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12

(Re)examining the Politics of Education in Crisis and Conflict-affected Contexts

Mieke Lopes Cardozo and Ritesh Shah

Chapter Outline

Introduction	228
Rising Concern for the Impact of Crises and Conflict on Education	229
Increasing International Interventions in Situations of Conflict: Impacts on Education	234
From the 'Two Faces' to the 'Many Faces' of Education's Relationship to Conflict	236
Researching Education for Peace and Reconciliation through a Social Justice Lens	238
Moving the Debate Forward: Education and Peacebuilding beyond Problem-solving	244
Questions for Discussion	247
Further Readings	248
Useful Websites	248

This chapter reflects the equal input and scholarly contribution of each of the two co-authors irrespective of the order in which the names appear.

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Introduction

From the age of eleven, Malala Yousafazi gained international fame for her active role in detailing her life under Taliban rule and for promoting the rights of children, particularly girls, who were being denied their right to education by ongoing conflict in Swat Valley, Pakistan. On 9 October 2012, Taliban militants shot Malala in the forehead while she rode a bus back from school, in a brazen attempt to silence her concerns. Malala survived the attack, and ten months later, she stood before a crowd at the United Nations in New York on her sixteenth birthday and proclaimed:

> I speak not for myself, but so those without a voice can be heard. Those who have fought for their rights. Their right to live in peace. Their right to be treated with dignity. Their right to equality of opportunity. Their right to be educated.[1]

Applauding Malala's vision and resilience, former British prime minister Gordon Brown, the UN's Special Envoy for Global Education, reflected that 'her dream that nothing, no political indifference, no government inaction, no intimidation, no threats, no assassin's bullets should ever deny the right of every single child … to be able to go to school'.[2]

Reality, however, paints a different picture. Approximately 75 million children each year have their schooling interrupted by a range of shocks and stressors – such as natural hazard impacts, outbreaks of disease or famine, climate change, gender – or school-based violence, violent conflict and economic shocks (UNESCO-IIEP 2011, Global Campaign for Education 2016). Worrying estimates from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2018) indicate that within contexts of conflict and crises, nearly 50 per cent of students may be out of school. The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in their *Gender Guidance Note* adds to this picture that girls very often participate less than boys in education in conflict-affected settings, and they also tend to suffer disproportionally during disasters (INEE 2019b).

Research today is exploring the dynamic relationship between education, crisis and conflict, to understand how education is both affected by and effects a range of shocks and stressors, including insecurity, violence and natural disasters. In this chapter, we explore current dilemmas and complexities within the field of education in situations of crises and conflict, and new approaches to critically assessing how and if education can work towards transforming

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the underlying conditions of adversity and contribute to a more equitable and socially just society. Firstly, we sketch the context of rising concerns and international responses to the complex relation between education in conflict or crisis situations, highlighting emerging debates on resilience of education in emergencies. Secondly, we continue by outlining the merging of development, diplomacy and defence in international interventionism and how this impacts on education systems and actors in multiple ways. This leads us to discuss the multiple faces of education in conflict and consequently offer a social justice inspired framework for analysing education sector governance and praxis in conflict and crisis called 'the 4Rs'. We conclude by discussing how the debate on education and peacebuilding can move forward, moving beyond a problem-solving approach.

Rising Concern for the Impact of Crises and Conflict on Education

In recent times, it has become clear that climate change and weather variability, population growth, migration and displacement, local and global price shocks, illness and disease, political instability, violence and armed conflict are combining in complex and uncertain ways, threatening the lives and livelihoods of people and eroding hard-won development gains, including education (Shah 2019). The most recent global development compacts – namely the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Action and the Incheon Declaration – all recognize these mounting threats, and argue for a need to protect education from a mounting number of risk factors through increased attention and investment in conflict and disaster-prone regions of the world.

Alongside the immediate impact on the communities and nations where conflict and crisis are occurring are the flow-on effects to hosting communities and nations for displaced peoples. The numbers of peoples displaced by conflict and natural disasters are currently at an all-time high, with over 70 million refugees and internationally displaced peoples globally (UNHCR 2018, 2). Many end up 'flee[ing] to neighbouring developing countries, whose education systems are already weak and face limited capacity to support new populations' (UNESCO 2013, 2). The clearest example of this in recent times are Syrian refugees who fled the civil war in

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the country throughout the 2010s. The majority reside in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, where public services, including education, were already struggling to function effectively before the Syrian refugee crisis. While all three of these countries have extended the right to education to the Syrian refugee population, there remain significant issues about the quality and reach of the provision which is provided to both Syrian refugees and other vulnerable populations in these countries. The result is that significant numbers of learners may enter into schooling but drop out in these education systems because their needs are not adequately considered in the education that is provided (Carlier 2018). Beyond access, then, are also questions about a system's capacity to provide quality, relevant education for all in a context of conflict and crisis. Failure to consider this, as we later explore, may in the long run undermine education's proven potential to build human and social capital, prepare communities for future risks and support stronger state–society relations.

