

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Rationales

1.1 Education and conflict: Acknowledging a dialectical relationship

The acknowledgement of a dialectical relationship between formal education and violent conflict is very recent to international development discourse¹. Concern with education in conflict-affected societies has traditionally been articulated in terms of the disruptive and destructive impact on the provision of *access to basic education*. Indeed, over the past decade, “escalating violence caused by growing ethnic tensions and other sources of conflict” has been seen as an “emerging challenge”² within the framework of the Education for All (EFA) goals set by the international community in 1990³. More recently, the Dakar Framework of Action stated that Education for All “must take account of the needs (...) of children and adults affected by armed conflict”⁴.

Even more problematic and compelling are the ways in which educational content, structure and delivery may in themselves be *catalysts* of violent conflict. Recently, it has been recognized that “weaknesses in educational structure and content may have contributed to civil conflict” and that “an education system that reinforces social fissures can represent a dangerous *source of conflict*”⁵. The issue has lost no ground in the past year as the 2002 EFA Monitoring Report states, “(a) major concern in post-conflict situations is to avoid replication of educational structures that may have contributed to conflict.”⁶

There have been a number of recent attempts to understand the potential role of formal education as a precipitating factor in social divisions, political violence and armed conflict. These include an initial exploration of the role of education in disrupted societies (Tawil 1997) where “the growing recognition that education is often a target of political violence has prompted greater concern with the ways in which the content and process of education may actually contribute to precipitate the outbreak and development of violent conflict”⁷. Salmi (2000) has investigated the role of education and violence through an analysis which frames “two complementary angles: first, education as a place or a determinant of violence, and second education as an instrument to reduce societal violence.”⁸ Bush & Sartarelli (2000) have explored and identified the positive and negative faces of education in relation to ethnic conflict, while Smith & Vaux (2002) outline the multiple ways in which education relates to conflict and international development. All three sources illustrate the extent to which:

“Formal education is an inherently ideological instrument that is related to political violence in both intended and unintended ways. On one hand, authoritarian education systems can incite conflict when explicitly used as a weapon of oppression -- that is, as media of repression, apartheid, discrimination, intolerance and the perpetuation of inequalities. On the

¹ Tawil & Harley “Education and conflict in EFA discourse”, *Norrag News*, No 13. (2003).

² Round table session at mid-decade review of international achievement toward the goal of education for all (Amman, June 1996).

³ World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand 1990.

⁴ World Education Forum, Dakar (April 2000).

⁵ Education in situations of emergency and crisis: Thematic assessment study prepared for the World Education Forum in Dakar, Paris, UNESCO, 1999.

⁶ EFA Monitoring Report (2002). *Education for All: is the World on Track?* Paris, UNESCO (pp. 161)

⁷ Tawil (ed.) *Educational destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies*. Final report of meeting, Geneva 5-6 May 1997. Geneva, International Bureau of Education: UNESCO (1997)

⁸ Salmi, J. *Violence, democracy and education: An analytical framework*, LCSHD Paper series No. 56, Human Development Department, Washington: The World Bank, February 2000 (p.9) .

other, education can be a means through which oppressed people can resist ideological domination, and contribute to liberation."⁹

The analyses acknowledge the potential role of formal education to reproduce and exacerbate social divisions and contribute to the outbreak of violent conflict.

1.2 Schooling, violent conflict and the changing nature of nation-states

*The modern school functions to reterritorialize the individual through stories that link the development of the child to that of the nation. The salvation stories of the curriculum produce a collective authority that places diverse peoples, languages, and prior customs into a seemingly seamless whole, that of the nation-state. The individual becomes the agent who enacts the collective purpose embodied as the nation-state.*¹⁰

"The nation," it should be recalled, "is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."¹¹ Until the nation started conceiving of itself as such and endeavouring to account for its population "...through the device of regular periodic censuses which did not become general until the middle of the 19th century"¹², there was neither mass selection for admission nor access to compulsory education. Thus, keeping track of who was there was, and is, a state structured dialectic of authority and legitimacy: the state has the authority to determine who makes up its territory (delineated by set borders) and in doing so the state also confers legitimate status on its citizens/subjects as having the right to be there and be further schooled in their position. The one implies and obliges the other.

