Mainstreaming National Cohesion and Integration in Kenya’s Educational Curriculum
Mainstreaming National Cohesion and Integration in the Kenya's Educational Curriculum

In partnership with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
CHAPTER TWELVE: Bonding through Faith: Enhancing Cohesion and Integration Values in the Islamic Religious Education Curricula for Primary and Secondary Schools

Hashim Abdulkadir, PhD

“A syllabus suitably related to the land and people of Kenya can, we believe, help to foster a sense of nationhood” (The Ominde Report, 1964, Part I, p.39)

Introduction

Since independence, the Government of Kenya has engaged various Commissions and Working Groups which emphasized on fostering national unity. For instance, the Gachathi Report pointed out that “National unity has continued to be important in facing social and economic challenges” (The Gachathi Report, 1976, p.4). However, drastic events which resulted in the loss thousands of lives and destruction of property worth billions have proved the failure of Kenyans to achieve national unity.

After a lengthy exercise and series of consultations undertaken by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission with stakeholders, education was found to be the cornerstone on which cohesion and integration values could be inculcated in the curricula at the various learning levels. For instance, the Ominde Report in 1964 highlighted the significance of education by stating that “We see education as an agent for shaping the society. This is a process in which our schools necessarily play a part, whether they know it or not. We have suggested in our report how they may help to combat divisions of race, tribe and religion to weld in Kenya a united people”. (The Ominde Report, 1964, Part I, p.23) The Kenya Vision 2030 underscores the significance of education and training of all Kenyans as a key factor to the success of the Vision.

The above sentiments have paved way for the National cohesions and Integration Commission to engage KIE, NCIC staff and resource persons to review the curriculum in primary and Secondary Schools in Kenya with a view of mainstreaming cohesion and integration values in the curricula. The key question that has guided this review process is: What can guide and assist Kenya to achieve and enhance cohesion and integration among citizens?

The review process is primarily concerned with exploring and assessing the curricula taught in primary and secondary schools with a view of recommending proposals for reform in order to enhance cohesion and integration principles in the education curricula. The overall objective of the review process is to inculcate learners with educational values that will ensure their successful integration and cohesion in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society and live in a peaceful and prosperous country.

The NCIC engaged resource persons in conducting a ‘Review of Curriculum Reform Proposals in Primary and Secondary Schools in Kenya with the following specific ToR:

1. Identify areas where national cohesion can be integrated in the Islamic Religious Education by reviewing the Content, Methods of teaching and Learning Activities of the different subjects taught in primary and secondary schools in Kenya.
2. Identify areas that are detrimental to national unity.
iii. Identify and compile relevant training materials, references, relevant exercises, etc. for each module and prepare the necessary handouts and PowerPoint presentations.
iv. Together with NCIC Staff, resource persons co-deliver the induction program in a professional manner using various methodologies and approaches.
v. Prepare a report to be submitted to the Commission which includes:
   a) Review of the content, methods of teaching and learning activities of the subject.
   b) Recommendations of reform proposals in the reviewed subject.

IRE occupies a significant place in the education and upbringing of Muslim children. Islam emphasizes on the significance of education in the life of a Muslim and there are numerous sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) that encourage Muslims to seek education. For instance, in one report the Prophet said “Whoever seeks the path of knowledge Allah will ease for him the way to the paradise”. (Narrated by Imam Muslim, his another prophetic tradition, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) said “whoever Allah wants good for, He will teach him the religion”. (Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari). It is from this religious background that Muslims feel obliged to teach their children IRE in order to mould the behaviour of the learners in accordance to Islamic teachings.

Initiatives to Enhance National Unity

The Ominde Commission, 1964
A number of commissions, working parties, committees and task forces have been established since independence. For instance, in 1963, the Ominde Education Commission was formed to survey the existing educational resources and advise the Government on the formulation of National policies for education. The Commission was mandated to introduce changes that would reflect the nation’s sovereignty and focused on identity and unity which were critical issues at the time. The Ominde Report, 1964 proposed an education system that would foster national unity and recommended that religious education be taught as an academic subject. To this end, the Report pledged that “to respect the convictions of persons of all religions, and of none. To the secular state, the use of any public service to trench the claims of any religion is repugnant” (The Ominde Report, 1964: 22). However, IRE is considered by Muslims not just as an academic subject but rather an integral part of religious education that plays a vital role in the moral development and deepening of learner’s religious commitment in the Islamic faith. In supporting this view, the Koech Commission of Inquiry into Religious Education noted that religious education “has been considered by religious organizations as not just another academic subject. It is a subject that has been expected to effect behavioural changes among the learners” (The Koech Report: 1999: 57).