Concerns about threats facing the education sector in times of conflict and crisis are long-standing. When the international community assembled in Dakar in 2000 to review global progress against the 1990 Education for All targets, it was agreed that greater focus and attention needed to be given by the international community to conflict affected contexts (CACs). While mention was made of this in the main text of the Dakar Framework for Action, there was no clear sense of what additional commitment should or would be needed to address the challenge of educational provision in CACs, and none of the six EFA goals made explicit the issue of conflict in the targets that were set (Smith and Vaux 2003). Ten years later, the 2011 UNESCO

	Estimated # of OOSC in emergency countries (In millions)	Total # of OOSC in the World (in millions)	Estimated share of' OOSC in Emergency Countries
Preprimary (one year before primary only)	15.3	39.7	39%
Primary	32.9	63.3	52%
Lower Secondary	23.7	61.1	39%
Upper Secondary	32.3	138.5	23%
Total	104.2	302.7	34%

Figure 12.1 *Out-of-school children (OOSC) and youth from conflict- and disaster-affected settings* (see https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-future-stolen/), Table 3.

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Global Monitoring Report (GMR) reiterated that with less than five years left to 2015, it was conflict-affected states that remained most off-track to achieving most of the Education for All goals set out in 2000, with nearly 50 per cent of the out of school population located in CACs (UNESCO 2011). As illustrated in Figure 12.1, more recent analysis by UNICEF indicates the situation has not changed, and children living in CACs continue to be those most likely to have their right to a quality education denied.

Several explanations are behind this situation. One is that inadequate attention has been given to thinking about educational system resilience in the contexts of crises and conflict which are increasingly recurrent. Driven instead by piecemeal solutions and responses to immediate threats, there has been an unwillingness, until recently, to consider the need for short-term humanitarian action to link up more coherently with long-term developmental and systems-focused responses prior to and in the midst of a crisis (Nicolai et al. 2019). When a resilience focus to response has been employed in CACs, it often falls short of ensuring structural and systemic-change (see Box 12.1). The result is that the medium- and long-term capacities of education systems to prepare for and protect against known and potential threats are lacking, and when a crisis hits, it is unable to maintain equitable access to quality education for all in the midst of adversity. This can lead to prolonged education disruption, permanent dropout of learners from schooling, weakened learning outcomes and long-term psychosocial concerns for learners (Nicolai and Hine 2015, Ireland 2016). In the long run this leads to a vicious cycle where reduced or limited access to schooling in the midst of a crisis can have profound impacts on countries and regions around the world seeking to recover and transform afterwards, particularly when entire generations of children may have never gone to school or had their schooling interrupted prematurely. This undermines opportunities for these future generations to be productive, active members of society and for the social contract between citizens and the state to be reinforced and strengthened (Smith and Ellison 2015).

Alongside this, relatively low levels of humanitarian funding continue to be allocated for education in emergency situations, despite the fact that conflicts today are more protracted and affect greater portions of the civilian population than in decades prior. According to UNESCO, 'while humanitarian aid to education reached a historic high in 2016, increasing by 55% from 2015 to 2016, it still receives only 2.7% of total aid available, amounting to 48% of the amount requested.'[3] This contrasts with an uncomfortable reality where humanitarian crises are on the rise in various parts of the world.

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Funding for education in crisis contexts is suffering because education is not seen as a priority for humanitarian aid, and because development donors do not always see the clear link between development and crisis contexts. Despite the tripling of humanitarian financial assistance in recent years, the share of the total that goes to education has barely risen, standing at a mere 2.3 percent in 2018.

(INEE 2019a, 4)

Concepts 4
The Rise of Resilience as a Narrative for Action in CACs

In recognition of the increasingly complex and interconnected relationship between conflicts and disaster, as well as the need to bridge the short-term action typical of humanitarian response, with the longer-term view of developmental programming, resilience strengthening efforts have become much more common in the Education in Emergencies (EiE) community. A review of key EiE texts from 1990 to the present suggests that the term's use in recent years has proliferated, and regularly features centre-stage in key EiE policy texts and framing documents (Shah et al. 2019). Oftentimes, however, this concept has been used uncritically, and with the unintended impact of limiting possibilities for seeking transformative action which addresses the root causes of adversity.

Specifically, the concept's translation into EiE interventions has thus far focussed primarily on strengthening individual or community level resilience, and often for the purposes of coping with adversity. This is because much of the evidence standing behind this work is founded in human psychology or anthropology, which has sought to identify a range of individual and environmental assets which learners draw on in times of adversity to maintain positive learning outcomes. Such research identifies that traits such as having hope, purpose, social competence, problem-solving skills, emotional regulation and a sense of place and future were all critical to being resilient as an individual. This has then led to the rapid expansion of efforts to equip learners with these social emotional competencies through targeted programmes of support with the belief that in times of adversity, resilience becomes a resource to draw on (Shah

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et al. 2019). O'Malley (2010b, 489) critically observes that 'elements formerly identified as human "attributes", such as courage, will-power, fortitude and character, have been reconfigured as "coping strategies" or "skills" that can be learned by anyone'. This view has also had the (un)intentional impact of making young people, schools or communities accountable for their own circumstances in times of adversity. MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) link such narratives to the project of 'responsibilisation', where the power of the state or other external actors is replaced by offering the resources, initiative and capacities of individuals and communities to help themselves. It also tends to ignore underlying power structures which might purposely be acting to worsen the vulnerability of some to conditions of risk (Shah 2015).

