

# Chapter 1

## Education and Identity-based Conflict: Assessing curriculum policy for social and civic reconstruction

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## **About the Authors**

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## EDUCATION AND CONFLICT

The link between education and conflict is now squarely on the Education for All (EFA) agenda of international educationists. Already in the 1980s, the declining enrolment patterns observed in many developing countries were often associated with situations of political instability and armed conflict (Berstecher & Carr-Hill, 1990). In 1990, the World Declaration on Education For All referred to “war, occupation, [and] civil strife” as significant elements of the “daunting problems” that “constrain efforts to meet basic learning needs” and reaffirmed the right to basic education for “children and adults affected by armed conflict.” With the end of the bipolar world in the early 1990s, there appears to have been a continuation, if not an accentuation of the trend towards greater social instability, political violence, and armed conflict.

During this same period, international attention progressively shifted from a concern with violent conflict solely as an obstacle to ensuring access to basic education for all, to an awareness of the more subtle, complex, and often disturbing linkages between education and conflict. An exploration of the experiences of Cambodia, Colombia, Palestine and Sierra Leone by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education in 1997 reflected this growing international concern with the targeting of education in situations of political violence, as well as the ways in which the contents and processes of schooling may actually contribute to precipitate the outbreak and development of violent conflict (Tawil, 1997). The investigation recognised that there was a need to distinguish between education as an “accomplice to rebellion” and the outbreak of armed conflict, and education as a victim of overt violence with the sources of the conflict lying elsewhere.

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Center has explored and identified the positive and negative faces of education in relation to ethnicity and conflict, focusing on the potential role of school education in amplifying social divisions, and as a precipitating factor in the outbreak of political violence (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). They argue that destructive educational practices—when combined with such causal factors as economic tensions, poor governance, and perceived threats to cultural identity—may fuel suspicion, hostility, ethnic intolerance, and violence. In convincing support of this argument, they identify a number of ways in which education has exacerbated hostility, including: the uneven distribution of education; education as a weapon in cultural repression; denial of education as a weapon of war; the manipulation of history for political purposes; the manipulation of textbooks; and segregated education that tends to reinforce inequality, lowered self-esteem, and stereotyping.

The World Bank has also explored the role of education both as a determinant of direct and indirect forms of violence, and as an instrument to reduce societal violence (Salmi, 2000). Salmi proposes an analytical framework in order to understand the different forms of violence, and applies it to the examination of the positive and negative role of education in situations of violence. He notes that while education can be an effective instrument to reduce violence, “schools are violent environments and the education process or lack thereof, are important determinants of violence.”

The observation that educational content, structure, and delivery systems may, in themselves, be *catalysts* of violent conflict is now an explicit concern of the international community within the framework of the Education for All goals. The *Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis* thematic assessment study prepared for the World Education Forum in Dakar (UNESCO, 2000) recognised 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.*” This idea is re-iterated in the 2002 EFA Monitoring Report, which stated that a “major concern in post-conflict situations is to avoid replication of educational structures that may have contributed to conflict.”

The issues paper *Education, Conflict and International Development* produced by the U.K. Department for International Development (DfID) goes one step further. Smith and Vaux (2003) not only reiterate that education can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution, but also promote the adoption of a long-term perspective based on analysis of education policies and practice in terms of their potential to aggravate or help resolve conflict. The authors argue that it is crucially important to consider the linkages between education and conflict not only in times of overt violence, but also as “a routine ingredient of development thinking within the mainstream education sector.”

The fact that development thinking has neglected to systematically analyse the possible “negative face” of education may be partly explained by the apolitical and a-historical character of mainstream educational development and EFA discourse. Such discourse has largely overlooked the fact that social and cultural conflict – both intrinsic components of any schooling process – shape educational policy-making. One clear way to recognise the more politicised role of education and to recover critical historical perspective, is through an assessment of the process of educational policy change in societies affected by identity-based conflicts.