'*The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*' takes into consideration the implicit ways in which contemporary states make claims to homogeneity of culture and identity, noting that traditionally, education systems have played a key role in maintaining this fictive image of cultural homogeneity through the:

- invention and use of a canon of "national literature"
- promulgation of a common national language
- construction and imposition of a common culture
- shared sense of history and destiny...
- common set of expectations and behaviours rooted in a sense of civic loyalty.¹³

The aspect of language, for example, is clearly implicated in schooling. Frequently (mis)represented as a neutral mechanism for the communication of knowledge, schooling has often become an instrument of obliteration in the service of nationalism at a purely practical level as it requires multiple linguistic communities begin speaking a uniform discourse, namely, the translation of the policy needs of the state.

"It is the scale on which the state operates as well as its need for direct contacts with its citizens which create the problem. Thus mass education must, for practical

⁹ Tawil (ed) *Educational destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies*. Final report of meeting, Geneva 5-6 May 1997. Geneva, International Bureau of Education: UNESCO (1997)

¹⁰ Popkewitz, Thomas S., Pereyra, Miguel A., Franklin, Barry M. 'History, the Problem of Knowledge, and the New Cultural History of Schooling' In (Eds) Thomas S. Popkewitz, Barry M. Franklin, Miguel A. Pereyra. *Cultural History and Education: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Schooling*. Routledge Falmer, NY. 2001 (p.17)

¹¹ Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised and extended edition, Verso, London. 1991 (p.6)

¹² Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge University Press, second edition, 1992 (p.81)

¹³ Bush, K. & D. Saltarelli *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peace-building approach to education*, UNICEF Innocenti Center. 2000. (pp vii, ix., 9)

purposes be conducted in a vernacular, whereas education for a limited elite can be conducted in a language not understood or spoken by the body of the population or, in the case of 'classical' languages like Latin, classical Persian or classical written Chinese, by anyone at all."¹⁴

Mass schooling in turn makes a standard national language possible, thereby linking *what* is said to *how* it is capable of being conceived at all. This poses the urgent question of whether or not one standard language can effectively express the diversity of a nation.

The birth, consolidation, and collapse of nation states are processes that are often characterized by violent conflict. There is evidence of this in the historical process of the formation of modern nation-states in Western Europe throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the national liberation movements against colonial rule in what was to become the "developing world" in the wake of the second World War and the early sixties, as well as in the failure and collapse of many nation-states in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Moreover, the end of the bipolar power constellations of the Cold War era marks a significant acceleration of the process of 'political globalization' initiated in the middle of the twentieth century:

*"globalization is questioning the very notion of territorial integrity on which nation-states are based. It is appropriate to examine then the impact of globalization, particularly on societies that have not even begun building the nation-state concept. Moreover globalization may also be seen as exacerbating political imbalances that would only invite violence."*¹⁵

As 'political globalization' has largely modified the nature of the nation-state and of political violence in the latter part of the twentieth century, the relationship between schooling and violent conflict has also evolved. The development of schooling as part of the formation of modern nation-states is a violent process of destruction and reconstruction of social relations and structures. "Violence may be considered to be inherent to the process of modernization whereby social bonds are destroyed before other forms of social cohesion and socialization are built." This process generates tensions between state schooling and community culture.