In response, the past two decades have seen an increasing level of international advocacy and attention given to the urgency of supporting education in conflict-affected settings. For example, advocacy networks such as the INEE have arisen and produced guidelines for provision of education in situations of conflict and disaster; international NGOs such as Save the Children have made children affected by conflict a key concern of their action and advocacy work, and funding bodies, such as The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), have targeted support to conflict-affected states under the hope that education can 'promote peace-building and conflict mitigation, and foster economic growth' in such contexts. These campaigns also continue to highlight concerns over funding, as mentioned above, and to mobilize additional funding for education in times of conflict and crisis. For example, the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development urged governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, foundations and the private sector to mobilize funding for education in emergencies. This was followed by the launch of the Education Cannot Wait Fund during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, which aims to increase funding and provide this in more flexible ways, to support coordination between various stakeholders, support national ownership over funding and address both immediate and longer-term needs.[4] While on the one hand, this increasing international interventionism and action in contexts of crisis and conflict is long overdue, it also comes with new challenges.

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Increasing International Interventions in Situations of Conflict: Impacts on Education

The last twenty years have seen a marked rise in Western interventionism in internal conflicts and reconstruction efforts – for example Kosovo (1999–2008), Timor-Leste (1999–2012), Solomon Islands (2003–13), Afghanistan (2002–present), and Iraq (2003–11), Syria (2013–present), Yemen (2015–present) – under the guise of nation and state-building by the United Nations or other regional stabilization initiatives (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2012). Driven by the desire to prevent a state failing or lapsing towards failure and threatening regional and international security, interventions have increasingly focused on a strategy of winning the hearts and minds of citizens (Novelli 2010). The restoration and reform of education service delivery is seen to be a key component of this strategy. It is based on the assumption that widespread, highly visible education policy changes can win public support for a new political order, but conversely poor educational provision is perceived as a symbol of state incompetence (Alubisia 2005).

The distribution of aid among severely conflict-affected countries reflects the impact of the melding of diplomatic, defence and development efforts in conflict-affected contexts. Figure 12.2 illustrates how aid to education has been increasingly targeted to a small group of conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. Other conflict-affected countries, such as Cote D'Ivoire, Chad or the Democratic Republic of Congo, remain much more poorly resourced, despite the fact that financing gaps within the education sector are equally as large in these countries (UNESCO 2011, 174). Such data suggest that educational aid is unevenly distributed towards those where international diplomatic and defence efforts are most pronounced.

This evolution has also led to international actors supplementing or substituting the capacity of the state to deliver educational services during reconstruction. Such was the case in Timor-Leste, where for several years following the nation's referendum for independence from Indonesia in 1999, the UN caretaker government and other international actors involved in peacekeeping operations rebuilt schools, recruited new teachers and procured new instructional materials. Action in those initial years was driven by the pragmatic concern of getting children into school,

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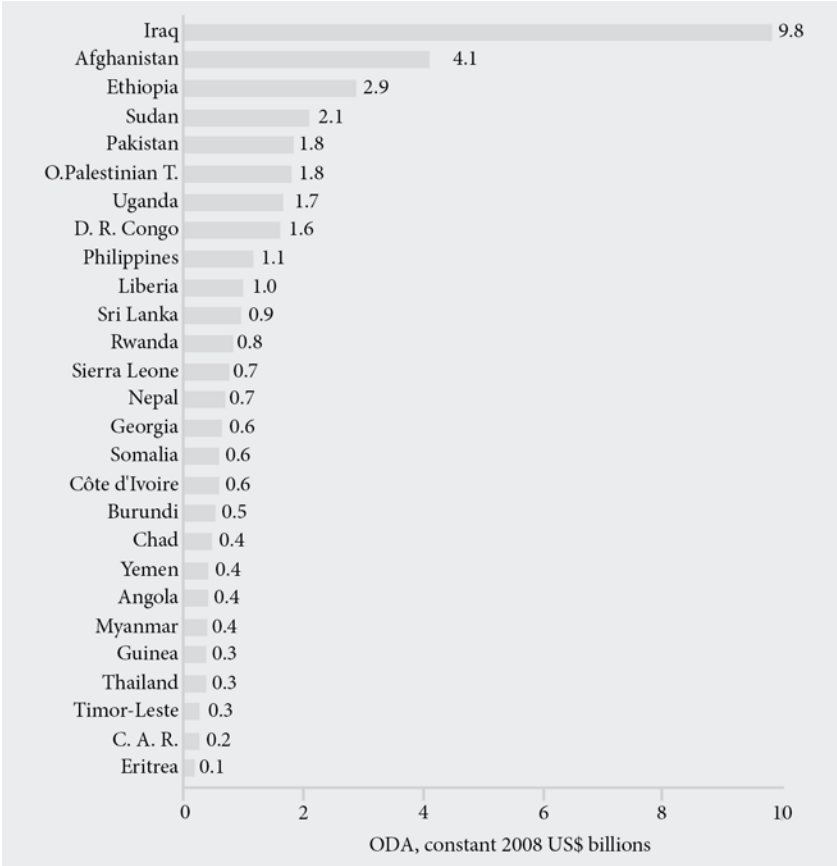

