Appropriating Globalisation to Revitalise Indigenous Knowledge and Identity Through Luhya Children's Play Songs

by

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Abstract

Globalisation has brought about major advances in technology with many benefits. Notwithstanding, 'side effects' have also accompanied this with many children losing touch with their indigenous play as they acquire high tech toys, video games, computers and other technological gadgets. This paper explores the indigenous way Luhya children passed their free time by engaging in play songs, simulations, poetry and such like activities. We used Critical Ethnography methodology and theoretical framework to analyse our findings and draw conclusions. We argue that in Kenya, we want to embrace that which is useful in globalization, however we also want retain and revitalize our indigenous ways of education and play that are of great value, because they give our children a greater sense of self and group identity. With globalisation there is need to appreciate what is good in others' cultures and tolerate what might be different from ours.

Key words: Identity, Indigenous knowledge, Luhya play songs

Introduction

Globalisation is a much talked about phenomenon that is inescapable to all. It has become clear that we live in a global village as what happens in any part of the world ripples over to affect the rest of the world whether financially, spiritually or socially. Globalisation is ambivalent as there are many benefits accruing from it as well as ill effects. Information transfer is quite rapid compared to the snail mail of yester years. Whereas it used to take days or indeed weeks to transmit around the world it now takes seconds through the use of Emails, Blogospheres, Internet networking such as Face Book, fax and other emerging systems. Rapid innovation in the field of communication and micro-electronics has, thus, speeded up the production and sharing of goods, ideas and services world-wide. World wide access to information through the Internet is one of the many benefits globalisation has brought. Children as citizens of this global village are able to understand their world through exposure to satellite TV, videos, ipods and other ever growing gadgets.

In this paper we first discuss the ambivalence of the concept 'globalisation' while placing it in theoretical perspectives of the day. We then explore values embedded in various Luhya children's play, especially in the play songs, giving examples of some of these songs. Finally, we appraise globalisation, suggesting ways of appropriating that which is good in it while casting away that which does not add value to our children's upbringing.

Methodology

To collect data we did an ethnographic study using a variety of methods. We used observation and participant observation in particular to collect the songs. All the three of us have lived in Western Kenya among the Luhya for at least ten years and have had a huge interaction with the community in numerous field work visits. In our interactions with the communities we collected and recorded field notes in our note books. This was enhanced by taking university students out to the field to collect data for their oral literature course work projects to Western Kenya in the Luhya community and in the process we also collected our data. We audio and video-recorded children's songs and dances and transcribed them for analysis. We also informally interviewed eight members of the community to corroborate the data for triangulation. Finally, we did textual analysis of written products in this case books on collection of proverbs and students' notes (see Khasandi-Telewa 2010:103). After data transcription we analysed them in view of Canagarajah's (1999, 2006) Critical Ethnography framework.

Theoretical Orientation

Unlike an uncritical 'traditional' ethnography whose concern is to describe in detail the cultural practices of a community without any plan of changing them and in fact, which strives to achieve as accurate a rendition of the social practices as possible, Critical ethnography has a bigger agenda. It not only aims at describing the community's 'emic' view but also the outsider's 'etic' perspective. Critical ethnographers also seek to elucidate and bring out any social practices and contradictions at the macro-level that might be perceived to entrench ideologies and power relations at the expense of local communities without being overtly clear. It analyzes historical processes and social contradictions that structure life and seeks to critique these in order to emancipate communities from known or hitherto unknown forces that structure their lives and bring out empowerment and self-determination by 'building an element of ideological critique into cultural description' (Canagarajah, 1999:48). Critical Ethnography induces people to comprehend their own actions and the historical and social contexts they operate in bearing in mind Michel Foucault's caution that power often has peripheral effects that affect our understandings of how things work in our social lives.

