

Afrocentric Citizenship Education: A Resource for Good Governance and Economic Resuscitation in Post-Colonial Africa



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ABSTRACT

Institutional corruption and lack of accountability, both prevalent traits of ill governance, continue to undermine Africa's economic development, persistently straining growth and stability despite numerous reform efforts aimed at promoting transparency, and integrity. Through a synthesis of contemporary discourse on anti-corruption measures and good governance, this desktop study conceptualised Africanized citizenship education, delivered through curriculum reforms, family influence, and societal platforms as a crucial intervention. The urgency of Afrocentric citizenship education lies in the need to restore Afrocentric governance principles from the pre-colonial era, which is premised on ethical leadership, oneness, communal values, dignity, and collective responsibility. While curriculum reforms foster compulsory undertakings of citizenship education, the involvement of parents or guidance in the pursuit is resourceful in bridging the gap between school-based learning and real-world application. Through societal platforms, awareness can be strengthened to build morally upright individuals who can comprehend, and fulfil their civic responsibilities, further guiding the younger generation in the same direction. Subsequent studies may triangulate the key findings with grassroots realities and conceptualise a more comprehensive framework towards Afrocentric citizenship education attainment.

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INTRODUCTION

This study conceptualizes Afrocentric citizenship education through the perspectives of cognitive and social psychology, and further analyses it as a crucial instrument for combating widespread misgovernance in post-colonial Africa, using Nigeria as a point of reference. Institutional corruption and the lack of political accountability - products of misgovernance, profoundly crippled many African nations, leading to instability and economic crises.

The absence of transparent governance, in countries such as Equatorial Guinea,¹ Libya,² Somalia,³

¹ Mirela Atanasiu, "Conflict in Guinea: Roots of Guinean Conflict from the Perspective of 'Greed Versus Grievance' Theory," in *Terrorism and Political Contention: New Perspectives on North Africa and the Sahel Region* (Springer, 2024), 271–86.

² Amal Hamada, Melike Sökmen, and Chahir Zaki, "Investigating the Libyan Conflict and Peace-Building Process: Causes and Prospects," in *The Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings* (Routledge, 2023), 185–218.

³ Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdullahi and Abdihakim Omar Abdullahi, "An Empirical Analysis of The Relationship Between E-Government and Corruption in Somalia," *Journal of Logistics, Informatics and Service Science* 11 (2024).

South Sudan,⁴ and Zimbabwe,⁵ among a myriad of other African economies, has resulted in severe economic mismanagement, corruption and suffering for the masses. This shortfall led to a collapse in public services in these countries, cascading hyperinflation, which peaked at an astronomical level in the late 2000s, further decimating the savings of ordinary citizens. Institutional corruption resulted in the government's inability to account for public funds not only eroded public trust but also stifled economic stagnation, socioeconomic exclusions, high unemployment rates, and heightened poverty levels.

In Nigeria, the situation is even more dire. The nation's vast mineral wealth has been both a blessing and a curse. The potential to drive significant economic development and sustainable growth was undermined by rampant corruption. This meant that the benefits of this wealth were not resourcefully utilised for a common good, and equitably distributed. Rather, a small facet of the political elite, frequently from certain ethnic groups benefits while the majority of the population gnash in abject poverty.⁶ Nigeria is one of Africa's largest economies due to its enormous natural resource endowment such as oil wealth.⁷ It ranked among the world's top producers of natural gas and crude oil estimated an approximation of 1.2 million barrels per day.⁸ It also has vast reserves of natural gas and is ranked 7 largest globally.⁹ Its coal reserves for power generation and industrial purposes are in excess of over two billion tonnes.¹⁰ Nigeria has iron ore deposits, one of the most common metallic minerals in the country,¹¹ gold deposits, and other accessible minerals,¹² as well as massive arable land,¹³ which makes agriculture a significant part of the economy. However, the country grapples with economic instability and progress, plagued by systemic misgovernance and endemic corruption.

The current Nigerian political dynamics and economic structure illustrate that individualism precedes social surplus – a potentially burgeoning economy where individuals in key positions, shielded under democracy, exploit the national wealth to the detriment of the masses.¹⁴ (Such a scenario resulted from moral decadence and lack of *ubuntu* - hallmarks of a typical African governing system for the people of Africa. Frequently, corrupt officials siphon vast sums of money from the national resource revenues which causes a setback in public investment in infrastructure, education, and healthcare,¹⁵ a dilemma which exacerbates regional inequalities and insurgencies, such as the Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast, the Biafran movement in the East and Militant groups in the Niger -Delta region. The inability to address these issues makes it nearly impossible to establish a stable and prosperous economy, effectively perpetuating a cycle of violence, stagnation, and immigration.¹⁶

This has necessitated the exigency for this scientific enquiry aimed at mapping out pragmatic pointers for policy interventions and practice towards curbing misgovernance and its resultant effects.

⁴ Kon K Madut, "Why Did Governance and Institutional Establishments Fail in Sudan and South Sudan?," *The Journal of North African Studies* 28, no. 3 (2023): 666–78.

⁵ Edson Paul Mutema and Modimowabarwa Kanyane, "Combating Corruption in Zimbabwe and South Africa (2007–2021)," in *Corruption, Ethics, and Governance in South Africa* (Routledge, 2024), 63–81.