Figure 12.2 *Education aid to conflict affected and fragile states* (see UNESCO GMR 2011, 173, Figure 3.14: Some conflict-affected countries receive far more aid than others, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf).

rather than ensuring that the education that was provided was of quality or relevant to the lives of children. Actions included the mass recruitment of individuals to fill the void left by the mass exodus of teachers from other parts of Indonesia who fled after the 1999 referendum, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of school buildings, and the provision of learning resources and a new curriculum plan for primary schooling. The results were astonishing with regard to access, as children across the country flooded into schools. Today, however, the nation still deals with a legacy of this period of strong external involvement. In particular, the majority of teachers remain un/underqualified for the positions they have assumed, and children learn from internationally procured curricula and textbooks

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which have little local relevance (Shah 2011, 2012). The result is that many children in Timor-Leste attend school, but often learn very little. Post-conflict educational reconstruction must be driven by a long-term view where teacher training, curriculum development and policy development are driven through local processes and systems, rather than being driven, provisioned and delivered by external actors (Tawil and Harley 2004, INEE 2011).

While renewed commitment of Western governments to supporting the education sector as part of reconstruction is on the one hand positively welcomed, the blurring of lines between defence, diplomatic and development efforts by external actors is also a matter of growing concern. For example, educational provision (particularly for girls) became a key discursive justification for the military intervention in Afghanistan, and educational progress was a means of demonstrating the alleged success of the occupation. Building schools and strengthening education helped to legitimate continued outside influence in the internal affairs of the Afghani state (Novelli 2011, Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2012). These new tactics have put humanitarian and reconstruction projects in the country, and elsewhere, under increasing scrutiny, as aid organizations are seen to be 'collaborating' with occupying forces and/or warring factions. Specifically, schools and educational projects receiving external assistance have come under increasing attack in recent years, jeopardizing both the safety of aid workers and those learning and working inside these activities (Novelli 2010, 2011, 2013b, Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2012).

From the 'Two Faces' to the 'Many Faces' of Education's Relationship to Conflict

> We had to leave behind all of our possessions. The only thing we could bring with us is what we have in our heads, what we have been taught – our education. Education is the only thing that cannot be taken from us.
>
> (Women's Refugee Commission, in Perlman Robinson 2011, 1)

This statement of a Sudanese refugee woman who fled from Darfur to Chad in 2004 conveys the importance of education to those affected by emergencies.

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It illustrates how communities often place high value on education in conflict-affected settings and perceive it as one of the few protective measures in situations of insecurity or instability (Smith and Vaux 2003, Smith 2005, Winthrop and Kirk 2008, Novelli and Smith 2011, UNESCO 2011b, Winthrop 2011, Save the Children 2013). Great importance has been, and continues to be, given to the restoration of education provision due to its visible and important role in restoring/reconstructing state legitimacy and the important function as a peace dividend that education can play (Rose and Greeley 2006). Education has been noted to have an important role in reconciliation or nation-building goals, through the messages and shared values it can promote – in essence promoting a form of social cohesion that can be often lost during conflict (Fukayama 2001, Tawil and Harley 2004). In post-conflict periods, education can provide for psychosocial recovery, normalcy, hope and the inculcation of values and skills for building and maintaining a peaceful future (Sommers 2002, 18). For example, children in crisis are particularly vulnerable to physical and emotional harm, and need new and different knowledge, skills and learning experiences to cope with these issues. Matters such as land mine education, health education (water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) or HIV/AIDS education) and disaster preparedness (earthquake safety, for example) are critically relevant in such moments (Kirk 2006, 2).

Beginning with Bush and Sartarelli's (2000) landmark report, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, research started to suggest that restoring educational provision after conflict is insufficient if the goal is to promote what Johan Galtung (1975, in Smith et al. 2011, 12–13) calls positive peace – specifically, 'the absence of structural violence, the presence of social justice and the conditions to eliminate the causes of violence'. This goal identifies that peace is not just about the absence of violence but rather an ongoing process of active social repair and reform. What Bush and Saltarelli noted was that while education has the *potential* to serve such a role in post-conflict societies (what they call the *positive face* of education), it can equally do more harm than good. Specifically, this report suggested that the content, organization, governance and student experience of schooling can all be contributors to further conflict, if considerations are not given to how these domains might have fuelled conflict in the first place. In the long run ignoring these issues can lead at an individual and community level to increasing rates of non-participation in schooling through absenteeism and drop-out, and at a societal level to public dissatisfaction with education and the state as the main duty-bearer for providing this service.