The Gachathi Report, 1976
The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Polices was established under the chairmanship of Mr. P. Gachathi to evaluate the system of education; formulate a programme that would make education a more potent instrument of social and economic advance. The Committee (The Gachathi Report, 1976) focused on redefining Kenya’s educational policies and objectives, giving consideration to national unity, economic, social and cultural aspirations of the people of Kenya. The Report recommended among others the teaching of religious education and social education and ethics in formal education institutions.
The Mackay Report, 1981
In 1981, a Presidential Working Party was appointed under the chairmanship of Prof. Colin Mackay. The Working Party (The Mackay Report, 1981) recommended the restructuring of the education system from the former 7:4:2:3 to an 8:4:4 system of education which made Islamic Religious Education (IRE) compulsory at the primary level of education.

The Kamunge Report, 1988
In 1988, another Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next decade and Beyond was established under the patronage of Mr. Kamunge. The Working Party (The Kamunge Report, 1988) focused on improving education financing, quality and relevance. Recommendation of the Working Party led to the production of the Government Sessional Paper No.6 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond which, in turn, led to the policy of cost sharing between government, parents and communities.

The Koech Report, 1999
In 1999, the Commission of Inquiry was established under the chairmanship of Koech to recommend ways and means of enabling the education system to facilitate national unity, manual social responsibility, accelerated industrial and technological development, life-long learning and adaptation in response to changing circumstances.

The Koech Report emphasized that “an effective educational system must be able to satisfy the mental, physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development of the society, as well as prepare its members for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of social living. The education system must, therefore, address the society’s secular, religious and ethical concerns”. (The Koech Report, August 1999, p.53)

Content

The IRE curricula for both primary and secondary schools contain a number of morals and issues that envisage cohesion and integration principles. However, there are missing contents in the syllabi that need to be addressed so as to inculcate such principles in the learning process. Recommendation: Cohesion and integration among learners can be achieved through the following proposed themes:

- Promoting national unity and patriotism among Kenyans
- Peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the people of Kenya
- Promote the spirit of equality and tolerance among the people of Kenya

IRE Syllabus for Primary Schools

The IRE primary curriculum contains various Islamic teachings on sound morals and good conduct. Teachers handling IRE in primary schools should give special attention to relate Islamic teachings on national unity and peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the various members of the Kenyan fraternity.

The areas of the IRE primary syllabus that relate to cohesion and integration values are contained in the following topics:

1. Hadith / Sunnah (traditions of Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon Him])
2. Moral teachings
3. Muamalat (Transactions / Relationships)
4. I'tlim (knowledge)
5. Ishlaq (Mora; values)
8.0 History of Islam

The teaching of I.R.E in primarily level is aimed at giving learners an opportunity to assimilate
the fundamental principles of Islam in order to be at peace with the Creator, self and the society at large.

Among the objectives set in the IRE syllabus is to develop respect on other people’s faith and foster harmonious co-existence through tolerance. Despite the fact that the objective of fostering harmonious and peaceful co-existence has been highlighted, materials for teaching IRE in primary level do not clearly cover this important aspect which is part of the NCIC objectives.

Recommendation: It is therefore, imperative that in the sections on moral teachings, emphasis should be placed on inculcating values of respect and mutual co-existence between the various communities in Kenya.

**Recommendations to integrate NCIC objectives in the IRE Primary Curriculum**

**Introduction**

The IRE secondary curriculum approved by KIE states that “The teaching of I.R.E is primarily aimed at giving learners an opportunity to acquire the fundamental principles of Islam in order to be at peace with the Creator, self, fellow citizens, members of the society and the environment”.

Recommendation: In addition to have peace with the Creator, oneself, there is a need to extend peace to fellow citizens and other members of the society.