⁶ Rasaki Stephen Dauda, "Inequality: The Fundamental Bane of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria," in *The Routledge Handbook of Poverty in the Global South* (Routledge India, 2023), 139–58; Y. G. Manjo, *Corruption Phenomenon in Nigeria (1960-2023)* (UNILORIN Press, 2023).

⁷ Oluebube Christopher Offor, "Oil Wealth and Illicit Financial Flows in Nigeria's Petroleum Sector," *Journal of Academics Stand Against Poverty* 3, no. 1 (2023): 17–36.

⁸ Yusuff Jelili Amuda, Shafiqul Hassan, and Umashankar Subramaniam, "Comparative Review of Energy, Crude Oil, and Natural Gas for Exchange Markets in Nigeria, India and Bangladesh," *Energies* 16, no. 7 (2023): 3151.

⁹ Adeniyi Adekunle Tirimisiyu and Anselm Iuebego Igbafe, "Proven, Probable, Possible, and Contingent Natural Gas Reserves: A Concise and Holistic Review of Major Critical Developmental Steps," in *SPE Nigeria Annual International Conference and Exhibition* (SPE, 2024), D032S030R001.

¹⁰ E I Ohimain, "Diversification of Nigerian Electricity Generation Sources," *Energy Sources, Part B: Economics, Planning, and Policy* 10, no. 3 (2015): 298–305; V I Fagorite et al., "Prospect Evaluation of CO2 Sequestration in Coal Beds of Anambra Basin, Nigeria," *Unconventional Resources* 3 (2023): 248–63.

¹¹ Abdulaziz Alhassan et al., "Iron Ore Tailings as Partial Replacement for Fine Aggregate in Concrete Production-Review," *International Journal Of Engineering And Management Research* 12, no. 4 (2022): 64–71.

¹² Daniel Oluwafunmilade Afolabi, Ayokunle Adewale Akinlalu, and Sherif Olumide Sanusi, "Integrated Geophysical and Remote Sensing Investigations in Hydrothermal Mapping for Orogenic Gold Mineralization in Parts of Ife–Ilesa Schist Belt SW Nigeria—a Case Study," *Arabian Journal of Geosciences* 17, no. 9 (2024): 244.

¹³ Victor Olowe, "Africa 2100: How to Feed Nigeria in 2100 with 800 Million Inhabitants," *Organic Agriculture* 11,no.2(2021): 199–208.

¹⁴ Manjo, *Corruption Phenomenon in Nigeria (1960-2023)*.

¹⁵ Dauda, "Inequality: The Fundamental Bane of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria"; Mohammed Ibrahim Mohammed, Sunusi Adamu, and Oki Olaniyi Pius, "Corruption as the Bane of Nigeria's Security," *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations* 1, no. 2 (2023).

¹⁶ Omoroghomwan Blessing Osayemwenre, Chris-Obadigie Olayemiomolola, and Meluwa Faith, "Nigeria Pattern of Migration: Issues on Human Sustainable Development," *Journal of Techno-Social* 15, no. 1 (2023): 1–15.

The subsequent sections of this paper delve into contemporary discourse around misgovernance in the context of Nigeria, and the conceptual underpinnings of civic education in mitigating corruption, drawing perspectives from global experiences. Following this, the research sheds light on the theoretical foundations of Afrocentric citizenship education, and the potential benefits of implementing the concept in Nigeria and other African countries where ill governance precedes. It concludes with insightful recommendations based on the findings.

Misgovernance in Nigeria

The state of corruption in Nigeria is a well-established concern in contemporary discourse, with recommendations for interventions. A notable recommendation centres around institutional reforms, particularly the strengthening of anti-corruption agencies and the judiciary systems.¹⁷ Emphasis on reforms is legitimised by the fact that independent and well-resourced institutions play a critical role in enforcing accountability and deterring corrupt practices. However, these efforts are frequently undermined by political interference and inadequate funding – major constraints hoarding Nigeria’s efforts towards good governance despite numerous reforms in the public sector, in the post-colonial era. Against these constraints, traditional governance models like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) which are more assuring, fall short of providing solutions to the pervasive corruption stretching across boundaries in the country.¹⁸ It is important to note that these establishments failed because an effective reform requires more than just the creation of anti-corruption bodies; it necessitates a broader transformation in governance structures that ensures autonomous operation such that even the most influential can be called to justice, prosecuted effectively and impartially.

Technological advancement promises solutions as scholars believe that the adoption of digital measures such as e-governance systems in public domains is a corrective measure to corruption.¹⁹ E-governing system leverages technology to foster the transparency and integrity of governance, enhancing greater accountability.²⁰ Its transparency nature prevents government officials from shady activities thereby mitigating corrupt-related engagements that disturb the tranquillity of Nigeria. Allowing for digital trails that can be audited by civil society and international stakeholders, the system minimizes the discretion of public officials, promising greater transparency in financial management, public procurement, and service delivery. Like the reform, the success of the e-governance platform hinges on the willingness of political burgesses to embrace openness, likewise, the capacity of civil society to engage meaningfully with the data generated from the initiatives poses a significant constraint. Arguably, Nigeria is transitioning to e-governance, this system is compounded with multiple deficiencies including the high cost of ICT infrastructure, insufficient or lack of reliable electricity supply, inadequate computer expertise and literacy, and limited access to ICT in remote areas, among other constraints,²¹ narrowing the possibility of harnessing e-governance intervention in curbing misgovernance and corruption in the country.