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What is increasingly noted in the literature is that particular educational aspects (such as equity, relevance, management considerations) and conflict dimensions (such as security, economic factors, political representation) operate in contingent and specific ways. Education, in itself, is rarely the panacea for conflict transformation that it is envisaged to be, and paradoxically, particular dimensions of the education system or its location within the post-conflict political economy in which it finds itself may render it to do more harm than good. Following on this, and drawing on the work of Salmi (2000 in Seitz 2004), we contend that education is related to matters of conflict and violence in two ways: (1) direct violence/conflict where schools become ideological battlegrounds for control in conflict-affected states and instances where physical harm is being done (e.g. attacks on teachers, physical punishment of students), or alternatively serve a protective function against such conditions; or (2) indirect violence, through which social injustices and inequalities are perpetuated and legitimized in discriminatory or (culturally, linguistically, politically, etc.) biased schooling practices, provoking social exclusion and the seeds of further conflict, or alternatively actively seek to redress such conditions through more inclusive schooling practices.

Researching Education for Peace and Reconciliation through a Social Justice Lens

In order to bridge the spectrum on causes of conflict and violence, on the one hand, and opportunities for peacebuilding and reconciliation, on the other hand, we now introduce a social justice-inspired framework for analysing education sector responses and action in CACs. The framework was developed with colleagues in the context of the Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding, a collaboration with UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme. This '4Rs framework' (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith 2017) adapts Nancy Fraser's (1995, 2005) three-dimensional conceptualization of social justice (redistribution, recognition, representation) and combines this with insights on reconciliation. In the three subsequent sections, we link this to the first three Rs that together

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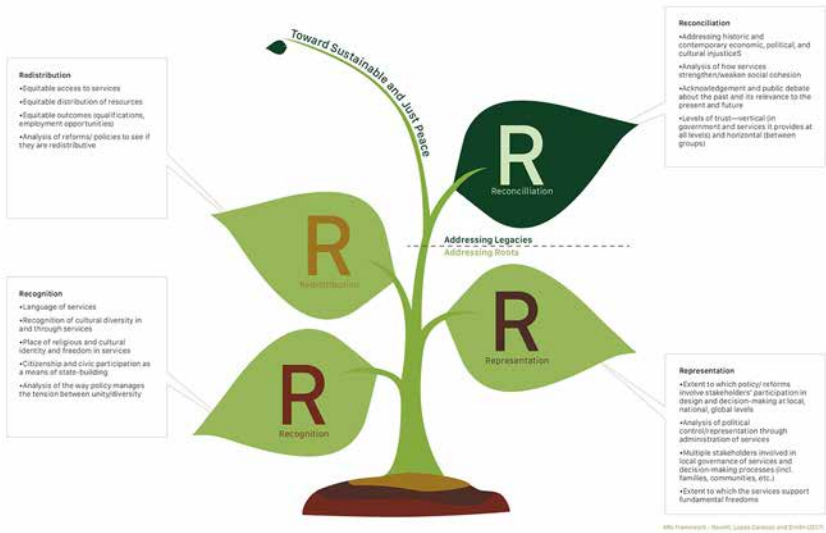

Figure 12.3 The 4Rs Framework. Source: Adapted from Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith, 2017, redesigned by Adrian Serezo for the Early Childhood Peace Consortium Report (2018)

help to understand the underlying causes and drivers of inequalities and conflict: (1) redistribution of safe and equitable educational access and opportunity; (2) socio-cultural recognition and educational relevance; and (3) transparency, participation and representation. We identify how these domains might interface with the legacies of conflict, and both the challenges and potential for reconciliation. We would like to stress that while we separate these categories out for analytical purposes, they are in reality closely interlinked. The key underpinnings of the 4Rs framework are visualized in Figure 12.3, which is an updated version of the figure published in 2017 (Novelli et al.), redesigned by Adrian Serezo for the Early Childhood Peace Consortium Report (2018). The 'original' 3Rs as developed by Fraser are closely connected to the roots, while the 4th R of reconciliation is connected to addressing the legacies of conflict, and growing towards sustainable and just peace. Importantly, however, each context requires a specific and tailored approach to understanding and addressing the various dimension of injustices included in this framework, requiring adaptations to these Rs as needs be.

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Redistribution of Safe and Equitable Access and Opportunities

In several contexts, such as Rwanda, Liberia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, research has shown that a lack of equitable access[5] to schooling amongst the civilian population served as a grievance amongst fighting parties and fuelled further conflict (Dupuy 2008). In the case of Rwanda, schooling opportunities during the colonial period disadvantaged the Hutu majority, and favoured the Tutsi minority, who were deemed to be intellectually and culturally superior. Over time, it led to the Tutsis assuming a near monopoly on political, administrative, cultural and economic control of colonial society. After independence, the tide turned against the Tutsis, and strict quotas were put in place by the Hutu-majority to limit access of Tutsis to schooling. The result is that since independence, 'schools have had little influence in promoting national unity' (Weinstein, Freedman and Hughson 2007, 55). Rather, blatantly discriminatory practices, such as enforced racial quotas, led to growing alienation of the Tutsi minority, and youth in particular, who fled the country throughout the 1980s and banded together to form the Rwandan Patriotic Front army who would later become embroiled in the country's bloody civil war in the early 1990s. The Rwandan example is a prime case of the fact that 'those who control political and economic power tend to allocate priority of educational opportunities first and foremost to their own children and then to those who are next in line in maintaining the power holder's position of interest' (Degu 2005, 138).