For our purposes we describe the children's songs and dances taking note of changing trends and emerging themes manifested in these apparently innocent games. As critical ethnographers, though, we also proffer a critique of the situation in light of globalisation and its implicit power relations in things as basic as transforming children's games. Next, we briefly look at literature on globalisation, children's games, and identity issues and then discuss the findings of our study, and finally, we offer a critique of the emerging trends in children's leisure activities with a view to appropriating what is good without losing sight of our rich heritage.

Ambivalence of Globalisation

Although many elements of globalisation have enabled our society to hasten its development process, there are also negative effects that have emerged and are quickly affecting our erstwhile comfort zones. Indeed, when we talk about globalisation we ask

- Who is being globalised?
- Who is globalising who?
- Whose globalisation is it, anyway?

We seem to have here those who are being globalised and those who are globalising, and. undoubtedly a globalisation that is supported by dominant socio-cultural, political-economic models. Here we appear to have a 'big brother' scheme with the Other looking up to him for which way to proceed linked with power as those with supremacy tend to give direction to other people's bearing wherein other people's standards start getting treated as the norm, even from those that would normally appal us. Thus, there is an emerging endangered group and dislocated orders within society.

Many affluent and 'busy' parents in Kenya today tend to buy their children toys, computer games and videos to keep them occupied, and to be in vogue, in the process children have a greater propensity of being locked up in their homes with these gadgets, making them miss out on the socialisation previously available. Besides, many of these *dot com* parents insist on their children speaking English at the demise of their indigenous languages and the cultures engraved therein. Furthermore, most of these modern entertainment gadgets are more individualized and the child is, in the process, denied a chance to get out and play with other children.

Studies have shown that a child glued to television do not grow up holistically. Bandura's Social Learning theory (that he applies to media) supports this view by pointing out that behaviour is reinforced through observation and the imitation of others. He argues that by watching violent programmes on television [and by extension computer games] children tend to imitate this violence and apply it to real life. He believes that people 'acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling' (Bandura 1977: 27). In this framework, a child would internalize some negative traits from the computer games being manipulated, and when playing with video games he/she is the one that manipulates them by pressing buttons and clicking on a mouse and is also given the ability to create players in fantasy football with all the features he/she would wish to see in heroes. This child is thus liable to grow up into the kind of person used to getting his own way and unable to take in the views and imperfections of others. Needless to say, he/she can also be harsh on self as he/she tries to manipulate live people the way he/she does the plastic Lego or rubber toy characters in his/her play things or in the digital characters on the screen. Consequently, when children grow up into a leadership position (especially with the current trends of children taking over even political leadership from their powerful parents) this poses the risk of having a leader with a convergent perspective: 'People must do as I say'. Hence, he/she will try to make people do as he/she pleases leading to great dissatisfaction and frustration when they cannot be acquiescent unlike obliging fantasy characters.

Furthermore, such a child is likely to be distressed and ill prepared to face the challenges of a social world, not mentioning the possible ill effects of indoor individualistic activities, such as obesity, we are at risk of creating future families that have been weakened as their foundation that should have been entrenched in their culture and identity have been cut off (See Bloomaert 2006; Fairclough 1992, 1996). They are fast becoming alienated, belonging neither here nor there, but appearing as a sorry imitation of the American child, thus a pale shadow of their firmly grounded African traditionally educated counterparts.

Recently one of us passed by a child's birthday celebration in an estate in Nakuru and listened to children playing and singing. They were actually competing in who could articulate the lyrics of American pop songs best! Granted these songs are usually devoid of moral lessons and are often about love and sex or rebellion, they are certainly most unhelpful to children of an average age of six! However, that is what the children encounter most in every other *matatu* they board, radio and television screens and even adverts. They dominate the ring tones children hear on mobile phones and even in background music in shopping malls. This leads to more *cocacolonisation* of their life instead of developing a fresh unique traditional character that contributes to an authentic Kenyan identity. Bourdieu ([1979]/1984) cautions against uncritically accepting these regretful situations as the universal norm, and likewise, Wodak (2011) also cautions against uncritically accepting ideologies as normal.