*"Historically, modernization also involves the imposition of foreign schooling systems and alien cultures in many parts of the developing world. Based on the schooling model born in Europe in the nineteenth century, the content and organization mode of schooling is still often unrepresentative of local and national cultures. As a result of foreign curricula and the use of foreign languages, schooling is an alienating factor in many parts of Africa today, creating a communication gap between the schooled and their parents and communities. Within current concerns to contextualize schooling, there is a need to bring the school back to the community. Schooling may either work toward a set of common values among different national communities, or toward reaching an understanding and acceptance of a plurality of interpretations."*¹⁶

It could therefore be argued that changes in socio-political organization and in the nature of violence have forced education and development discourse out of its traditional instrumental conceptualizations that have neglected both historical perspectives and political considerations. The delayed acknowledgement of the possible "negative face" of school systems may be explained in part by the apolitical and a-historical character of mainstream

¹⁴ Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge University Press, second edition, 1992 (p.94)

¹⁵ Tawil, (ed.) *Educational destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies*. Final report of meeting, Geneva 5-6 May 1997. Geneva, International Bureau of Education: UNESCO. 1997. (p.10)

¹⁶ *ibid* (p. 9)

educational development discourse that has overlooked the fact that social and cultural conflict in an essential component of the schooling process¹⁷.

Finally, it is important to note that the project is informed by a broad, *peace-building* approach that takes into account historical and socio-political factors and defines education as multidimensional and necessarily linked to other subsystems¹⁸, rather than the narrower *peace education* approach that focuses on the discrete or cross-cutting subject area. In adopting a *socio-educational approach*, which considers education as multidimensional and as necessarily linked to social and political processes of reconciliation and reconstruction, the case studies trace the processes of the social construction of educational knowledge at the level of official school curricula.

2. Working assumptions

Examining curriculum policy and social cohesion in conflict-affected societies is based on the following working assumptions.

2.1 Curriculum renewal as a reflection of changing approaches to social cohesion

Why focus on the process of curriculum renewal? Curricular renewal is the crux of the process of reform of school education. A social cohesion approach to processes of curriculum development would see these processes as “related to the prerequisites of societal integration – specific to a given society - to be realised on both the levels of material conditions and symbolic representations.”¹⁹ The first working assumption underlying the project then is that processes of curricula change aim to reflect the ways in which society has changed as a result of conflict, or to provoke the types of social changes required to consolidate or reinforce social cohesion. The types of knowledge, values, competencies, attitudes and behaviours that encourage *respect for human dignity and diversity* are mainly located within normative areas of learning such as social studies, civics, religious studies, history, values education that touch upon the often sensitive issues of collective memory or collective amnesia, identity, sense of citizenship and shared destiny.

2.2 Curriculum policy change as a process of social dialogue in divided societies

Why focus on processes of curriculum policy change? In the context of social divisions, there are strong arguments in favour of focusing on the process of policy development of the official national curriculum. The important issue in the social cohesion approach to curriculum development “is the *bargaining* that occurs about the shape of education with respect to the society’s structure and symbolic representations.”²⁰ It follows that this process of *negotiation* and *social dialogue* about the way in which national school education is seen as having to change is context-specific and would have to be rooted in analysis of the historical, social and cultural context. It can be assumed that the broader the process of consultation and social dialogue put in place to define the aims and goals of education that translate the vision of the citizen of tomorrow. Examining the process of reaching consensus on the definition or reformulation of sensitive learning content in conflict-affected societies is indeed of great value in understanding how education may contribute to social cohesion and how this contribution can be promoted and strengthened through focused educational policy-making processes. National curriculum guidelines and frameworks may therefore be seen as

¹⁷ Tawil & Harley “Education and conflict in EFA discourse”, *Norrag News*, No 13. (2003)

¹⁸ Bush, K and Saltarelli, D (2000) *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

¹⁹ Rosenmund (2000).

²⁰ Rosenmund, 2000: 603

social contracts resulting from processes of social dialogue, bargaining, negotiation, and reaching consensus.