## **EXPLORING CURRICULUM POLICY IN IDENTITY-BASED CONFLICTS**

Examining educational policy change within the context of identity-based conflicts was the focus of the *Curriculum Change and Social Cohesion in Conflict-Affected Societies* project coordinated by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (2002–2003). The aim of the project was to gain a better understanding of the role of education policy in shaping social and civic identities and in redefining or reconstructing national citizenship within the context of identity-based conflicts. The underlying assumption is that for processes of educational change to be meaningful contributions to national reconciliation and peace building in the context of identity-based conflicts, the complex linkages between schooling and conflict need to be explicitly recognised and explored. Of central concern were the policy issues that determine the role of schooling in the formation and transmission of collective identity, memory, and sense of citizenship and of shared destiny. The exploration and documentation of these issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Guatemala, Lebanon, Mozambique, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka is guided by the following question:

How do the forms of educational governance, processes of curriculum policymaking, and of curriculum development contribute to either (1) a shared sense of national identity and citizenship which is inclusive and respectful of diversity or (2) exacerbate social divisions, tensions, and identity-based conflicts?

The studies presented in the following chapters of this volume explore this central question. In doing so, some of the authors examine the extent to which the education system itself has been a potential source of the very conflict it is expected to prevent and remedy. The challenge facing all of the authors was to explore not only the way schooling relates to violent conflict, but also to understand how this relationship is rooted in contested and/or changing conceptions of national cohesion and how it impacts on identity formation.

**Figure 1: The seven project cases**



### **Learning from societies emerging from civil strife**

Focusing on processes of curriculum policy change in the wake of civil strife arguably provides a more nuanced understanding of the nature of the relationships between formal schooling, social divisions, and political violence, where such issues are more apparently explicit than in other contexts. Assessing the ways in which formal schooling may be seen to have undermined social cohesion in such cases helps to delve more fully into the question of how education can also contribute to reconstructing and renewing social peace based on justice. Moreover, understanding the role of education in general, and of curriculum policy in particular, in their capacity to erode or reinforce social cohesion in the context of conflict-affected societies, is relevant to efforts at peacebuilding education in *all* societies.

### **Approach and methodology**

In designing this project, an attempt was made to link each study to on-going processes of educational research, which aimed to strengthen local research capacity and policy dialogue. Thus, where possible, the seven studies presented in the following chapters were prepared by national educational decision-makers and researchers. It is hoped that the compilation of these studies in one volume shall similarly allow for increased opportunities to explore problematic areas of educational policy in divided or conflict-affected societies in a comparative and constructive fashion. The framework grew out of a set of guiding questions that was developed by the project team at the start of the project. Preliminary versions of the seven studies were presented and discussed at an international seminar organised in Geneva, providing the authors with an opportunity to share their work with each other, as well as with an international audience. The critical input collected was used by the authors to improve and finalise each of their studies, and by the project team as a whole to refine the analytical framework. Throughout the process, group reflection and dialogue helped overcome difficulties and challenges inherent to comparative work and analysis while at the same time trying to avoid prescriptive and rigid formulas. Additional critical feedback was gathered through the presentation of the project in

its entirety, and/or selected cases at a number of international forums<sup>1</sup>. Finally, the completed drafts of the seven studies were circulated to a number of national and international experts for comment. The entire process has thus sought to promote dialogue and raise awareness concerning important questions relative to identity, violent conflict, and social cohesion that are being addressed in educational reform in societies in both the North and the South.

### **Situating the seven studies**

The first study, on *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (chapter two), was developed by an international expert closely involved in establishing the inclusive consultative structures and mechanisms that led to the development of the Education Reform Strategy Paper in November 2002. Moreover, the study was prepared based on the in-country experience and expertise of the UNESCO field office in Sarajevo with which the author had been closely involved in providing technical advice for an unofficial core curriculum team representing the diverse educational authorities within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Srpska.

Prepared jointly by the national coordinator and the chief technical advisor for the Project to Mobilise Support for Mayan Education (PROMEM), the *Guatemala* study (chapter three) is embedded in the process of curriculum development for the inclusion of Mayan culture and language in the national Curriculum for Basic Education. The development of the study was part of a process of dialogue with key stakeholders in Guatemalan education and was thus linked to the work of the Consultative Commission for Education Reform and the Accompaniment Commission for Compliance with the Peace Accords.

Chapter four, on *Lebanon*, reviews the ways in which curriculum policy was framed during key moments in the historical development of schooling, including following the reestablishment of peace in the early 1990s after the end of fifteen years of civil war. This exploration into curriculum policy formulation and the issue of Lebanese identity, history, and sense of citizenship is presented by the former president (1999-2002) of the Educational Centre for Research and Development (ECD), who was in charge of the Civics Education Project and the development of history curriculum in the postwar period.