Obviously, Kenya is in need of the benefits of globalisation we must not swallow wholesale all that comes to us, thus we must apply our sieves to appropriate (Canagarajah 199, 2006) that which is good in globalisation while at the same time revitalising that which is good in our cultures. Correspondingly, one of the key treasures we must hold onto and indeed share with others in the world is that found in the way children traditionally passed their time through the formative years of their lives through play, principally play songs. Traditionally it was unheard of for a child to complain of being bored, as there were more than enough activities to engage each child regardless of their interests. There were games galore for each child and enough playmates freely available to socialise, and accordingly children valued each other even if only for their companionship, discrimination was unheard of on the grounds of colour, race or other sorry excuses. Children also engaged in play songs, poetry, simulations and in so doing they learned about their environment as well as getting grounded in the values of their societies which allowed for them to established an identity giving them a foundation to face future challenges with experience, and the ability to appreciate themselves more and in turn, enable them to value others.

Skills and Values Embedded In Indigenous Luhya Children Playsongs

In consideration of the above, we can now examine skills and values propagated in Luhya children's play, particularly in their play songs. Hence, we analyse listening, turn-taking, identity/self-respect, education, tolerance, creativity, public speaking, cooperation/teamwork, and self-expression, all needing revitalisation to help enrich children's lives in the global village, hence, the modern world.

- **Listening**

This is a vital skill that allows people to come to a consensus in decision making which is mandatory for a peaceful co-existence. In story-telling children learn how to listen keenly and actively. In poetry recitation they have to listen to each other and are often asked to join in the chorus or echo some parts. Children are taught how to wait for a proper finale without jumping to conclusions as one may decide to change the ending of a story for flavour. Thus by doing this they avoid misunderstandings and learn how to internalise the lessons and the serendipity as they are entertained. Unfortunately, this skill is being eroded by some of the modern technology that erodes patience. A child does not learn how to wait for the proper ending in these modern technological games, but the ability lies in his/her hand to end it on impulse. By a tap on a keyboard or a flick of a switch, he/she can manipulate entertainment by switching to another ostensibly more interesting channel, show, programme or game.

- **Turn-taking**

Turn taking entails that one is able to listen to others and appreciate each one. One gives a chance to others to have a go at their particular game. In a game called *makola* a child plays and when defeated points to another child to have a go. Team rope skipping also necessitates co-operation and turn-taking. The child learns that we need each other for a game to be complete. The virtue of sharing is enhanced and vices such as selfishness and greed strictly warned against. Future leaders are trained in a very subtle way how to give others a chance. When one loses an election, for instance, they are expected to congratulate the winner and pledge to co-operate with them instead of sticking onto power as has become very common nowadays.

The following play song *'Yakhola titi olita'* illustrates turn-taking, hence in this game children sit in a circle and sing; a girl is chosen to walk in the middle pretending to be carrying a basket of water on her head, as the other children clap and sing:

> *Omukhana achendanga, neshimwero shia amatsi,*
> *Yakhoola titi olita*
> *Yakhola titi olita*
> *Manamushiesa mirembe*
> *Yakhola titi olita!*
>
> (A girl is walking, with a basket of water
> She does *titi olita* [dances, hands akimbo]
> She does *titi olita*
> And then she greets her: 'peace'
> She does *titi olita*!)

The two children [the one in the middle and the one she greeted when the song stopped] then run round the circle. The girl she greeted then becomes the next one to go in the middle of the circle.

In this play song we see that children learn the virtues of work (going to fetch water and carrying it on one's head) greeting others and wishing them peace, as well as turn taking. Indeed everyone in the circle gets a chance to go round carrying the imaginary basket. The rest patiently wait their turns, and give everyone a fair chance.