It is possible, however, to consider how opportunity and access can more equitably be re-allocated in the post-conflict moment. Doing so requires careful consideration of the barriers that have traditionally disadvantaged particular groups from attending school. Actions towards the positive face of education might include a fairly distributed access to schooling facilities, with equal resources and opportunities for all groups of learners. When speaking about acute emergency situations, or even longer sustained situations in refugee camps, the instalment of school tents or similar ad hoc constructions can be crucial to offer a daily structure and safe space for children. But also in more protracted situations of conflict, or during a post-conflict phase, it is crucial to prioritize safe and secure access (including protecting children and teachers from attack, school premises free of gender-based violence and discrimination, and teaching pedagogies which encourage children's expression) and to redistribute educational resources to ensure that targeted resources are directed at marginalized students.

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An example of where such efforts have been successful is Aceh, a province in Northwestern Indonesia, where after emerging from nearly thirty years of conflict in 2005, the provincial government made a serious and sustained commitment to addressing educational disadvantage suffered by the province and populations within it due to conflict. They eliminated school fees, increased targeted support to conflict-affected regions/populations and made a legal commitment to directing the province's resource revenues to education (Shah and Lopes Cardozo 2014). Compared to other parts of Indonesia, the province now enjoys higher-than-average participation rates across the early childhood, primary, pre-secondary and secondary schooling sectors. Examination results for the province are also close to national averages, suggesting improvements in quality. Data also suggest that the most conflict-affected districts of the province now have enrolment rates and examination results either at or above the provincial average, with educational inequality greatly reduced from the time of the conflict (BAPPENAS and UNICEF 2019).

Socio-cultural Recognition and Educational Relevance

When education is not perceived to be relevant by particular groups, it can be a significant conflict-trigger. A lack of recognition of the diversity of learners and their needs in terms of relevance can occur within the curriculum when the language(s) of instruction effectively exclude particular linguistic (and often minority) groups or leads to further segregation in societies. In Sri Lanka, this has led to a segregated education system that reflects a power imbalance between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority groups. From 1983 to 2009 Sri Lanka was embroiled in a violent conflict between the Sinhalese-dominated government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who were fighting for an independent state in the north-eastern regions of the island. The ethnically driven conflict led to a separation of the two groups in society and within the schooling system, where Sinhalese-speaking students attended Sinhalese medium schools (the majority language) and Tamil-speaking students attended Tamil medium schools. This helped to perpetuate the notion of a divided country and deepen entrenched hostilities (Lopes Cardozo 2008).

Exclusion can also occur when learning content presents biased or intolerant messages towards specific ethnic or cultural groups. Presenting certain negative stereotypes of 'the other' (ethnic, linguistic, religious) groups as being

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violent or untrustworthy can fuel distrust between students in a classroom, or in the broader community and society. In Sri Lanka, history textbooks and content, in particular, have been noted to be biased and exclusive of Tamil minority views (Davies 2011, Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks 2014). In Sri Lankan schools, history classes have had little attention for an understanding of how history is politically manipulated or an exploration of recent roots of conflicts and mistakes made by all involved parties, as 'Tamils are portrayed as "filthy" invaders, fought by heroic Sinhalese kings' (Orjuela 2003 in Lopes Cardozo 2008, 26). This has resulted in the case of Sri Lanka in government-driven attempts for reconciliation being perceived by parts of society as disingenuous. Rather, community-driven approaches for reconciliation, led, for instance, by minority Muslim communities in the north of the country, have shown greater promise for success (Duncan and Lopes Cardozo 2017).

The converse problem can also exist, wherein attempts to sanitize the content of the curriculum following conflict or ethnic tension by removing any references to difference, citizens feel that important questions of identity and struggle are artificially glossed over, leaving little space for a critical reflection of the past and the lessons that could potentially be drawn from it. Such is the case with the curriculum in Rwanda, which insists on the presentation of a one-nation narrative despite the very real sense of identity based on ethnic belonging/difference which exists in the country, and the desire of the education system to encourage critical thinking and engaged citizenship following conflict (Paulson 2011).

For this reason, some authors have argued for a critical intercultural pedagogy which respects minorities as indigenous rather than identifying them as infiltrators, and a pedagogy that stays away from uncritical and stereotyping forms of multiculturalism that do not take into account issues of religion, race, class or gender (Davies 2011, Keddie 2012, 9). An example of this is evident in Bolivia, where a national reform process began in 2006, under the presidency of Evo Morales (2006–19). The aim was to develop a new critical intercultural/intracultural curriculum that would begin to decolonize the minds of all (indigenous and non-indigenous, male and female) Bolivians. The curriculum aims to respond to the ongoing social conflict within the nation caused by centuries of colonialism, racism and deeply entrenched poverty and inequality that were the product of these conditions. It builds on the notion to *live well* (enough, and not better to the expense of some). Bolivia's education law developed under the Morales government was built on 'liberatory pedagogy', partly inspired by the philosophy of Paulo Freire (1970). It encourages personal development,

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a critical understanding of one's own and others' cultural identities and a critical awareness of reality 'in order to change it' (Article 3.14, ASEP law, in Lopes Cardozo 2011). The implementation of this set of reforms in practice, however, has been met with considerable challenges, including a lack of resources to train teachers accordingly, and resistance from politically opposing groups in society (Lopes Cardozo 2009, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). With changes in the political directions of new governing actors with the end of the presidency of Morales at the end of 2019, it remains to be seen in what ways, and how far, the underlying aims for an intercultural and decolonizing education system within the reform and curriculum will impact educational realities of teachers and students; as well as how long-standing a commitment to this bold new direction in education will be.