2.3 Learning from societies emerging from violent conflict:

Towards more relevant and “conflict-sensitive” curricula

Why focus on societies emerging from violent civil strife? The basic working assumption is that there is a dialectical relationship between schooling and violent conflict and that this relationship needs to be explicitly recognized and explored for the process of educational change in the wake of civil strife to be a meaningful contribution to post-conflict reconciliation and peace building. In reference to Pigozzi 1999; Tawil 1997; Smith & Vaux 2002; and Isaacs 2002, the 2002 Education for All (EFA) Monitoring Report states that “(a) major concern in post-conflict situations is to avoid replication of educational structures that may have contributed to conflict.” Moreover, a focus on processes of curriculum policy change in the wake of civil strife can provide a finer understanding of the nature of the dialectical relationship between school education, social divisions, and political violence, than is the case in other contexts. Arguably, a finer contextual understanding of this relationship is relevant to efforts at peace-building education in *all* societies, regardless of their experience of political violence and conflict. Beyond attempting “to avoid replication of educational structures that may have contributed to conflict”, learning from curriculum policy reform in societies emerging from violent conflict is a contribution to the establishment of indicators for “diversity-sensitive” or “conflict-sensitive” school systems that could be part of all educational planning processes (Smith & Vaux 2003). A strong case can be made to insist that conflict sensitivity is an important dimension of the relevance of education to national socio-cultural and socio-political realities. As such, it is an increasingly important component of educational quality.

3. Issues raised during the colloquium and areas of further clarification

The purpose of this section is not to provide a summary of presentations made at the colloquium, but to highlight areas of the discussion that were particularly compelling and others which seemed to indicate a need for greater clarity. In the same way that the analytical framework was meant to be viewed as an essential companion document during the colloquium, it is also included in this report (in revised version) in order to serve as a reference document indicating both broad categories of interest and the specific thinking relevant to them (see section II of the report, pp14-19). We recommend its consultation for a complementary description of the questioning and envisioned treatment of the issues indicated below.

3.1 Approaching or understanding the nature of the conflict

The term “conflict” is used, within the framework of this project, to refer to situations of violent armed conflict. More specifically, the term here refers to internal conflicts and, particularly, to situations of civil war. From the “troubles” in Northern Ireland to the civil war in Lebanon; from the separatist armed struggle in Sri Lanka to the genocide in Rwanda; from the “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the centuries of cultural repression in Guatemala; these dramatic experiences of political violence of varying scale, intensity, and duration are essentially all conflicts at national or sub-national levels, though sometimes integrated into wider regional or international conflicts.

Viewed thus, the seven contexts can be further characterized and differentiated on the basis of issues of legitimacy of the nation-state and associated conceptualizations of citizenship. In Guatemala and Mozambique, for example, where the legitimacy of the nation state is not in question, each society is undertaking a radical reconceptualization of citizenship at the

national level. In the case of Guatemala, this involves a shift from a hegemonic and monocultural assimilationist tradition to a multilingual and multicultural conception of the Guatemalan national identity based on the principle of “unity in diversity”. Mozambique is rediscovering a national (African) identity which may have been recovered at the end of its war for independence (1964-1975), but which is only recently undertaking to incorporate cultural and linguistic diversity, an effort long held hostage by the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo (1976-1992). While the existence and legitimacy of the nation-state in its existing contours is not in question in the cases of Lebanon and Rwanda, both societies can be seen to be intent upon finding the means to strengthen a central national identity that will hold the nation together. If there is consensus on the reality of a “pluralistic” Lebanese nation-state composed of seventeen official communities, the 1975-1989 civil war reflected the lack of agreement of the definition of Lebanese national identity. As for the case of Rwanda, the fact that the post 1994 government of national unity defines “peace and reconciliation” as a “life skill” reflects an explicit attempt to overcome a long tradition of division and discrimination by endeavoring to strengthen a common national identity.