- **Identity and Self-respect**

Through play songs a child is taught to identify one's roots and share in the community's pride and shame. Collective responsibility is inculcated early in the child through stories and songs that give examples of collective responsibility. They learn of how one's good fortune can benefit many and one's bad behaviour can affect all and needs to be corrected. Perhaps sacrifices might need to be made to God to appease for an ill done (or to the ancestors). This way a child is able to get firmly rooted and no matter how far they go socially or physically in life, they still can take pride in their roots. It is hard for such a child to grow up and start denying his/her people as primitive, backward or other negative stereotypes that were especially rampant during colonisation. In fact, those trying to create a new identity had to work hard to eradicate these firm beliefs from the African child and that is why movements such as Negritude arose to reaffirm a new African consciousness.

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- **Education**

The play songs are a rich source of education. Even though most of the traditional education was informal it was quite rich as the children learnt about their environment and how to co-exist peacefully with other creatures. Songs and stories as well as other folklore forbade going to the river late at night as that was time for animals to get their drink (Khasandi-Telewa 2006). One is portrayed as lazy and facing great risks if one goes to the river or the farm too early in the morning or too late in the evening. Even though the stories and songs will not give danger from wild animals as the reason to avoid these untimely habits, a close analysis will explain the reasoning behind some taboos and warnings. There is also education about traditional cures, and problem solving. And also, one is taught how to utilise the environment to meet his/her needs while preserving it at the same time.

The next play song is a demonstration of a multiple education lesson that is played by two teams. The children stand in single file and the first child goes to [what I will refer to as] Team A while the following in line goes to Team B. This follows till every child is in either team A or B. The children then put their arms round each other's shoulders and the teams face each other. Team A then dances towards Team B singing:

Khwenyanga omwitsa wefu /khwenyanga omwitsa wefu, Khwenyanga omwitsa wefu omwitsa mwenoyo!
(We want our friend …x3. The friend herself!)

Team B dances towards team A replying:

Omwitsa wenyu ni wina omwitsa wenyu ni wina omwitsa wenyu ni wina? Omwitsa mwenoyo!
 (Who is your friend? x3) The friend herself!)

Omwitsa wefu ni-----x3 Omwitsa mwenoyo! (A name is inserted)
(Our friend is--------x3. The friend herself!)

Ni wina wutsia okhumurera (x3)
Omwitsa mwenoyo!
(Who is going to bring him x3 the friend himself?)

Ni--------wutsia okhumurera (x3)
Omwitsa mwenoyo!

(It is---------who is going to bring him x3. The friend herself!)
Otsie obulayi, ofuche obusuma! Obusuma obutiakatia, olie wikure!

(Go well! Cook maize meal. Soft maize meal, eat until you are satisfied!)

Then the chosen two engage in a wrestling match until one throws the other down. The team cheers and the winner score a point. Consequently it is Team B's turn to select a contestant from Team A for the next round.

This fun activity encourages strength and wrestling skills wherein everyone is a potential contestant. Needless to say, the choosing team is likely to pick the competitor they think they can prevail against, but then the opposing team has a chance to prepare themselves. Strength and courage was a virtue encouraged especially as their world required facing challenges from neighbouring communities wherein the young had to be prepared to defend their land and property from hostile neighbours. This game also encouraged healthy competition as well as accepting defeat when one is beaten. Unlike the modern wrestling seen on TV where the defeated opponent is continually battered, in Luhya wrestling once one fell to the ground a winner is declared and the match is over. The team is also encouraged to work closely, thus an arm in arm dance; as they whispered their choice contestants before the song begun and were not to give any indication as to who their choice was, so as to catch the opposite team off guard. This play song is also a simulation of marriage, as girls are chosen for marriage in real life and therefore they are expected to demonstrate some coyness and resistance, hence a symbolic tussle.

- **Tolerance**

Tolerance and patience are presented as mandatory in Luhya children play songs. Children with a lisp or stammerers are given a chance to sing again if it is felt they have not had a fair chance equal to the other children. When playing if it is the turn of a disabled child the team mates are asked to be careful, for instance when throwing the ball, so as to mind their friends.