Media and civil society organizations present another crucial intervention for dealing with corruption and ill governance in Nigeria.²² This intervention ignites a concern as to whether there is a

¹⁷ Bright Bazuaye and Desmond Oriakhogba, “Combating Corruption and the Role of the Judiciary in Nigeria: Beyond Rhetoric and Crassness,” *Commonwealth Law Bulletin* 42, no. 1 (2016): 125–47; Ehi Eric Esoimeme, “A Critical Analysis of the Anti-Corruption Policy of the National Judicial Council of Nigeria,” *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 21, no. 3 (2018): 253–63.

¹⁸ Preye Kuro Inokoba and Weleayam Tina Ibegu, “Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Political Corruption: Implication for the Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria,” *The Anthropologist* 13, no. 4 (2011): 283–91; Idris Ahmed Jamo, “Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Anti-Corruption Crusade in Nigeria: Success and Challenges,” *Gusau International Journal of Management and Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (2021): 13; Duyile Praise Fisayo et al., “Elite Capture Syndrome and Anti-Corruption Control in Nigeria: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and The Independent Corrupt Practices Commission in Perspective,” *International Journal of Business, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (IJBHES)* 5, no. 2 (2023): 144–52.

¹⁹ Augustine Osa Enofe, S A Ogbasi, and O H Mbotto, “E-Governance and Corruption in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* 2, no. 8 (2015): 640–45; Opeyemi Idowu Aluko and Gabriel Temitope Aderinola, “E-Governance and Corruption Impasse in Nigeria: A Developmental Expedition Synopsis,” in *Security Frameworks in Contemporary Electronic Government* (IGI Global, 2019), 129–49; Christopher Agaodi Obike, “E-Governance and Fight against Corruption in Nigeria: The Issues and Challenges,” 2022.

²⁰ Aluko and Aderinola, “E-Governance and Corruption Impasse in Nigeria: A Developmental Expedition Synopsis.”

²¹ Aluko and Aderinola, “E-Governance and Corruption Impasse in Nigeria: A Developmental Expedition Synopsis.”

²² Dauda Ishaya Suntai and T S Targema, “FoI Act, Mass Media and the Civil Society in the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria,” in *A Paper Presented at the 18th Annual Conference of the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter, Ebitim*

safe and enabling environment for civil society and the press. This society is frequently constrained by repressive laws and state-sponsored intimidation, for instance, the #EndBadGovernance saga, a protest in 2024 staged by civil Nigerians against poor governance, corruption, rising cost of living, economic hardships, removal of fuel subsidy, and high inflation rates. A clash between the civil protest and security forces resulted in the use of tear gas, and life ammunition,²³ leading to at least 22 civilian casualties, including minors,²⁴ and the detention of over 300 protesters.²⁵ A youth-led #EndSARS protests in 2020 over police brutality, human rights abuses by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), and demand for police reform over ill governance reflects a similar picture, recording at least 50 civilian casualties.²⁶ The “Occupy Nigeria” Protests in 2012 were different from the former. Staged by civil society groups, labour unions, and social media activists against the removal of fuel subsidies, high cost of living, and government corruption for approximately two weeks left some casualties with dozens of the protesters detained.²⁷ The political resistance and continued ill governance despite numerous interventions leave a deepening concern as to what strategy can be more pragmatic in solving Nigeria’s misgovernance and corruption issues.

Scholars maintained that the dilemmas into which Nigeria is engulfed require a pragmatic approach of re-orientation through a commitment to the ideals rooted in civic education;²⁸ citizens should be educated about their rights, morals and the mechanisms available for holding their leaders accountable for misconduct. “It is hoped that if civic education can instil anti-corruption values in individuals, it will eventually translate into anti-corruption ethics in all sectors of the economy because every individual would have undertaken anti-corruption education.”²⁹ In other words, when citizens are morally upright and equipped with governance processes, they can mobilise and act as a powerful check on corrupt practices. In this context, civic education programs that promote awareness of anti-corruption laws, participatory budgeting, and citizen oversight should constitute part of the reform framework as they possess the attributes that can eventually foster a culture of accountability from the grassroots level. A notable shortfall in the recommendations from these studies, however, is saddling the responsibility of fostering civic education almost entirely in the hands of government – corruption masterminds. The implication is that corrupt leaders will either be adamant or manipulate the process favourably, thereby strengthening the propinquity for generational corruption.

If adequately enhanced, citizenship education, with a proven success record in countries like Botswana, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore, South Korea, and Uruguay (Table 1), promises a solution to Nigeria’s striking corruption and ill governance. Not dismissing the fact that no country is entirely immune and free from corruption and misgovernance, these countries have successfully harnessed the concept to instil values of integrity, transparency, and civic responsibility essential in promoting good governance, and in return, combatting corruption and accountability issues. One notable example is Finland, where corruption levels remain among the lowest in the world. Finland’s education system places a strong emphasis on citizenship education, which is integrated across various subjects, focusing on democratic participation, critical thinking, and ethical

Banigo Auditorium, University of Port Harcourt, 2016, 25–28; Leena Koni Hoffmann and Raj Navanit Patel, *Collective Action on Corruption in Nigeria: A Social Norms Approach to Connecting Society and Institutions* (Chatham House London, 2017).