The *Mozambican* team was composed of three experts from the National Institute for the Development of Education (INDE) and the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. The study (chapter five) focuses on the impact of a series of politico-ideological shifts in education policy “exploring the possible links between the experience of armed conflict, recent political change (...) and the reinforcement of national identity through curriculum change.” In addressing the “competitive co-existence” between the former colonial Portuguese language and the twenty-one indigenous languages, the chapter traces the ways in which language policies have attempted to define national cohesion. In doing so, the team reviewed official documentation produced by the Ministry of Education, interviewed a range of stakeholders involved in educational reform, and conducted a limited number of observations and interviews among students in a pilot school in Maputo.

Chapter six, on *Northern Ireland*, was developed as part of the ongoing evaluation work of the pilot Social, Civic and Political Education Project. Formerly director of the project at Ulster University, the author was also the principal officer at the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. The study was supplemented by interviews with individuals from a range of organisations with both policy and academic orientations who

have been involved in shaping or implementing education policy in relation to the conflict. Additionally, the study draws on existing research that explores the views of young people on the relevance of educational experiences in Northern Ireland with regard to the social and political environment of conflict.

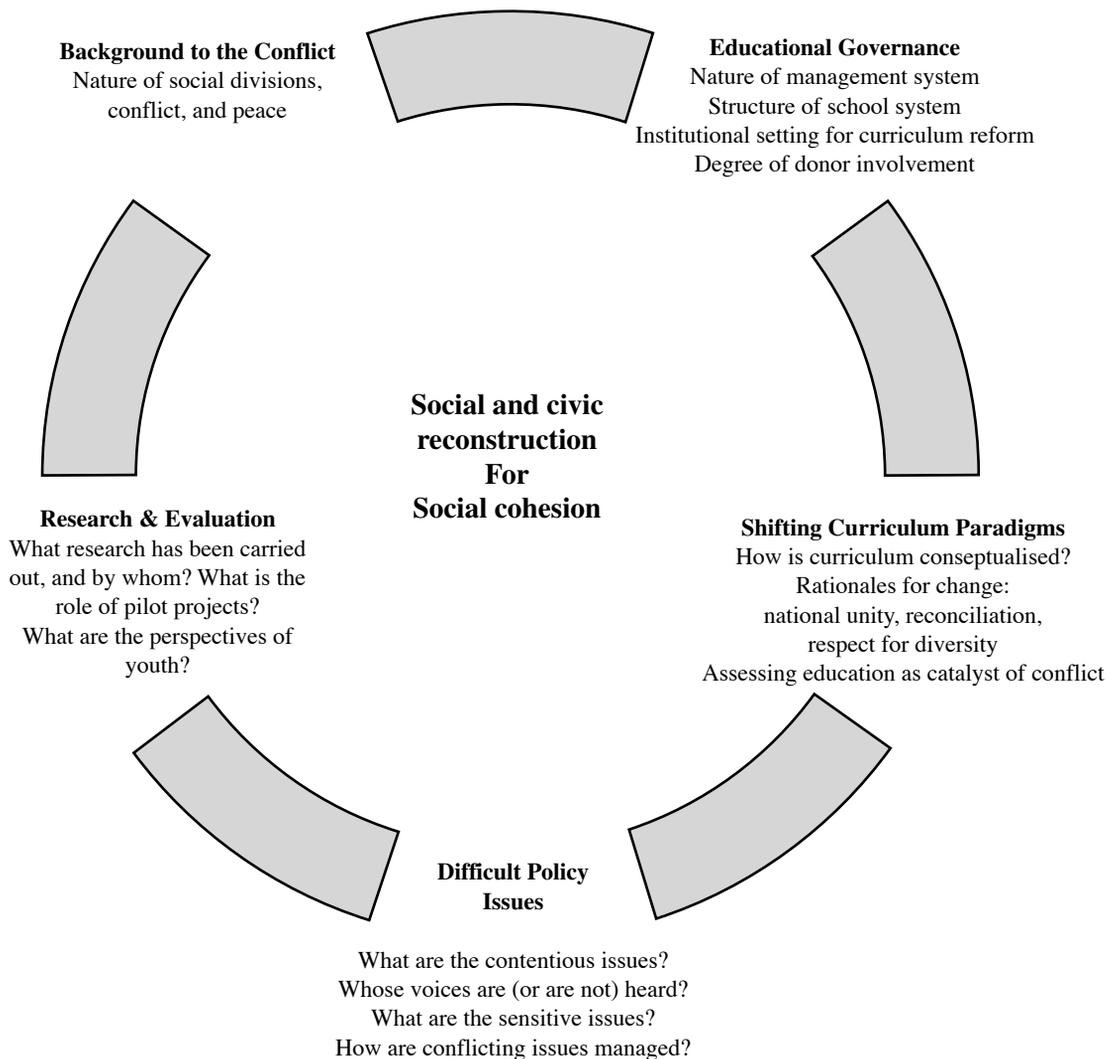
In the case of *Rwanda* (chapter seven), the study “is part of the whole process of curriculum change and review underway” and the methodology used “is in line with the current process of educational policy development” in which the team of three from the National Curriculum Development Centre and the Kigali Institute of Education consulted with teachers, head teachers, students, Ministry of Education officials, donors, and representatives of religious groups. The study addresses two main questions: 1) What was taught in schools in the past, and how has that contributed to social divisions and conflict; and 2) What values should be taught in Rwandan schools to bring about social cohesion?