- **Creativity**

Creativity is another virtue emphasised in children's play. Riddles, proverbs, poetry recitations all encourage creative thinking. A child with a particularly tricky riddle gets respected for throwing such a challenge to others. Even in storytelling one is free to adapt the ending to suit their needs. If a child likes cakes he/she can explain good fortune as the hero receiving lots of cakes, big houses, and big cars, and so on, to suit the child's imagination.

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- **Public Speaking**

  Speaking skills are developed in children through play practice. The poems, songs, riddles and proverb sessions are some of the activities that promote proper articulation and the art of speaking. Children learn etiquette, protocol, especially the proper and respectful way of addressing elders. They learn that every elderly person can be their 'aunt' or 'uncle' and even those without children can be addressed as 'mother' or 'father'. It is a growing concern that some children today have no idea how to address elders respectfully.

- **Co-operation and Team work**

  The whole concept of children playing together inculcated team work and co-operation. An example of a game that emphasised teamwork is *'ingwe ewe'* (you leopard), whereby the children pretend to be a family threatened by a leopard. The mother stands at the front and all the 'children' put their arms around the waist of the person in front till they are in single file. The chosen 'leopard' tries to grab a 'child', especially the little one at the back of the line. The 'mother' spreads out her hands defensively and defiantly 'cries out' in a song:

Ingweee we!
(You Leopard!)

Kolongolo
(Refrain- Kolongolo is a place)

Ingwe oli omusiru!
(Leopard you are a fool!)
Kolongolo!

Wayimalila abana!
(You have finished all my children)

Kolongolo

Abana ba were
(My children are finished)

Kolongolo

Nomubele yesi
(Even the first born)

Kolongolo

Nomutuwa yesi
(Even the last born)

Kolongolo

Tchaaa noliekhoo!
(Go away; let's see if you will eat any!)
Kolongolo

Chakita kitakita
Kolongolo

This dance goes on in circles as the leopard tries to grab the child at the back of the line, until the 'leopard' grabs a 'child'. Then the 'leopard' becomes one of the 'children' and we get another 'leopard' and another 'mother'.

This game illustrates the need to work together to protect each other from threats. It also emphasises the responsibility parents have towards protecting their children from danger. Even when facing a tough opponent such as a leopard, it is not always the case that you run away. It is better to stand your ground and fight to the best of your ability. One must never give up even if the first born and the last born have been eaten by the leopard. Yet the fact is that even your best efforts can sometimes lead to failure. One must not give up, but continue defending themselves against the leopard, in spite of its superior strength. It also teaches that unity is strength. So long as everyone holds tightly to the child in front of him/her, the leopard cannot grab them (the leopard has to play by the rules and only grab the one at the end of the line).

The next play song is called *'machina ketsa'* (the stones are coming). In this play song every child collects a small stone. The children form a circle too by holding hands and spreading out their hands. Once a neat circle is formed they sit on the ground and start singing. The soloist sings:

Machina ketsa, machina ketsa (the stones are coming x2)
Noshindwa nosasakwa, noshindwa nosasakwa (if you are defeated you will be crushed x2)

Katore katoore
Katore, katoore
(Pick them up, pick them up)

Each child passes his/her stone to the child next to them in the circle in rhythm with the song. In the process they pick up the stone passed by a neighbour and passes it on . If anyone fails to pass the stones in time he/she will end up with in a pile. That is the 'crushing' and he/she gets out of the game, and it is repeated.

This game not only teaches children to be alert, rhythmical and systematic, but also to work as a team. They learn how to co-ordinate movements as they are required to sing out loud, as they receive the stones, and pass them on to the next person.

A similar play song is '*obule bwanje*' (my millet). Here in a circle the children sing, led by a soloist:

Obule bwanje!
Obule! x2
(My millet!)
(Millet!-refrain)
Nende akhanyama! Obule! x2
(With a little meat! Millet!)