²³ A. Kontagora, “Violence Erupts As Nigerians Protest Economic Hardship And Poor Governance,” *The Organization for World Peace*, August 13, 2024, <https://theowp.org/violence-erupts-as-nigerians-protest-economic-hardship-and-poor-governance/>; P. Salako,

“‘Nigerians Are Tired’: Protesters Fed up with Bad Governance, Soaring Costs,” *Aljazeera*, August 2, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/8/2/nigerians-are-tired-protesters-fed-up-with-bad-governance-soaring-costs>.

²⁴ Kontagora, “Violence Erupts As Nigerians Protest Economic Hardship And Poor Governance.”

²⁵ Salako, “‘Nigerians Are Tired’: Protesters Fed up with Bad Governance, Soaring Costs.”

²⁶ Victor Chidubem Iwuoha and Ernest Tooohi Aniche, “Protests and Blood on the Streets: Repressive State, Police Brutality And# EndSARS Protest in Nigeria,” *Security Journal* 35, no. 4 (2021): 1102; Kontagora, “Violence Erupts As Nigerians Protest Economic Hardship And Poor Governance.”

²⁷ Solomon Ibrahim Hari, “The Evolution of Social Protest in Nigeria: The Role of Social Media in the ‘# OccupyNigeria’ Protest,” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 3, no. 9 (2014): 33–39; George Emeka Agbo, J Kelechi Ugwuanyi, and Uchenna H Obieluem, “Occupy Nigeria and the Inception of Online Visual Mobilisation of Street Protest,” *Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 19–32.

²⁸ Horacio Larreguy and John Marshall, “The Effect of Education on Civic and Political Engagement in Nonconsolidated Democracies: Evidence from Nigeria,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 99, no. 3 (2017): 387–401; Abdulraheem Yusuf et al., “Teachers’ Perception of Civic Education as a Measure of Curbing Corruption in Nigeria,” *KIU Journal of Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2018): 61–68.

²⁹ Yusuf et al., “Teachers’ Perception of Civic Education as a Measure of Curbing Corruption in Nigeria.”144.

governance.³⁰ Finnish schools bolster an inclusive learning environment that motivates students to actively engage in social and political issues from an early age. Teaching children to critically assess governance and hold public officials accountable contributed to a culture of openness and trust in public institutions. This proactive educational strategy has been instrumental in maintaining the country's reputation for clean governance and low levels of corruption.

Similarly, New Zealand implemented citizenship education as part of its broader strategy to foster ethical leadership and democratic engagement, helping to minimize corruption. The country's curriculum includes social science as a key area where students learn about their roles and responsibilities as citizens, emphasizing the importance of honesty, integrity, and active participation in the democratic process.³¹ The inclusion of lessons on government transparency and the role of citizens in holding leaders accountable is central to this framework. Civic education in New Zealand is supported by extracurricular activities that promote community involvement and leadership among young people. Equipping students with the knowledge and skills to engage in governance nurtured a population that actively participates in the oversight of public institutions, thus limiting opportunities for corruption to prevail.

Denmark is another country where citizenship education contributes significantly to good governance. The country consistently ranks as one of the least corrupt nations in the world, largely due to its strong civic culture, which is reinforced through its education system. Danish schools embed citizenship education through subjects like social studies and history, where learners study democratic values, the rule of law, and the importance of accountability.³² The Danish citizenship education model emphasizes collaborative learning and peer interaction, fostering a sense of community and collective responsibility for good governance – an approach resourceful in creating a well-informed citizenry that is vigilant against corruption and dedicated to upholding transparency in public space. The combination of a robust civic education and active citizen participation resulted in Denmark's success in ensuring ethical governance and curbing corruption.

³⁰ Pasi Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons 3.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* (Teachers College Press, 2021).

³¹ Bronwyn E Wood and Andrea Mulligan, "Citizenship Education in New Zealand: Policy and Practice," *Policy Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (2016).

³² Lejf Moos, John Krejsler, and Per Fibæk Laursen, "5.1 National Report on Citizenship Education: Denmark 5.1. 1 Introduction: The Development of Citizenship in Danish Society," *Informal Learning of Active Citizenship at School: An International Comparative Study in Seven European Countries* 14 (2009): 75; Jens Bruun, "Civic and Citizenship Education in Denmark 1999–2019: Discourses of Progressive and Productive Education," in *Influences of the IEA Civic and Citizenship Education Studies: Practice, Policy, and Research across Countries and Regions* (Springer International Publishing Cham, 2021), 49–62.