**Moral Teachings**

Recommendation: Under moral teaching emphasis should be put on inculcating values of respect and mutual co-existence between the various communities in Kenya.

The IRE secondary curriculum approved by KIE provides that “It is expected to help the learners develop holistically”.

Recommendation: Special attention should be given to relate Islamic teachings on national unity and peaceful co-existence between communities in Kenya.

| Standard One: | 7.0          | TOPIC: MUAMALAT |
|               | 7.1          | SUB-TOPICS:     |
|               | (iv) Love for neighbours |       |
|               | (v) Peaceful and harmonious co-existence |       |
|               | 7.2          | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|               | Respect for humanity |       |
|               | Develop love for neighbours |       |
|               | Develop respect to other people’s faith and culture |       |
|               | 7.3          | CONTENT |
|               | Love for neighbours |       |
|               | Respect to other people’s faith and culture |       |
|               | TOPIC: AL-ILM |       |
|               | 9.1          | SUB-TOPICS:     |
|               |             | Places of worship (mosques) |
|               | 9.2          | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
9.3 CONTENT
Respect for other places of worship

Standard Two:
2.0 TOPIC: HADITH/SUNNAH
2.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(i) Love for neighbours and fellow citizens
2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Iman, good deeds and love for parents, neighbours and fellow citizens
2.3 CONTENT
2.4 Hadiths on respect for neighbours

5.0 TOPIC: MORAL TEACHINGS
5.1 SUB-TOPICS:
Islamic etiquette
5.2 CONTENT
Etiquettes of dealing with people of other faiths and cultures

7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
7.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(i) Respect to people of other faiths and cultures
(ii) The spirit of harambee in Islam
7.2 CONTENT
Dealing with people in good behaviours and manners
Hadith on “Interact with people in good manners”

9.0 TOPIC: AL-ILM
9.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(i) Places of worship for other religions
(ii) The spirit of harambee in Islam
9.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Develop respect for other religions and their places of worship
Narrate the spirit of harambee
Spirit of working together as one nation
CONTENT
Places of worship for the Muslim, Christians and Hindus

Standard Three:
2.0 TOPIC: HADITH/SUNNAH
2.2 CONTENT
“Salute to the one you know and the one you do not know”

5.0 TOPIC: MORAL TEACHINGS
5.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(i) Prohibition of insulting others

7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate to live in a healthy, moral and social order state factors which will help them to develop good relationships with others.

5.3 CONTENT
Effects of insulting others
7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
SUB-TOPICS:
(vii) Assisting neighbours and the needy people
7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Develop love for neighbours and other people
7.2 CONTENT
Respect other people in the society

9.0 TOPIC: AL-ILM
9.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate the places of worship for other faiths and cultures
9.2 CONTENT
Recognition of other prophets and their nations

Standard Four:
5.0 TOPIC: MORAL TEACHINGS
SUB-TOPICS:
(iii) Working with others
5.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate to work with others
5.2 CONTENT
Importance of working with others

7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
SUB-TOPICS:
(iv) Interacting with other people in the society
7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Develop a sense of responsibility for others
Suggest extent of interaction with people in the society
7.2 CONTENT
Qualities of a good citizen
Hadith on dealing with people in good behaviours

9.0 TOPIC: AL-ILM
SUB-TOPICS:
(iv) Commonalities between Muslims and people of other faiths
9.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate commonalities between Muslims and people of other faiths

Standard Five:
2.0 TOPIC: HADITH/SUNNAH
SUB-TOPICS:
(iv) Kindness to others
2.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Show kindness towards other people
Appreciate hadith on kindness
2.2 CONTENT
Kindness to others

7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
SUB-TOPICS:
(v) Peaceful and harmonious co-existence with other people
7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Explain one’s obligations to close relatives, neighbours and other people in the society

7.2 CONTENT
Obligations to relatives, neighbours and other people in the society

8.0 TOPIC: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
8.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate peaceful and harmonious co-existence of people from different faiths in Medina

8.2 CONTENT
Multi-faith society in Medina
Promotion of the concept of “Ummah” (one nation)

9.0 TOPIC: AL-ILM
9.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate the origin of mankind

9.2 CONTENT
Adam the father of mankind

Standard Six:
5.0 TOPIC: MORAL TEACHINGS
5.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(i) Kindness
(ii) Hospitality
(iii) Generosity

