewey encouraged the creation of a curriculum which emphasizes the development of an attitude and would accomplish the following: (1) Promoting the idea of world patriotism; (2) Using the social sciences, especially geography and history, as a bridge for understanding other cultures; and (3) Rectifying the more sinister aspect of patriotism and nationalism that have been a basic cause of war between/among nations. His peace education ideas also challenged the role of teachers and urged them to incorporate the values of peace and global cooperation among nations in their curriculum (Howlett, 2008).

The submission of John Dewey on the use of subject such as geography and history in promoting peace education can be said to be in line with social studies curriculum. Social studies as a subject is a combination of geography, history and civics. John Dewey's writings on peace education is therefore in line with the social studies as an instrument of global peace.

### **Bargaining Theory of Global Peace**

According to Hegre, Oneal & Russett (2009), trade does promote peace and conflict contemporaneously reduces commerce, even with extensive controls for traders' rational expectations of violence. Violence has substantial costs, whether these are paid prospectively or contemporaneously. Jervis (2002) and Gleditsch (2008) assert that there is now extensive social scientific evidence that interdependence and international organizations as well as democracy reduce interstate conflict. The World Trade Organization (WTO) lists some of the benefits of the trading system it manages, the first being that, it helps to keep the peace because "sales people are usually reluctant to fight their customers". The second benefit highlighted is that disputes are handled constructively by the organization's institutions and procedures. It is a happy irony of the post-cold war era that WTO now denotes the World Trade Organization, and not the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Moreover, the liberals have argued that interdependence reduces conflict because conflict discourages commerce. The use of force reduces the gains from trade and imperils the flow of information necessary for the development of mutual understanding. The costly nature of conflict is also central to contemporary applications of bargaining theory; commercial relations increase the likelihood of peace because trade and investment make costly signals possible. Economics, trade and commerce are important themes in social studies and they help to

emphasize the importance of promoting peace globally. These themes thus portray social studies as an instrument of global peace.

#### **4.0. Social studies as an instrument of global peace: Analytical and prescriptive perspectives.**

According to Danesh (2006), the universal presence of conflict and war in human history has always necessitated that priority be given to education for conflict management and war preparation, and for the preservation of the larger community. Social studies can act as a catalyst of peace, both nationally and globally. Social studies is looked as an instrument of global peace based on the following perspectives- analytical and prescriptive

##### **4.1. Analytical Perspective of social studies**

###### **Teaching World Mindedness in Social Studies classrooms**

The need to teach global perspectives in schools has heightened with the proliferation of information-sharing technologies and the growing interconnectedness of world systems, hence, the suggestion that if social studies is to do better in the preparation of global citizens for the future, it has to pay attention to global perspectives. In the light of the above assertion, Mhlauli (2014) suggests the following as ways in which teaching global perspectives in social studies can help promote global peace among global citizenry.

###### **Teaching about world mindedness**

World mindedness refers to teaching about the world. World mindedness is defined as knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism, and increasing interdependence. It involves learning about problems and issues which cut across national boundaries and the interconnectedness of systems which may be cultural, ecological, economic, political and technological (Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Merryfield, 2012, Mhlauli, 2014).

Social Studies education incorporates and teach themes on world issues such as: (1) Socio-political issues (poverty, conflicts/war tribalism); (2) Environmental issues and natural disasters; (3) Economic issues (trade, economic recession) (4) Social issues (communication and information technology); and (5) Political issues (international relations, celebration of international days such as World AIDS Day, World Peace Day, Commonwealth Day etc). Emphasis should placed on the importance of these world issues because they affect global peace.

In-service training for social studies teachers on global education pedagogies and the use of technology need special attention. Teacher educators need to strengthen their programmes towards a global perspective in order to able *“to walk the walk and talk the talk”* more. This means that teacher educators need to make learning relevant, integrate technology, use performance-based assessments, and create opportunities for interdisciplinary instruction. In-service and pre-service teachers need to be prepared to infuse global perspectives in their daily classroom practices and instruction. Pre-service and in-service teachers need to be provided with opportunity to engage in study abroad programmes in order to learn from their counterparts.

###### **Prescriptive Perspective**

According to Iyamu & Onyeson (1991), social studies is a subject whose scope is not definite. By its interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary commitment, it is difficult to say where social

studies begins or ends. This coupled with its focus on changing social conditions of man and society makes its scope assume an increasing horizon. Also, social studies is unique as a corrective study. It is a problem-approach discipline. It focuses on the problems of man and the society as well as how to solve them. It also sought ways to correct felt social imbalances in the society. From the above position, it becomes evident that the subject embraces issues of concern in the society both local, national and global and plays a very important role in promoting peace in all its ramification. Conflicts have bedeviled the world in our contemporary days and if there must be peace, then social studies as a corrective subject/discipline has a vital role to play.

Some of the ways social studies can help promote global peace are include : First, social studies curriculum should be reviewed to accommodate courses and themes such as multicultural education and international education, as these will enable learners from various cultures, tribes, ethnicity and races learn about other cultures besides theirs. This in the long run will help to foster good relationship and promotion of peace among them. Peace education should be incorporated into the social studies curriculum. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of peaceful relationship among people and nations. Second, social studies should also place emphasis on the negative consequences of conflicts and wars on all the parties concerned and try to discourage the minds of the learners on involving in wars or acts of violence that could hinder peace at all levels. Themes such as conflict resolution and negotiation should be incorporated into the social studies curriculum so as to enable the learners acquire requisite knowledge and skills on conflict management that will make for peace at all levels of human life. Third, social studies should also teach on the importance of war and conflicts. This is sometimes necessary because without conflicts and war, there cannot be lasting peace as supported by the power politics paradigm which asserts that “if you want peace, prepare for war”. There is need for strict compliance in implementation of the social studies curriculum. This is necessary for learners to acquire all the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude needed for peaceful living and conflict management. If global peace is to be achieved, then, there is need for training of social studies teachers on peace education. Many social studies teachers are ignorant of peace studies (with reference to global peace) and as such they need to be properly trained as this will enable them to properly handle or teach peace studies to the learners. There is also the need to increase the number of social studies teachers for effective curriculum implementation. The media also has a very crucial role to play in promoting the cause of social studies as it relates to global peace and peace education. Social studies teachers and experts of peace education and global peace can preach peace at all levels (local, state, national and international) of governance. This can happen by sensitizing the people through the media-television, radio, newspapers and even through the use of the internet.

### **Conclusion**

The place of social studies as an instrument for global peace cannot be overemphasized. Social studies as a discipline/subject for correcting ills of society has a broad curriculum to accommodate contemporary issues like global peace because it has the potentialities to promote and foster communal, national and global. Therefore, countries must place emphasis on incorporating social studies in their school curriculum or review the existing social studies curriculum to accommodate courses such as multicultural education and international education. Moreover, social studies teachers and other practitioners should be trained and retained to be adequately equipped and informed to preach this gospel of peaceful living among nations of the world.

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