Finally, chapter eight, devoted to *Sri Lanka*, was prepared by three senior professionals who have been associated with the development of school and teacher education curriculum over the past three decades. The study focuses on the link between education reform and political violence in Sri Lanka. In attempting to present a comprehensive and balanced record and analysis of educational policy against the backdrop of twenty-five years of conflict, the authors accessed a wide range of studies and printed documents. They also consulted and interviewed relevant persons and authorities in order to document views on the way in which curriculum change may contribute to foster social cohesion and peace in the country.

### **Assessing curriculum policy from a social cohesion perspective**

The common analytical framework attempts to provide a coherent way of approaching a range of key issues associated with processes of curriculum policy reform following a protracted period of civil strife. The principal concept guiding this assessment is that of social cohesion, and supplements pedagogical, socio-economic, or other logics of curriculum evaluation. The practiced strength of the framework has proven to be the flexibility with which specific sets of issues and questions proposed can be highlighted and explored in widely differing historical, cultural, socio-economic and political contexts, as well as in policy development processes at very different stages of reform. The framework is organised around five main categories of guiding questions relating to: (1) the background to the conflict, (2) educational governance, (3) curriculum paradigm sifts, (4) difficult policy issues, and (5) the role of research (see Appendix 1 for more detail). In practice, different structures of educational governance and resulting patterns of policy dialogue, and differing models and phases of curriculum change tend to dictate varying logics of framing the issues. Figure 2 is a simplified representation of the analytical framework and the remaining discussion of this chapter will be organised around these more generalised categories, beginning with the central concern of social cohesion and social and civic reconstruction. Each category will be introduced by a brief selection of guiding questions from the original framework and will be illustrated by a discussion of the ways in which some of the primary concerns are taken up by the authors in the chapters that follow.

**Figure 2: Assessing curriculum policy from a social cohesion perspective**



**SOCIAL AND CIVIC RECONSTRUCTION FOR SOCIAL COHESION**

The studies that follow have prioritised social cohesion as the prism through which they assess curriculum policy change. It is therefore clearly important to begin our discussion with a closer look at this term. While efforts to define social cohesion have generated numerous models and typologies, a single agreed definition remains rather elusive. Recent scholarship, however, argues that the real utility of the term “social cohesion,” is precisely that it can function “as a *framing concept* for thinking through the complexity of policy issues” (Beauvais and Jensen, 2002). We also endorse this understanding of social cohesion as less a concept that begs a single fixed definition, and more the idea of a paradigm—an umbrella concept or governing principle—under which public policy can be constructed and assessed. Moreover, like all paradigms, it is capable of shifting. The term denotes an awareness of social exclusion and

inclusion that can be applied to a wide range of policymaking contexts aimed at responding to diverse social challenges. Social cohesion, in other words, is neither a given entity nor a thing in itself. The way it is perceived translates into the way it is defined. The way it is defined, in turn, determines the types of indicators used for the assessment that serves to inform policy formulation. As an organising idea, it may delineate the crucial elements that should not be excluded from the process of policy dialogue, of the framing and reframing processes of reflection and debate, and of policy formulation. In reading the studies presented in this volume it will therefore be salutary to keep the following questions in mind: ‘How is the question of social cohesion approached?’ and ‘How are policy-makers approaching curriculum policy change in view of social and civic reconstruction?’