Table 1: A Profile of Successful Citizenship Education Reforms

Country	Framework	Focus	Implications
Botswana (Africa)	National education curriculum reforms with emphases on civic duty and public service.	Learners acquire essential knowledge and skills to respect the rule of law and engage in governance processes. The reforms enhanced a strong sense of national pride and responsibility among learners, encouraging citizens to participate effectively in decision-making processes and monitor public institutions.	Botswana has an extended track record of clean governance and low levels of corruption - citizenship education plays a crucial role in reinforcing the values of integrity and accountability. ³³ Botswana was one of the poorest and least developed nations in Africa, with issues of weak governance at independence in 1966. In 2023, the country's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score based on Transparency International (2023), rose to 60, making it one of Africa's least corrupt countries. The incorporation of citizenship education early in its nation's education system, focusing on civic duty and governance plays a significant in the development.
Denmark (Europe)	Citizenship education curriculum Collaborative learning environments that foster active engagements on societal issues, governance, and public integrity.	The country's curriculum emphasizes understanding the political system, engaging in the democratic process, and upholding ethical standards in governance (Bruun, 2021).	Prior to modern civic reforms, specifically Citizenship Education implementation in the 19th Century, the country had relatively moderate corruption. However, it has since demonstrated progressive governance as one of the most transparent governments in the world, with strong citizenship education promoting democratic values. It ranks 87 on the CPI. This reflects consistently high and progressive governance scores, illustrating the success of long-term investments in citizenship education.
Estonia (Europe)	National curriculum for citizenship education Digital literacy and democratic engagement	Online accessibility of government services and accountability, transparency, the rule of law, and ethical governance.	Fostering a technologically savvy population and embedding democratic principles in the curriculum enable the country to minimize corruption and maintain heightened levels of public trust. ³⁴ After regaining independence in 1991, the country struggled with post-Soviet corruption and weak governance institutions. The government embarked on digital governance

³³ Kenneth Good, "Corruption and Mismanagement in Botswana: A Best-Case Example?," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no. 3 (1994): 499–521.

³⁴ Nikolai Kunitsõn, Leif Kalev, and Triin Ulla, "Estonia: Civics and Citizenship Education in Estonia: Policy Design, Normatives, and Practices," *JSSE-Journal of Social Science Education* 21, no. 4 (2022); BTI Transformation Index, "Estonia Country Report 2024," 2024, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/EST>.

			and citizenship education reforms in the late 1990s, and by 2023, it had amassed 74 scores on the CPI (Rank 14 out of 180).
Finland (Europe)	Citizenship education is positioned in the national educational system. Civic engagement, and active public participation in societal issues.	The country's education system is designed to foster critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Lessons cut across topics in democracy, human rights, and anti-corruption, contributing to promoting high levels of transparency and trust in government.	Citizenship education instils confidence and skills to understand the rule of law, engage with local governance, and develop a sense of collective responsibility towards the public good. This has contributed significantly to the country's consistently low levels of corruption. ³⁵ Prior to reforms in the Early 20th Century where citizenship education was projected, the country had issues with corruption and political instability. In 2023, the country ranked among the top countries in the world with a CPI of 87, reflecting its highly effective government and rule of law. The long-integrated citizenship education with a focus on democracy and civic responsibility has been crucial in the ascertainment of a healthy, corrupt-free economy.
Georgia (Europe)	Educational reforms - mandatory civic studies in the national education system Implementation of anti-corruption education programs in schools and universities.	Programmes span democratic values, accountability, integrity in public service, and active participation in the political process.	Georgia was affected by notorious ill governance and corruption. Through citizenship education, Georgia reformed governance, enhanced public accountability and curbed corruption, ³⁶ especially following the Rose Revolution of 2003. ³⁷ In 2023, the country's CPI score improved to 56 (Rank 41 out of 180), with mandatory civic education playing a crucial role in the revitalisation.
New Zealand (Oceania)	Integration of citizenship education into the country's	Subjects and public programmes in civic education include ethical leadership, understanding	General programmes/courses such as the social science curriculum enable students and the public to understand civic roles as citizens and the importance of holding public officials

³⁵ Sahlberg, *Finnish Lessons 3.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?*

³⁶ Mikheil Shavtvaladze, "Attempts to Build Democratic Nation-State in an Ethnically Diverse Country: The Case of Georgia" (Central European University, 2010); Joseph R Nichols, "The Economic Citizen: Civic Education and Its Discontents," in *Teaching for Democracy in an Age of Economic Disparity* (Routledge, 2016), 25–41.

³⁷ Stephen F Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2006): 33–48.

	broader educational framework. Community involvement and leadership through public civic education programs.	government processes, civic responsibility and the importance of integrity in public service.	accountable, thereby nurturing a population that is vigilant against corruption and committed to ethical governance. ³⁸ Although New Zealand’s governance was relatively stable, even before Citizenship Education reforms in the early 20th Century, however, issues of corruption existed, especially during its early colonial days. Civic education has been a part of the country’s education system for decades. New Zealand ranked with a CPI score of 87 in 2023.
Rwanda (Africa)	Citizenship education programs such as the <i>Itorero</i> Civic Education on the value of national identity, accountability and civic responsibility. Unity and reconciliation education post-genocide.	Rwanda’s citizenship education centres on fostering unity and reconciliation post-genocide, with a strong focus on promoting ethical leadership, anti-corruption and rebuilding trust in government institutions.	Rwanda’s emphasis on civic responsibility and ethical leadership through education has played a critical role in reducing corruption and improving governance in the country. ³⁹ Rwanda had weak governance, rampant corruption, and instability post-genocide (1994). Launching the <i>Itorero</i> civic education program in 2007, which focuses on reconciliation and good governance contributed to the country’s economic revitalization. Its CPI score in 2023 is 51, a dramatic shift from its post-genocide struggles.
Singapore (Asia)	The Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curriculum. Civic engagement through National Education focuses on governance challenges	The country’s approach to citizenship education is structured around the teaching of civic responsibility, national values, and the rule of law. The curriculum offers lessons on ethics, morals, integrity, and the importance of good	Singapore’s persistent emphasis on ethical citizenship has been resourceful in building a highly transparent and more just nation. ⁴⁰ After independence in 1965, Singapore grappled with high levels of corruption and weak governance. Citizenship education implemented as part of nation-building strategy shifted the paradigm. Singapore recorded a CPI score of 83 in 2023.