5.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Interpret the hadith on kindness and generosity
Kindness to the needy and the poor
Appreciate to live in a multi-faith society

5.2 CONTENT
Kindness e.g. “Verily Allah (S.W.T) likes kindness in everything that one does”

7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
SUB-TOPICS:
(iii) Harambee spirit

9.0 TOPIC: AL-ILM
SUB-TOPICS:
(iii) Prophethood as a divine guidance to mankind

9.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Role of Prophets on preaching peace among people

Standard Seven:
TOPIC: HADITH/SUNNAH
2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate to love a health, moral and social order
State the advantages of living in harmony with neighbours

CONTENT
The Hadith on: Neighbours e.g. “whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not annoy his neighbours”.
The Hadith on: Think before you act e.g. “If you want to do something think of its outcome. If it is good, do it and if it bad, avoid it”.
5.0 TOPIC: MORAL TEACHINGS
SUB-TOPICS:
(vi) Peaceful and harmonious co-existence with people of other faiths

5.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate living with other people in the society in a peaceful and harmonious manner

5.2 CONTENT
Peaceful and harmonious co-existence

TOPIC: MUAMALAT
7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Appreciate social ethics

8.0 TOPIC: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
8.2 CONTENT
Significance of Prophet Muhammad’s last sermon on discouraging discrimination

Standard Eight:
7.0 TOPIC: MUAMALAT
7.1 SUB-TOPICS:
(iii) Qualities of a good citizen
7.1.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Teachings of the hadith on co-operation
Appreciate qualities of a good citizen
7.2 CONTENT
Qualities of a good citizen

IRE Syllabus for Secondary Schools
The IRE secondary curriculum approved by KIE states that “The IRE syllabus for secondary schools is designed to nurture the spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical well being of the learners. The curriculum is also geared towards enabling the learners to face the challenges of life such as HIV/AIDS, gender, child abuse, child labour and substance abuse, integrity and environmental concerns.”

Key areas of the IRE secondary syllabus that relate to cohesion and integration mainly contained in the following topics:
6.0 Akhlaq (Mora; values)
7.0 Muamalat (Transactions / Relationships)
8.0 History of Islam
12.0 Pillars of Iman (Faith)

The syllabus also aims to develop respect for and foster harmonious co-existence with other people through tolerance. However, materials for teaching IRE in secondary level do not highlight the significance of peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the various members of the Kenyan society.

Recommendation: It is important for the syllabus to cater for and give special attention to relate the Islamic teachings to the peaceful and harmonious co-existence with others.

Recommendations to integrate NCIC objectives in the IRE Secondary Curriculum

Introduction
The IRE secondary curriculum approved by KIE states that “This syllabus is designed to nurture the spiritual, moral, social, emotional and physical well being of the learner.”
further provides that “The learning of I.R.E. in secondary schools is geared towards enabling the learner face the challenges of life.” Among the general objectives stated in the IRE curriculum is to “Develop respect for and foster harmonious co-existence with other people through tolerance”.

**Recommendation:** Special attention has been given to relate the teachings of Islam to issues such as peaceful and harmonious co-existence with others.

**Form One:**

- 6.0 AKHLAQ (MORAL VALUES)
  - 6.10 Specific Objectives
    - e) Relate Islamic morals to peaceful and harmonious co-existence in the society
  - 6.20 Content
    - e) Interacting with people in the society

- 7.0 MUAMALAT (RELATIONSHIP)
  - 7.20 Content
  - 7.25 Relationship between individual and:
    - (a) Neighbours
    - (b) Members of the society

- 8.0 HISTORY OF ISLAM
  - 8.20 Content
  - 8.25 Achievement of the prophet
    - a) Brotherhood and equality of mankind
    - b) Elimination of racism
    - e) Religious tolerance

**Form Two:**

- 12.0 PILLARS OF IMAN (FAITH)
  - 12.10 Specific Objectives
    - f) Respect for other faiths
  - 12.20 Content
    - 12.26 Quranic teachings on respecting other faiths