Whereas the above-mentioned contexts reflect an implicit belief in the nation and are engaged in definitions of citizenship under the umbrella of that paradigm, the contexts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, and Northern Ireland, initially question at least the contours and composition of the nation state, even going so far as to question the idea of the nation itself. The contested terrain in Sri Lanka has been oriented around conflicting conceptions of space as reflected through the Tamil separatist struggle, at least until the recent signing of the cease-fire agreements in 2002. In Northern Ireland, the “legitimacy of the state is still in question with no consensus as yet as to its nature with a range of identities.”²¹ Similarly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a nation-state that emerged in 1995 as a result of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, the realities of a constitution that speaks of “three constituent peoples” translates into a questioning of the nation state by its citizens, summed up by one expert in the following remark: “all around them were symbols of a nation that they believed did not exist.”²²

In each case, the specific nature of the conflict has implications for the conceptualization of citizenship and a direct incidence on the challenges posed to educational policy reform in terms of (re)defining national culture and identity through language policies, social studies, and the teaching of subjects such as history, geography, civics, literature and religion.

3.2 On so called “ethnic conflict”

The discussions also pointed to uncertainties about the relevance of using terms such as “ethnic conflict” as a means of analyzing these contexts and the implications that it has for educational policy reform. The concept of “ethnic conflict” appears inadequate to describe these contexts because it overlooks, diverts attention from, or obscures the political, economic, and social issues at stake. Furthermore, there is also serious academic debate, particularly in anthropological circles, questioning the validity (and racist conception) of the origins of the term. The Rwandan case study presents a telling example of the inadequacy of the various theories of ethnic conflict as a means to understanding the experience of the 1994 genocide. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, we prefer to use the term “identity-based conflict.” Typically;

“a certain form of identity – be it individual, social, cultural, professional, religious, or political – constitutes the point of departure for any and all relations with others. Identity is what makes us what we are and who we are. And yet, the experience of

²¹ Michael Arlow, statement made during colloquium discussion, Geneva, 3 April 2003

²² Philip Stabback, statement made during colloquium discussion, Geneva, 3 April 2003

identity invariably evokes codes of exclusion, difference and distinction. Belonging to a collectivity always concerns the delimitation of that collectivity and the application of a logic of conflict and contention”.²³

The preceding suggests that different forms of identity represent potential sources of social division. However, it may be argued that social divisions also result from exclusion from employment, means of production, land (economic exclusion), as well as exclusion from education, health care, housing, and other social services (social exclusion). Cultural identities and social and economic exclusion may overlap and represent an important source of identity-based conflict when associated with forms of political exclusion that imply the denial of security, representation, citizenship and other basic political and cultural rights. Importantly, the context of Guatemala challenges the traditional conception of identity as a dualistic “self” “other” and, further goes beyond the juxtaposition of “integrated” multiple identities in the definition of national citizenship (for example), to arrive at a vision of “el otro yo” - a fusion of self and other as complementary and simultaneous.

3.3 On educational reform for social and civic reconstruction

One particular area of clarification lies in making a distinction between education in emergencies, and education for social and civic reconstruction undertaken by a sovereign national education authority. In exploring curriculum policy, this study does not share the same focus as that generally adopted in education in emergencies. The social and political environments in which educational policy reform aimed at social and civic reconstruction can take place is of a different nature from those encountered in emergencies, rehabilitation and early reconstruction. Perhaps most important for the former, is the existence of a national educational authority, socially acknowledged as legitimate, which can construct and define curriculum goals and framework/guidelines at the national state level.

Figure 1: *Conflict status and type of educational initiative*

Conflict status	Non-conflict; Relative “peace”	Internal trouble; Social unrest; “pre”- conflict	Armed conflict	Transition out of violence; Peace process	“Post” conflict
Type of educational initiative	Education for prevention		Education in emergencies		Education for social and civic reconstruction

3.4 On power to select legitimate knowledge

The above demonstrates that the focus of this project on the (political) process of reconciliation and of social and civic reconstruction is embedded in (sovereign) educational policy reform. The central question is to determine how society is reconstructing itself regarding sovereign and sensitive issues related to the (re)definition of identities, memory, sense of citizenship and shared destiny.