³⁸ Carol Mutch, “‘Creative and Innovative Citizenry’: Exploring the Past, Present and Future of Citizenship Education in New Zealand,” in *Citizenship Curriculum in Asia and the Pacific* (Springer, 2008), 197–211; Wood and Mulligan, “Citizenship Education in New Zealand: Policy and Practice.”

³⁹ P. Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Jia Ying Neoh, “Citizenship and Democratic Education in the Time of Rising Nationalism: Implications for Citizenship Education from the Cases of Australia and Singapore,” *Citizenship Teaching & Learning* 16, no. 3 (2021): 361–79.

	and the importance of clean leadership.	governance, a strong sense of duty towards the nation, which has fostered a culture of zero tolerance towards corruption.	
South Korea (Asia)	Incorporation of anti-corruption education into the national curriculum.	The country's citizenship education centres on democratic values, social justice, and the importance of ethical leadership. Learners are exposed to the legal and social consequences of corruption.	Programs such as moral education in South Korea's national curriculum teach learners to uphold ethical behaviour in both public and private life, significantly maintaining a strong culture of dignity and transparency which ensures a citizenry that actively monitors government actions.
Uruguay (South America)	Effective Civic Education curriculum. Democratic participation and social responsibility.	Uruguay's civic education curriculum and general awareness place a strong emphasis on learning about the importance of ethical behaviour, human rights, and transparency in governance.	Civic education and democratic participation enabled the country to build a strong democratic culture and minimize corruption. ⁴¹ Uruguay, notably, struggled with political instability and moderate corruption levels before Citizenship Education Reform Pre-2000s, it however, ascertained a CPI score of 74, indicating strong control over corruption.

Source: Authors' illustration based on literature synthesis and data from Transparency International CPI (2023).

⁴¹ B. Simon, "Why Uruguay Finished First in Our Anti-Corruption Ranking," Anti-corruption Watch, July 8, 2020, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/why-uruguay-finished-first-in-our-anti-corruption-ranking/>; BTI Transformation Index, "Uruguay Country Report 2024," 2024, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/URY>.

Globally, countries with minimal corruption have successfully integrated citizenship education as a key intervention to instil values of transparency, accountability, and civic responsibility. Consequently, this intervention provides the foundation for Nigeria and a host of other African countries, however, if effectively integrated with Afrocentric leadership perspectives and expanded to include the younger generation in the framework. The emphasis on the younger generation, especially children is premised on three crucial issues. Corruption among adults in Nigeria especially in the civil service sectors has reached a critical level, making it unlikely that targeted interventions directed mainly at these cohorts will produce the desired and timely outcomes.

Citizenship education at the early childhood development (ECD) level has the potential to combat the systemic nature of corruption in the country. Increasingly, scholars have demonstrated that the earlier children are exposed to civic values, the more deeply ingrained these values become,⁴² making them more likely to persist into adulthood. This highlights the significance of citizenship education at the ECD stage, where the brain's adaptability can be leveraged to instil long-lasting values of integrity, transparency, and accountability. Targeted efforts in early citizenship education are, therefore, an investment in the ethical leadership and governance of future generations in Nigeria and Africa. In addition, corruption in the country is not simply the result of personal ethical failings but is frequently embedded within the political and economic fabrics that govern public life.⁴³ Therefore, citizenship education can address this issue by equipping future citizens with the orientation, knowledge and skills to critically engage with these systems. Cognitive psychology suggests that when children are taught to think critically and behave ethically about governance structures from a young age, they are better prepared to challenge corrupt practices and demand accountability.⁴⁴ Fostering a generation of citizens who are critical of the status quo and committed to ethical governance, can play a transformative role in dismantling systemic corruption and ill governance.

Afrocentric Citizen Education

The growing complexity of modern society, alongside increased cultural diversity and the apparent erosion of shared values, combined with the collapse of traditional support systems calls for a fundamental concept - civic and citizenship education. The phrase "citizenship education" defines a process of educating individuals about civil rights, responsibilities, and roles as citizens within a society.⁴⁵ The concept emphasizes knowledge building, skill orientation, and values necessary for individuals to participate effectively in civic life. Rooted in the idea that a well-functioning governing system relies on the active participation of its citizens, who are aware of their civic duties and are equipped to engage in public discourse and decision-making, citizen education builds responsible and well-informed active citizens who can contribute to the democratic process and the betterment of their communities.

Departing from this definition, Afrocentric citizenship education would be that which illustrates a pedagogical approach and orientation that centres the experiences, histories, and cultures of people of African descent. Anchored on its values, this educational orientation is formidably merrowed to strengthen law and order while upholding social justice for all, especially in governance. The Afrocentric governance pre-colonial era was driven by Ubuntu – a concept emphasizing communal values, dignity, interconnectedness, and collective responsibility, fostering ethical leadership, peaceful coexistence and social cohesion to address local challenges and promote holistic development.⁴⁶ It embodied a sense of dignity rooted in moral practice and thought, which laid the groundwork for social justice as a daily

⁴² Iffat Naomee, "Role of Families on Early Childhood Development and Education: Dhaka City Perspective," *The International Journal of Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2013): 158–69; Rahmat Nurul Walidaini and Marzuki Marzuki, "Analysis of the Role of Parents and the Community in Value Education and Citizenship Education," *ScienceRise: Pedagogical Education*, no. 3 (42) (2021): 22–26.