- 14.0 AKHLAQ (MORAL VALUES)
  - 14.10 Specific Objectives
    - d) Discuss the effects of vices such as hate speech, ethnicity, and tribalism in the society
  - 14.20 Content
    - 14.34 National unity and peaceful cohesion of society

**Form Three:**

- 22.0 AKHLAQ (MORAL VALUES)
  - 22.10 Specific Objectives
    - d) Relate Islamic morals to peaceful and harmonious co-existence with others in the society
  - 22.20 Content
  - 22.22 Dimensions of morality in Islam
    - d) Quranic teachings on tolerance. Verses on tolerance and peaceful and harmonious co-existence in the society

- 26.0 ISLAM IN EAST AFRICA
  - 26.20 Specific Objectives
d) Show historical and contemporary peaceful and harmonious co-existence between Muslims and people of other faiths in East Africa

Form Four:
32.0 AKHLAQ (MORAL VALUES)
32.10 Specific Objectives
e) Causes and effects of disintegration of the society
32.20 Content
32.21 Causes and effects of tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism and hate speech
33.0 Muamalat (Relationship)
33.10 Specific Objectives
Describe Islamic teaching on co-existence with people of other faiths
d) Appreciate the need for peaceful co-existence among people of different races and nations
33.20 Content
33.21 Relationship between Muslims and people of other faiths
33.25 Islamic relations with other nations

Methods of Teaching and Learning Activities

IRE is a compulsory and examinable subject at the end of the primary level in Kenya. Hence, pupils sitting for the 8-4-4 primary level examination are required to sit for the KCPE examination in IRE which is considered to be part of the social studies. However, IRE is optional at the secondary level and students who opt for it sit for the KCSE. In some schools, routine assessments such continuous assessment tests are also undertaken in both primary and secondary schools.

In addition to the IRE syllabus approved by KIE, Islamic integrated schools offer to learners other Islamic subjects that include the Quran – both memorization and understanding, the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet), ta'rikh (history of Islam), aqeeda (theology), and fiqh (jurisprudence), serah (the life history of Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon Him]) and Arabic language.

Recommendation: Due to the significance of IRE at both primary and secondary levels, it is imperative to equip learners at these levels with integration and cohesion principles that will foster communal unity and ensure that they become responsible citizens.

Resource Materials

The guiding material for teaching IRE in both primary and secondary levels is the examination prepared and approved by KIE and teachers prepare their teachings materials at their individual capacities. The main resource material for teaching IRE in primary schools is a series of texts that covers class 1 to class 8 and written by Islam Khiyar Islam and published by Oxford University Press. There are three resource materials for teaching IRE in secondary schools:
1. Textbook of Islam by Qureshi
2. IRE Form 1 to 4 by Adan Saman Sheikh

Recommendations on mainstreaming cohesion and integration values in resources for teaching IRE in the primary level
Primary Curriculum

The following are recommendations to inculcate cohesion and integration principles in the IRE primary texts *New Beginning IRE* written by Islam Khiyar Islam:

Class 1:

7. Lessons from Surah Al-Fatiha p.29
   Recommendation: In addition to acknowledging that Allah is a caring and loving God, learners need to be taught to care and respect the fellow human beings.

8. Places of worship, p.38
   Recommendation: After being explored to the various places of worship i.e. church, temple and mosque, learners need to be develop respect for these places of worship and appreciate that people worshipping God should not fight one another particularly in places of worship.

11. I love my parents, p.42
    Recommendation: In addition to showing love to one’s parents, learners should appreciate love for neighbours.

Class 2:

Lessons from surah Al-Kafirun, p.36 and 37.
   Recommendation: A better word such as Quraysh which is relevant to the context of the revelation should be used instead of using the word ‘non-Muslims’.

13. Happy Eid, p. 39
   Recommendation: Among the things that learners should appreciate during Eid festival is that we care for and love neighbours.

14. What is a good behavior? 49
    Recommendation: In addition to respecting the poor and elders, learners need to appreciate that to respect neighbours is a good deed.

Class 3:

   Recommendation: In addition to the teachings on salutation, learners need to develop saluting other people in the society as per Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon Him) teaching: “Salute the one you know and the one you do not know”.

3. Rights of others, p.32
   Recommendation: In addition to prohibition of the bad habits mentioned i.e. laughing at others, learners need to be taught not to insult others.