Nechesa sinjila! Obule!
(Nechesa stand up! Millet!)

Shina amabeka! Obule!
(Do the shoulder dance! Millet!)

Shina obulayi! Obule!
(Dance well! Millet!)

Kalukha wikhale! Obule!
(Go back and sit down! Millet!)

This apart from being enjoyable for the children as they sing and pat the ground with their hands, this activity also gives everyone a fair chance to be in the limelight. Every child gets a chance to get up and shake their shoulders alone as the rest sing for them. There is no discrimination on any grounds and even those that are not very good dancers get their chance to express themselves. It is also a cultural expression and education as children learn to appreciate and enjoy the foods eaten in the community.

Hence, this is similar to the Swahili '*nyama nyama nyama*!' that has been adapted by the Luhya children as well as the children stand in a circle and a leader calls out '*nyama*' (meat) x3, and the chorus replies '*nyama*' (meat). And when the chorus leader shouts out a name of some food that the Luhya consider to be edible meat, the children jump up and shout '*nyama*!' (Meat'). Everyone must be alert to jump up when edible meat is mentioned or else you are out of the game, and you go to the centre. If the leader calls out what is not considered meat, the children remain standing. If anyone jumps at the mention of what is not considered meat in the Luhya community, they are out of the game, and proceed to the centre.

For example, in the Luhya community, snake meat is not eaten, therefore, if the soloist calls out '*inzukha*' (snake) the children must remain standing. However, if he/she calls out '*eing'ombe*' (cow) the children must jump up because beef is eaten in the community. The children also learn concentration and firmness, because those who are out of the game try to deceive the remaining ones to jump when the 'wrong' meat is called out; they are already out of the game so they jump at all times. If one is gullible they can be cheated to jump by following those that are already out of the game, and in conclusion, the last one remaining is the winner of the game and becomes an instant hero.

This brings us to the final lesson, self-expression.

- **Self-expression**

Self-expression and speaking skills simulations were also taught to children right from early age when they begin to speak. The child is able to show feelings and to empathise with others in difficult situations. Through poems, songs and related activities children learn how to articulate words as they also learn honorifics which promotes respect to elders, as they must be addressed in the correct way. Hence, every child is encouraged to develop self-confidence and self-expression. This is done through recitation of poetry, singing of songs, riddles and storytelling.

One such recitation is when a child hears his/her name, he/she jumps up. For instance:

I am Nafula,
The daughter of Wanjala,
The son of Chief Wangokho,
The son of Wangila,
The son of Wafula the brave warrior, who defeated the *Bayobo*,
And so on and so forth

The above exercise is good for brain work as one must remember details, and thus it is a good intellectual practice because these skills are vital in a pre-literate setting where traditions were orally transmitted. And in conclusion, the child is cheered and applauded when he/she successfully named his/her lineage.

Appropriating Globalisation: Reaching Others in the Worldwide Village

Since our children spend a great part of their time in school, it is crucial that school plays a vital role in propagating the best in our culture. Granted every culture has some bad apples that need not be carried on, it is also a fact that some missionaries and colonialists tended to condemn anything traditional, even that which they did not understand. We have to go back and retrieve and reclaim them; then pass them over to our children. And subsequently, we will be able to share them with other children universally, through modern technology.

Adapting more of these play activities in schools will enrich the children's experience, especially insofar as it helps reduce the home-school disparity for the young children beginning school. Instead of learning that 'a' is for 'apple', something some village children will not have an opportunity to taste or even see in their childhood, we have to use local examples. The children can easily learn these concepts without too much struggle. In fact, by playing the games they are familiar with, the teacher will have an easier time teaching them as they can form mental associations with what they are already familiar with, rather than what is foreign and abstract to them. Thus, by incorporating indigenous play in learning, we reason that children will enjoy what they learn even more.