Transparency, Participation and Representation

The way in which management functions and processes within education systems are laid out, and how stakeholders' participation is facilitated within them, can foster constructive interactions and relationship building, or promote distrust and entrench intolerance. Political representation should ideally be promoted through fair ethnic, linguistic and gender-balanced representation at multiple scales of educational governance. For example, centrally controlled and managed educational provision can lead to a general lack of accountability and transparency between citizens and the state, particularly when educational resources and services are seen to be inequitably deployed. This has been the case in Liberia, where a culture of highly centralized government control of education continues, despite long-standing issues of political power being wielded in exclusionary ways, which serve self-interest rather than the national good. While the current government has made promises to reform the educational civil service and decentralize control, the system remains prone to high concentrations of power at the central level with rampant charges of corruption and growing public perception that the central government, and in particular current political leadership, has little political will or concern for improving education service delivery. According to one report, this remains 'the core of political, economic, social and environmental fragility [in the country], both in the past and in the present' (UNESCO-IIEP 2011, 44).

As a solution, mechanisms such as school-based management and decentralization of authority, control and provision to local levels have

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been promoted for their potential to promote citizenship, social inclusion and cooperation, and also can potentially increase levels of accountability, transparency and participation between educational service providers and communities (Dupuy 2008, Edwards and Higa 2018). In the case of Afghanistan, community-based and community-managed schools have proven to be an important and vital component of the national education system, as they have increased the value and relevance of education in communities where high distrust and concern for centrally provisioned educational services remain. The communities maintain strong oversight of these schools and are responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluating the nature of education that is provided to their children, including the ability to employ local teachers who may not have the appropriate qualification but are seen to have a keen sense of understanding the needs and wishes for education from the community itself. The government of Afghanistan has, over time, worked to incorporate these schools into its national system by providing their teachers with in-service support, resources and teaching materials as part of a recognition that these schools provide an important complement to centralized educational provision (Kirk and Winthrop 2008). Others have noted with concern, however, that decentralization of management functions onto the backs of community-based committees, who often assume such responsibilities without adequate training, resourcing or support, is often a ploy to substitute rather than complement state-based provisioning of education (Poppema 2012). Additionally, research findings from Indonesia and post-conflict Cambodia have indicated that these committees are prone to elite capture, and that despite being given authority, citizen-actors are afraid, unwilling or unaccustomed to challenging professional educational actors (Bjork 2006, INEE 2009). Such dynamics severely undermine the ability of such governance arrangements to constructively improve authentic representation and participation.

Moving the Debate Forward: Education and Peacebuilding beyond Problem-solving

As acknowledgement has grown of the complexities we note above, a new research agenda has begun to take shape – one that actively explores how education might contribute to goals of social justice and transformation,

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and longer-term peacebuilding. Novelli and Smith (2011, 7) contend how 'peacebuilding is essentially about supporting the transformative processes any post-conflict society needs to go through, and these changes unfold over generations. Developments through the education sector represent a very important part of this transformative process, with huge potential to impact positively or negatively'. They further stipulate how the emerging literature 'argues that education can contribute to peacebuilding more effectively if interventions and reforms are conducted at the sector level and by contributing to political, economic and social transformations in post-conflict societies' (ibid., 12). In addition, attention should continuously be paid to the longer-term sustainability of donor interventions during or immediately after conflict, so that impact extends beyond short-term 'problem-solving' approaches to longer-term structural improvements of the education sector. Hence, what this new research agenda seeks to respond to is *how*, *why* and, most critically, *under what conditions* education and peacebuilding processes can support each other.

This new research agenda responds to several shortcomings of prior work in the field. For one, research has been too focused in the past on approaching the issues of education and conflict from a problem-solving approach – namely identifying how to get the system back up and running – rather than paying close attention to education's location within a broader governance and social change agenda (Smith et al., McCandless, Paulson and Wheaton 2011). As we have suggested in prior sections, it is insufficient to restore educational provision without any consideration for the cultural, political, economic and social structures it feeds into and belongs to. It also limits education's potential to act as a transformative measure, by accepting the status quo and identifying all educational problems as the fault of the education system itself. The examples illustrated throughout this chapter show how many of the challenges facing education in conflict-affected settings are the product of historical (and colonial) legacies, long-standing social and economic structures, and political regimes and affiliations of power and privilege. These issues extend well beyond the borders of education itself.