7. Caring for orphans, p. 35
   Recommendation: The text explores learners to various good gestures such as caring for orphans. There is a need to mention caring for neighbours and relate it to the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him)

10. Smoking, p.49
    Recommendation: A number of vices have been mentioned but others in contravention to the values in section 10 of the constitutions need should be highlighted.

Class 4:

11. It is good to care for our environment, p.60
    Recommendation: There is a need to expose learners on the importance of environmental management.
Obligation to relatives, p.73.
Recommendation: In addition to the obligations to relatives, learners need to understand obligations to neighbours.

Class 5:
D. Neighbours, p.4
D. Obligations to our neighbours, p.11.
Recommendation: These sections have sound Islamic teachings on caring and kindness to neighbours that can be useful in other parts of the curriculum.
C. Care for our environment, p.76.
Recommendation: There is need to expose learners to the significance of caring for our society.

Class 6:
Recommendation: In addition to the drawings showing good behaviours, there is a need to have a drawing depicting kindness to neighbours.
B. Qualities of Muttaqin (pious persons), p.19.
Recommendation: In addition to the good qualities of a pious person mentioned, there is need to add virtues such as kindness and respect to other people.
It is more appropriate here to relate virtues of the Muttaqin (pious persons) with the qualities of a good citizen.
D. Enjoining good and forbidding evil, p.20.
Recommendation: In addition to the examples of etiquettes mentioned, there is a need to add other bad behaviours such as insulting others using hate speech and killing others.
This should be followed by questions in page 21 such as:
Why should people insult others?
Why should people kill others?

Class 7:
A. Annoying your neighbour, p.24.
Recommendation: This section has good Islamic teachings on prohibiting annoying neighbours that can be useful in other parts of the curriculum.
Recommendation: In addition the harms of useless talk, there is a need to add material on hate speech and its effects.

Class 8:
Cooperation, p.10.
Recommendation: The section has good material on the spirit of cooperation that needs to relate to the notion of barambee as a significant factor in the process of nation building.
Taqwa (piety), p.80.
Recommendation: The teachings on Taqwa (piety) should be related to the qualities of a good citizen.
Importance of tolerance, p.96.
Recommendation: The section has good material on the significance of tolerance that needs to expose learners to appreciate the importance of living in multi-cultural and multi-faith society.
Sharing, p.104.
Recommendation: Learners need to be exposed to the concept of sharing to include the wider members of the society.
Recommendation: There is need to highlight the peaceful co-existence between visitors and locals that had existed for centuries.
Recommendations on mainstreaming cohesion and integration values in resource materials for teaching IRE in the secondary level

The following are recommendations to inculcate cohesion and integration principles in IRE secondary text *IRE Form One to Form Three* by Adan Saman Sheikh:

**Form One:**

**Recommendation:** Relate the Islamic teachings prohibiting the grounds of discrimination with the NCIC objectives.

**Prohibition of defamation of women,** p.44.

**Recommendation:** Relate the Islamic teachings prohibiting defamation with the NCIC objectives.

**Rights of man in relation to other people,** p.47.

**Recommendation:** Relate the Islamic teachings on the rights of a person towards other members of the society to the right to respect others and be kind to them.

**Extended family members,** p.54.

**Recommendation:** There is a need to include the rights of neighbours.

**The terms of the Madina Charter,** p.74.

**Recommendation:** There is a need for learners to be informed on the significance of the charter in urging people of different faiths and cultures under one notion of ummah (nation).

**Major terms of treaty of Hudaybiyah,** p.81.

**Recommendation:** There is a need for learners to be informed on the lessons learnt from the treaty that include concepts of tolerance and forbearance.

**Conquest of Makkah,** p.83.

**Recommendation:** There is a need for learners to be informed on the lessons learnt from the conquest that include notions of pardoning and reconciliation.

**Form Two:**

**Drug abuse,** p.72.

**Recommendation:** Various social vices have been mentioned. There is need to highlight other types of vice prohibited by NCIC such as hate speech, insulting others, killing others etc. Learners should be exposed to the dangers of engaging in drug abuse, alcohol and other illegal substances.

**Form Three:**

**Forgiveness,** p.43.

**Recommendation:** In addition to the good morals mentioned, learners need to be exposed to other sound virtues such as respect and kindness to members of the society etc.