A similar recommendation was made by Young-Youn Kim in South Korea, whereby she collected and documented traditional Korean songs arguing that, 'heritage songs might be gathered which could then be adapted to a curriculum in music for young children. Hence, during the last century Korean children have more frequently learnt traditional children's songs of Western Europe and North America than they have learnt the songs of their own Korean traditions. To more effectively transmit collected traditional children's songs to new generations of Koreans both at home and abroad, she also recommended teaching applications for these disappearing songs to be used with pre-school and primary children.' (Young-Youn Kim 1999:38)

Likewise, traditional story telling should be strengthened in our schools, as well. Whereas it is good to read about Hansel and Gretel and other cultures' monster stories, it is also important for our children to also read about *Wanakhamuna* (squirrel) and *Wananzofu* (elephant), elements that might not be found in cultures that do not have some of these rare animals. Children will thus be able to appreciate what is unique to their cultures and environments as they also learn about others' cultures. By documenting and digitalising our children's play songs we will also be able to enable other children in the global village to become familiar with what is lovely in our culture and environment.

Skills of appreciating others will be strengthened by the teachers' own appreciation of, and support for children's appreciation of others' efforts. It should not be the case, as it tends to be in some schools, of teachers focussing on appreciating only the academically excellent pupils, but appreciation should be extended to good effort as well. This way even those children that are not intellectually endowed will still learn how to be appreciated and how to appreciate others. Thus, children will not feel isolated and stupid because they do not seem to receive any commendation from their teachers and peers.

In addition, socialisation is very crucial in Luhya childhood as witnessed in a growing trend for children to be lonesome and lonely because they are 'an only child' through their parents' choice. In traditional Luhya society there was no lonely child as the extended family was ever present to interact and socialise with them. In the present age, therefore, it is important for schools to nurture fruitful socialisation in children. Even in the early stages of education, children should be encouraged to learn by group work activities that enable them to discuss ideas, through creative activities, and hence, boost their learning. They can also learn how to share ideas and in life become great at networking for the common good. And through the use of integrated teaching methods, the teacher can help young learners socialise better and therefore get rid of negative stereotypes about others.

We posit that all the above skills add to the enhancement of peace. As children learn to work together, get educated, network, appreciate and understand one another all in an atmosphere of happiness and enjoyment, they grow as holistic human beings. Through the use of modern technology to advance children's play songs, poetry and so on, children will learn to give an eye, ear and a heart to others (they will definitely do more good in engaging children than the easily available horror movies that are fast becoming children's favourites). Hence, it is much better to select and document stories that socialise children into a culture of peace than the diverted messages in most of the imported 'made in Hollywood' movies with no moral story for children wherein villainy is often glorified and rarely gets punished. Also, in a return to cultural matters, if many of the songs were in the local languages it would help in preserving indigenous languages and cultures. Thus, we suggest that by translating children's play songs, poetry and so on and placing them on the Internet and other electronic formats, these culturally relevant songs will become a part of the child's identity in a regional and global authenticity. Imagine ring tones in Luhya that can enhance a child's proud in his/her heritage, instead of a pop stars' rebellious or sexually explicit lyrics that do not add value to the child's life experience.

Conclusion

Today we are happy to undergo change for the better through globalisation. Our lives are richer and information is more readily available than in previous years. It is very important now even more than before that our children learn how to work in teams, develop personal abilities, listen to others as well as understand our economic, social and political environment through formal and non-formal education. Here, we have argued that traditional education achieved this value instillation through the informal education system. Now with globalisation we have to embrace that which is good in other cultures and what is readily available through the information super highway. As a result, we need to contribute our children's play songs and other education resources to this global information bank so as to share with others the strengths of our experiences. And perhaps we can start by incorporating our children play songs into the world of electronic mass media (mobile phone ring tones, media tunes, radio, television, etc.) in a cultural participant context that will promote a positive spirit of globalisation that encourages team work rather than individualism.

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