⁴³ Kempe Ronald Hope, "Corruption in Nigeria," in *Corruption and Governance in Africa* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 125–62, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50191-8_4; Olatunde Julius Otusanya and Sarah G Lauwo, "Corruption and Socio-Political Economic Structures: A Case of Nigeria," *Journal of Financial Crime* 26, no. 1 (2019): 330–71.

⁴⁴ Albert Bandura, "Social Foundations of Thought and Action," *Englewood Cliffs, NJ* 1986, no. 23–28 (1986): 2.

⁴⁵ James Arthur and Daniel Wright, "What Is Citizenship Education?," in *Teaching Citizenship in the Secondary School* (Routledge, 2013), 4–19.

⁴⁶ Raphael Mbendera, "Ubuntu Ethical Values and Africa's Quest for a Better Home," *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research* 4, no. 8 (2020): 177–87; Hellen Taabu, "Ubuntu: Social Justice Education, Governance, and Women Rights in Pre-Colonial Africa," in *Education, Colonial Sickness: A Decolonial African Indigenous Project* (Springer, 2024), 43–57.

reality.⁴⁷ Citizen education in Africa void of these crucial ingredients may lack the grounds to lay a solid foundation to positively reshape the current African corrupt government system.

The significance of Africanised citizenship education in the context of this study lies in its potential to strengthen democratic societies in line with the continent's cultural orientation - oneness, values, morals, and dignity. The principle of oneness, deeply ingrained in the communal nature of African societies, encourages collective responsibility, where the welfare of the community is prioritized over individual gain.⁴⁸ This sense of shared responsibility cultivates a culture of transparency and mutual accountability, key pillars in democratic governance. African values and morals, such as integrity, respect, and honesty, reinforce ethical leadership and discourage corrupt practices. Furthermore, the emphasis on dignity ensures that every individual is treated with fairness and justice,⁴⁹ which aligns with the democratic principles of equality and the rule of law. In an increasingly globalized world, it also encourages individuals to think beyond national borders and consider their roles as global citizens. By advocating these cultural values, African societies can create a moral framework that upholds good governance, discourages corrupt practices, and strengthens civic accountability.

Application of Citizenship Education

As earlier pointed out, efforts to institutionalize Citizenship Education are not only limited to formal educational approaches such as tertiary institutions, and secondary and elementary schools. Effective citizenship education requires a holistic approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical experiences and observation. This takes various forms, including formal education, informal platforms like community programs and media, as well as family influence (Figure 1). These three facets have their respective capacities and boundaries, however, closely related to each other in delivering effective citizenship education to the younger generation, making it essential to have awareness of actors in each spectrum to share insights on how they can maximize their role in its optimization. For instance, how teachers in the formal education terrain, which are crucial stakeholders for implementing value education, foster connections with parents, media outlets and society to institutionalise effective citizenship education.

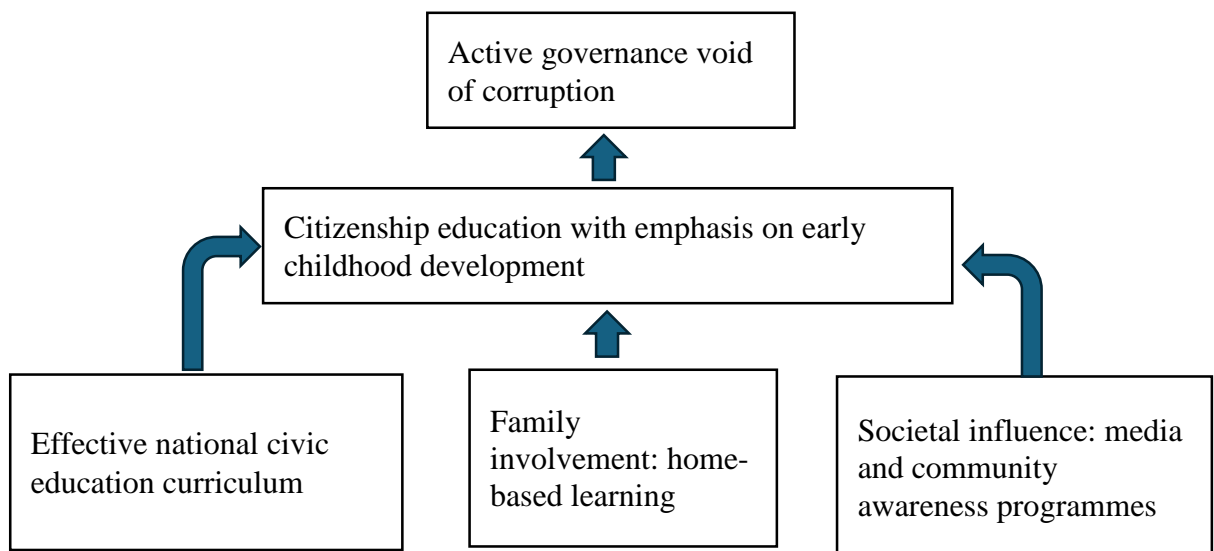


Figure 1: A Framework for an effective citizenship education
(Source: Authors' illustration based on literature synthesis).