The following are recommendations to inculcate cohesion and integration principles in IRE secondary text *A Guide to Islam Form Two to Form Three* by Islam Khiyar Islam:

**Form Two:**

**Chapter 5: Moral values,** p.325.

**Recommendation:** There is a need to explore learners to notions of mutual respect in a peaceful co-existence of the society in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.

**Needs leading to piety and righteousness,** p.331.

**Recommendation:** There is a need to relate these noble Islamic teachings with the qualities of good humanity.

**Differing types of Amanah (trusts),** p.392.

**Recommendation:** Learners need to be taught the significance of trust towards neighbours and fellow human beings.

**Social vices,** p.471.
Recommendation: Various social vices have been mentioned. There is need to highlight other types of vices prohibited by NCIC such as hate speech, insulting others, killing others etc.

Form Three:
Rights of other creatures, p.184.
Recommendation: There is need to relate the Islamic religious values mentioned to the objectives of NCIC.

Refrain from abusing, p. 200.
Recommendation: This section has good Islamic teachings on prohibiting abusing others and can be useful in other parts of the curriculum.

Forgiveness, p.227.
Recommendation: This section has good Islamic teachings on forgiveness that can be useful in exploring learners to the significance of pardoning others and enhance the process of reconciliation among fellow members in the society.

The qualities of a good judge, p.263.
Recommendation: The qualities of a good judge should be related to the qualities of a good citizen.

Vain speech, p.280.
Cheating and slander, p.296.
Recommendation: These sections should highlight the effects of hate speech and insulting others.

Islamic manners on: p.317.
Recommendation: In addition to the Islamic virtues mentioned in this section, there is need to include materials on dealing with others.

Challenges

Attitude towards change

In conducting its inquiry, the Koech Commission of Inquiry observed the attitude of the various religious faiths towards religious education has not changed among the religious leaders and noted that “an education system is one-sided unless the spirit, the values and standards of religion, informs it” (The Koech Report, 1999, p.55). Among the challenges that may arise in the process of reviewing the IRE curriculum could be changing the religious attitude towards understanding and accommodating cohesion and integration principles in the education system.

Recommendation: Concerted efforts should be made to make the religious fraternity understand and appreciate cohesion and integration principles in the education system.

Recommendation: Mainstreaming of cohesion and integration principles in the education system should involve family, then school then at the community level and ultimately, the nation.

Lack of proper training on inculcating cohesion and integration principles in the education system

Majority of teachers handling the teaching of IRE in both primary and secondary schools are not conversant with the NCIC objectives that aim at inculcating cohesion and integration values in the education system. IRE teachers in primary and secondary schools are not provided with adequate opportunities in order to expose themselves to new teaching methodologies with the challenges facing the society.

Recommendation: Relevant training of IRE teachers in order to equip them with the necessary methodologies in understanding and teaching of cohesion and integration principles in the education system. Institutions can undertake such training are many including NCIC and KIE.
Sacrifice of resource materials

Publishing of IRE resource materials have been commercialized and are limited in number. In most cases, even the recommended texts are out of print. There is need for additional IRE reference materials for both primary and secondary schools that incorporate cohesion and integration principles in line with NCIC objectives.

Recommendation: IRE resource materials incorporating cohesion and integration principles in line with NCIC objectives should be made available to learners at reasonable and affordable prices.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Reform

The teaching of I.R.E in both primarily and secondary levels aims at giving learners an opportunity to acquire the fundamental principles of Islam in order to be at peace with the Creator, oneself and the society at large. Among the objectives set in the IRE syllabus is to develop respect on other people’s faith and foster harmonious co-existence through tolerance. These noble Islamic teachings already encompass NCIC objectives and further efforts should be made to inculcate NCIC principles in the learning process.

Having good curricula is one thing, and delivering its content to learners is another. It is therefore very important to ensure that a sound curriculum that contains NCIC values should be delivered to learners by qualified and competent teachers and instructors who comprehend NCIC objectives. Teachers handling IRE in both primary and secondary schools should give special attention to relate Islamic teachings to Constitutional provisions and NCIC objectives on national unity and peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the various members of the Kenyan communities.