Who has the power to define what official identity is or includes at the level of the nation state? In the case of societies emerging from identity-based conflicts (as described above) the question is not only who is in a position to redefine national social and civic identity, but, also, how is this done? In terms of the direction of curriculum policy reform, such questions

²³ Peter Burgess, Network on Identity-based Conflict, PRIO Research Project.

imply uncovering the power structures that determine who is in a position to define policy, who continues to be excluded, and how this political dynamic functions.

3.5 On “post conflict”

Typically educational reform for social and civic reconstruction would ‘naturally’ be associated with a “post conflict” phase. For example, in classic “post conflict” cases such as Lebanon (Taef Agreement, 1989), Guatemala (Peace Accords of 1996), Rwanda and its new government of National Unity established following the 1994 genocide, Mozambique (peace agreement, 1992), there is a demonstrated lapse of time that has been necessary in order to undertake the different phases of curriculum policy dialogue, policy formulation, and policy making. However, this is not always the case, as is illustrated in the cases of Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka where educational policy reform is being undertaken in parallel with the peace process, possibly even serving as an integral part of it. Despite the fact that Bosnia would also appear to fit the classic post conflict category having signed the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, there is to date a marked lack of state level authority capable of initiating such an independent reform process. The lack of a legitimate state-level national authority in this context draws attention to the importance of examining the nature of the peace in all contexts. The nature of the cessation of hostilities and the peace achieved is crucial to defining the possibilities for social and civic reconstruction, namely curriculum policy reform, at the national level.

3.6 On “new missionaries”

Discussions during the colloquium pointed out the problematic issue of both the legitimacy and authority of international aid agencies and donors acting potentially as “new missionaries” in influencing or shaping national responses. Bosnia-Herzegovina was described as having a general environment of “disenchantment,” which extended beyond national borders to include the International Community, hardly surprising in a context in which the Office of the High Representative exercises power higher than that of the elected government. In Rwanda, a context particularly sensitive to the potential harm of “new missionaries,” the international actors are described as having “conflicting agendas.” Particularly in contexts heavily dependent on donor funding, such as Mozambique, an indirect effect on policy formulation was further noted due to occasional donor willingness to lend more support to particular initiatives (ranging from pilot projects to the implementation of new curriculum).

4. Colloquium follow-up

This collaborative action-research project is conceived of as a form of capacity building, in which documentation of processes of curriculum change are embedded – to the extent possible – in local and national processes of research and policy formulation. The coordinated documentation of these cases by national experts closely associated with reform of national curricula in a range of contexts worldwide is intended to enhance local/national capacity to address these issues through research, policy dialogue and international exchange.

The main expected outcomes of the project are the following:

- ***Analytical framework***

A framework of guiding questions that has been tested for its analytical relevance in the range of contexts represented in the project.

- ***Collection of seven in-depth case studies***

A compilation of seven case studies (approx. 15'000 words each) based on the collectively developed framework.

- ***Synthesis of lessons learned on social cohesion through curriculum policy reform***

An identification of lessons learned on the promotion of social cohesion at the national level based on a comparative analysis of the specific contexts, issues and challenges explored in the seven case studies.

The framework, case studies, and synthesis shall be published in book form by the end of 2003.

The framework has thus far served as a tool for an ongoing process of reflection and dialogue among the project team. This process of reflection and dialogue represents a collective attempt to overcome difficulties and challenges inherent to comparative analysis while avoiding prescriptive and rigid formulas. The colloquium was followed by a working session of the project group (5 April 2003), providing a moment for concentrated exchange with principal changes made to sequencing rather than content of the framework, although important clarifications were included in the sections on curricular paradigms and modalities of consultation. Subsequent changes to section headings are also a result of feedback that was received following the colloquium. This revised version of the framework is presented in the next section (II).