Additionally, with the growing influence of international interventions in domestic conflicts, there needs to be acknowledgement that 'conflict and its resolution is shaped by a range of structures, institutions and agents that operate below, around, above and beyond the nation-state (local government, national state, neighbour states, regional agreements, supranational bodies, other nation-states)' (Novelli 2011, 7). This is especially true as regards the

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contemporary field of education and peacebuilding, which is located in a 'complex and highly unequal system of local, national, regional and global actors, institutions and practices', as we have suggested earlier (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2008, 483).

Finally, as Davies (2013, 3) notes, research that has tried to link particular actions and interventions in the education sector, to particular outcomes in conflict-affected societies, is severely flawed. She remarks, 'input-output models do not work in social terms, as too many messy contextual factors and power interests intervene. The "attribution gap" is too huge. Even if conflict were to decrease, it is almost impossible to trace this back to something in education.' For that reason she notes that positivist, reductionist and deterministic understandings based on mapping clear cause–effect relationships between education and conflict are wholly insufficient. Her observation is one that is duly noted in an INEE (2011, X) synthesis report, which concluded that 'the issue of discriminating the interlinking and cross-cutting dynamics between [various] domains' made it 'apparent that a full understanding of fragility dynamics was necessary before beginning to tease out how education interacts and interfaces with indicators of fragility'.

Where this perspective falls short is in its failing to undertake a more comprehensive analysis of the cultural, political and economic nature of the root causes of a conflict situation – which is vital to understand when thinking about education's role, function and purpose in post-conflict reconstruction. Additionally, the education and conflict literature has often been too *state-centric* in its modes of analysis, largely failing to acknowledge processes and actors operating in levels above, below and beyond the formal state.

For this reason, approaches drawing on cultural political economy analysis are helping researchers and policymakers to identify education's location within the broader society, historically and at present (Robertson and Dale 2015). Such frameworks for analysis provide a tool for understanding the ways in which: (1) education is both a reflection of and a contributor to past, present and future social relations, experiences and practices (the cultural); (2) the ways in which education fits into existing relations of production, distribution and exchange in society (the economic); and (3) how and by whom education's purpose, role and function in society have and are being determined and governed (the political) in such contexts. Rather than presenting an evolutionary or consensual process of change, educational policy production, reproduction, modification and adaptation become located within highly contested projects of state, nation and region-building. This more critical perspective helps us begin to understand the context,

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political will and motivations of various actors involved in education projects in conflict-affected states. It allows us to see the many faces education has in relation to conflict and fragility – faces we have attempted to demonstrate through some of the examples in this chapter. A cultural political economy perspective has also informed the development of the 4Rs Framework (Novelli et al. 2017) presented earlier. This framework brings together the economic dimension of *redistribution*, the socio-cultural dimension of *recognition*, the political dimension of *representation* and the interconnected dimension of *reconciliation*, and it allows for a more holistic understanding of the role of education in hindering or fostering transformations towards peacebuilding and social cohesion in societies.

While highlighting the complexities of the field, and suggesting that education is not necessarily the panacea for preventing conflict, we retain our optimism about the potential of education to serve a transformative role in society. In this regard, we side with Malala's Yousafzai's urgent call to choose books over bullets, and her continued optimism, despite the adversities she has faced. As she herself noted in her speech at the UN, 'The wise saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword," it is true. […] let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.'

Questions for Discussion

1. Education cannot create peace and equality on its own. What structural dimensions of conflict-affected societies would need to be examined and potentially changed for education to effectively achieve such goals?
2. How does conflict challenge the rights-based provision of education, and conversely how might a rights-based argument for educational provision fuel conflict?
3. How might increasing external interventionism in educational reconstruction threaten the ability of education systems to promote messages of economic redistribution, cultural recognition/relevance, political representation and reconciliation that should be part of education's function as part of peacebuilding?
4. Teachers are often perceived as crucial actors in education (reform) processes. Can you reflect on specific challenges educators face in times of conflict or post-conflict reconstruction?

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Further Readings

Bengtsson, S. and Dryden-Peterson, S. (eds) (2018), *Education, Conflict and Globalisation*, New York: Routledge.

Lopes Cardozo, M. T. A. and Maber, E. J. T. (eds) (2019), *Sustainable Peacebuilding and Social Justice in Times of Transition: Findings of Education in Myanmar*. Cham (Switzerland): Springer.

Mundy, K. and Dryden-Peterson, S. (eds) (2011). *Educating Children in Conflict Zones: Research, Policy, and Practice for Systemic Change – A Tribute to Jackie Kirk*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Useful Websites

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies – INEE website http://www.ineesite.org provides a plethora of information related to education in conflict and emergencies.

Education Cannot Wait Campaign (https://www.educationcannotwait.org) is the first global pooled fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises.

The Education, Conflict and Crisis Network (ECCN) (https://www.eccnetwork.net/resources) has an excellent, curated set of resources for guidance and research on education in crisis and conflict.

UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme was a four-year, multi-country programme which sought to explore how education might make inroads to peacebuilding. A significant component of this work was research carried out by a range of international and local partners, the evidence which is available here: https://inee.org/collections/education-peacebuilding

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