In formal setups like schools, citizenship education is frequently integrated into the curriculum where a wide range of topics such as ethical leadership, community engagement, public participation,

⁴⁷ Taabu, "Ubuntu: Social Justice Education, Governance, and Women Rights in Pre-Colonial Africa."

⁴⁸ Humphrey A Regis, "Cheikh Anta Diop's Southern Cradle of Culture: The Work of Jimmy 'African Oneness' Cliff as a Case Study," *Caribbean Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2022): 234–50.

⁴⁹ Ujomu Philip Ogo, "Human Dignity and Social Order as Key Values for an Endogenous African Development," *Agathos* 10, no. 2 (2019): 267–81.

accountability, digital governance, and anti-corruption, among others can be delivered compulsorily to build a formidable young generation void of moral decadents.⁵⁰ The informed knowledge equips learners with skills, and values necessary to become araldite, responsible, and active citizens in a democratic society. In other words, teachers play a critical role in nurturing these cognitive skills and ethical sensibilities within the classroom. By creating learning environments that motivate open dialogue, ethical discourse, and collective decision-making, teachers contribute to the development of civic consciousness. When students are motivated to question authority, participate in class governance, and engage in debates about fairness and justice, the potential to internalize the values of democracy and accountability increases. In other words, teachers, are not only educators but also civic mentors who guide learners through the complexities of social and political life, assisting them develop the tools required to navigate these systems ethically and responsibly in adulthood.

Similarly, family influence is crucial as it complements formal education. The involvement of parents or guidance in civic education bridges the gap between school-based learning and real-world application. When parents engage children in conversations regarding current events, involve them in family decision-making, or encourage participation in community activities, for instance, they provide practical examples of civic engagement that children can emulate. This home-based reinforcement of citizenship orientation is crucial for ensuring that the values of integrity, accountability, and fairness are not confined to classroom learning but are lived experiences that shape their worldview. In addition to this point, parents have the moral obligation to grow their children responsibly and ethically such that they become well-rounded individuals. The process through which parents or guidance instil the value of goodness at every growth level of their children, including ethical behaviour, is a parenting process that impacts meaningfully on the child's development.⁵¹ Ethical behaviour, in the context of the family space, is a part that is naturally integrated as an aspect of the broader parenting framework to shape their children's character and teach them positive values, such as accountability, responsibility, politeness, honesty, and transparency, among other citizenship education attributes.

Societal programs disseminated through media platforms, religious outlets and other forms of community engagements are also instrumental in fostering quality citizenship education. Through these platforms awareness can be strengthened, further initiating discourses on ethical values and civic responsibilities. While community engagements provide a space for dialogue and collective action, encouraging active participation in democratic processes, media platforms can share information and educate the public on governance and anti-corruption measures. Likewise, religious outlets are resourceful in instilling moral values and ethical behaviour.⁵² For instance, leaders of various religions laid heightened emphasis and reinforced the importance of integrity and accountability to their followers. These programs combined can challenge and overthrow the dominance of self-centred perspectives, promoting a more balanced and inclusive view of history and knowledge, building a strong cultural identity, oneness, and community responsibility which fosters a sense of pride, values and agency among individuals. Through this, a society can build morally upright individuals who can perform and understand their civic responsibility not only to act in that manner but teach and mentor the young generation in a similar direction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Countries with effective citizenship education reforms have overthrown ill-governance, accountability-related challenges and institutional corruption. The educational orientation was implemented through diverse approaches merrowed to their socio-political contexts. A common thread in these nations' citizenship education reforms and strategies is the promotion of civic responsibility, ethical leadership, transparency, and active citizen participation in governance. Currently, Nigeria and several other African countries grapple with misgovernance and its associated challenges such as pervasive corruption, persistently threatening growth and stability despite numerous intervention efforts. A critical analysis of

⁵⁰ Bethel Ghebru and Mark Lloyd, "From Civic to Citizenship Education: Toward a Stronger Citizenship Orientation in the Ethiopian CEE Curriculum," *International Journal of Educational Development* 72 (2020): 102143; Emiliana Mangone and Lucia Picarella, "The Role of Education in Promoting Citizenship: A Comparison between Europe and Latin America," *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education* 13, no. Italian Journal of Sociology of Education 13/3 (2021): 45–65.

⁵¹ Walidaini and Marzuki, "Analysis of the Role of Parents and the Community in Value Education and Citizenship Education."

⁵² Khaled Ehsan, "Exploring Power Dynamics of Religious Leaders," *And Dialogue*, 2021, 101.

contemporary discourse has revealed that citizen education reforms focused on Afrocentric governance models offer solutions, similar to those implemented in other nations worldwide. The attainment involves curriculum reforms, family involvement, and societal influence. The push for Africanised citizenship education is rooted in the desire to reinstate governance models aligned with Afrocentric leadership principles from the pre-colonial era, which emphasize ethical leadership, oneness, communal values, dignity, and collective responsibility. Curriculum reforms will provide a learning environment for compulsory knowledge acquisition. On the other hand, family involvement will enable the younger generation to bridge the gap between school-based learning and real-world application, while societal platforms are essential to strengthening awareness of civic responsibilities and building morally upright individuals African societies need to combat misgovernance. Ultimately, triangulating the key findings of this study with grassroots realities will eventually set a foundation for a broader Africanized citizenship framework. Thus, an empirical study is recommended.

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