The main challenge to incorporate NCIC principles in the IRE curriculum can arise from lack of understanding of the significance of NCIC principles and its relevance towards ensuring mutual respect and peaceful co-existence among the diverse people of Kenya. Among the challenges that could face the IRE curriculum review process may lie in the religious attitude that could presume contradiction between the Islamic religious teachings and the NCIC objectives. It is imperative that at the outset to sensitize stakeholders from the Muslim community to appreciate the fact that already the IRE curriculum envisages much of the NCIC principles. In the event of any arising contradictions, then reconciliation efforts can be done to bridge the gap between religion and dictates of our contemporary time.

In order to respond to the change of attitude, it is important to mobilize Muslim stakeholders to understand and accommodate cohesion and integration principles in the education system.

Mainstreaming of cohesion and integration principles in the education system should be done at various phases that can start with the family, community and ultimately the nation.

The IRE curriculum in both primary and secondary schools should seek to promote values and principles that have been reflected in various reports and constitutional provisions. The IRE process should seek to promote and develop trust and confidence in constitutional and national values. The following are some of these principles and provisions:
The Constitution

The preamble of the Constitution states that “we are proud of our ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and determined to live in peace and unity as one indivisible sovereign nation.”

The Constitution of Kenya very clearly establishes freedom of conscience and fundamental rights of Kenya citizenship.

b) Freedom of conscience and religion

Article 32 of the Constitution states that “(1) Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.
(2) Every person has the right, either individually or in community with others, in public or in private, to manifest any religion or belief through worship, practice, teaching or observance, including observance of a day of worship.
(4) A person shall not be compelled to act, or engage in any act, that is contrary to the person’s belief or religion.

c) The national values

Among the national values that are relevant to the process of reviewing IRE curriculum are provided in Article 10 of the Constitution that states “(2) The national values and principles of governance include:
(a) Patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people;
(b) Human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalised;
(c) Good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability;

(d) Cultural values

Article 11 provides that “(1) This Constitution recognises culture as the foundation of the nation and as the cumulative civilization of the Kenyan people and nation. (2) The State shall—
(a) Promote all forms of national and cultural expression through literature, the arts, traditional celebrations, science, communication, information, mass media, publications, libraries and other cultural heritage”.

These constitutional provisions recognize the existence of different ethnic, cultural and religious diversities among the people of Kenya. In the process of reviewing IRE curriculum it is important to incorporate spirit and letter of these constitutional provisions so as to promote and protect ethnic, cultural and religious values.

e) The national values of education

In the process of reviewing IRE curriculum, it is important to consider and promote national values of education. A number of previous commissions and working groups on reviewing the education system in Kenya have laid the objectives of education. The following are among the objectives education that relate to the process of reviewing IRE curriculum:

a) Foster nationhood and promote national unity.
b) Serve the people of Kenya and the needs of Kenya without discrimination.
c) Respect the cultural traditions of the peoples of Kenya.
d) Promote social equality and remove divisions of race, tribe and religion. (The Ominde Report, 1964, Part I, p.25)

Objectives of NCIC
In order to ensure effective adoption of NCIC objectives in the review process of IRE curriculum, it is imperative to incorporate the following relevant sections of the NCIC Act in the IRE curriculum:

Section 25(2):
(a) Promote the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or race
(b) Discourage persons, institutions, political parties and associations from advocating or promoting discrimination or discriminatory practices on the ground of ethnicity or race
(c) Promote tolerance, understanding and acceptance of diversity in all aspects of national life and encourage full participation by all ethnic communities in the social, economic, cultural and political life of other communities
(g) Promote respect for religious, cultural, linguistic and other forms of diversity in a plural society

Cohesion and integration values
In addition to the constitutional and educational values mentioned above, there is also need to incorporate cohesion and integration values in the IRE curriculum that will equip learners with the necessary attitudes and skills to enable them to live in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. Cohesion and integration values include, inter alia:
• Respect the rights, faiths and cultures of others.
• Promotion of peaceful and harmonious co-existence between the people of Kenya
• Appreciate the significance of peace in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society.
• Understanding and acceptance of diverse faiths and cultures.
• Under-score the importance of mutual respect within diverse communities.
• Discouraging discriminatory practices amongst the people of Kenya.