Exploring curriculum policy as part of a broader process of social and civic reconstruction implies a developmental perspective. As such, the social and political environments in which educational policy reform aimed at social and civic reconstruction can take place are of a decidedly different nature than those encountered in emergencies and acute conflict situations. The latter has, nevertheless, been the main referent for much of the education and conflict discourse to date, and has important implications as to the relative roles of international, national and local partners in educational policy formulation. Implicit in the chapters that follow, on the other hand, is the conviction that education policy reform is likely to be most effective and sustainable when initiated by a sovereign national education authority in a context of relative security and political stability. The need for a national educational authority, socially acknowledged as legitimate, which can construct and define education and curriculum policy at the nation state level, places this discussion in the framework of education and development, rather than that of education in emergencies.

**Figure 3: Conflict status and type of educational initiative**

<b>Conflict status</b>	Nonconflict; relative “peace”	Internal trouble; social unrest; “pre-”conflict	Armed conflict	Transition out of violence; peace process	“Post-” conflict
<b>Type of educational initiative</b>	Education for prevention (development)		Education in emergencies		Education for social and civic reconstruction (development)

It is important to stress that education functions in a political domain and understanding this is to understand that very little about it is neutral. The implications of this for educational policymaking relate to the process of determining and defining legitimate knowledge that serves to define the nation-state in any given context. Schooling has played a key role in the historical development of nation-states. “The nation,” it should be recalled, “is an imagined political community” (Anderson, 1991) for which compulsory public schooling is an essential mechanism of integration. The development of schooling as part of the formation of modern nation states has often embodied a violent process of destruction and reconstruction of social relations and structures. Given the importance of schooling in nation-building, it has been argued that the monopoly of legitimate education in modern nation-states may be more important than the monopoly of legitimate violence (Gellner, 1983). While recent political globalisation has challenged traditional national sovereignty, it has also curiously strengthened

the *idea* of the nation state (Meyer et al, 1997), and the number of civil wars seen in the latter part of the twentieth century demonstrated the intensifying degree of political violence necessary to preserve it. As the relationship between violence and the construction of the nation state shift, so too does the relationship between schooling and violent conflict. The discussion that follows is an assessment of that changing relationship.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

In attempting to understand any process of educational policy change, it is important to examine the social and political context. Given our focus on social cohesion, it is important to consider cultural, social, and political factors in a historical perspective in order to understand the nature of social divisions, of identity-based conflict, and of the peace. The main guiding questions proposed in the framework are the following (see Appendix 1 for more detail):

- ***Nature of social divisions:*** What is the nature of social divisions? What is the nature of group identity? What is the role of language, religion, and ethnicity in defining cultural identity? How is group identity articulated with social/political divisions?
- ***Nature of conflict:*** What is the type of conflict? What are the scale, intensity, duration and recency of the violence? To what extent is the conflict identity-based?
- ***Nature of peace:*** What is the nature of the political agreement (if any) that has ended the conflict? How is the role of education/curriculum reform articulated in peace agreements (if at all)?

In exploring these questions, it is possible to develop a critical and historic awareness of the shifting role of education with regard to social cohesion. Interestingly, the attention given to a narration of the background to conflict in each context reflected the difficulties in undertaking this critical exercise. The authors of the various studies have remarked how difficult it was to endeavour to present an historical overview in light of the fact that versions of “official history” are often integral to the roots of the conflict, thus making history a highly charged concept. They further mentioned that the exercise of documenting the contextual background provided a direct opportunity to experience the difficulties of selecting appropriate historical information in an effort to communicate more or less objective information that would seem accurate to both national and international readers. The necessity of confronting this in the opening pages of the each study, therefore, had an impact on the presentation and discussion of policy change that followed.<sup>2</sup>

### The nature of conflict

The term “conflict” is used here 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 wars in Lebanon and Mozambique; from the separatist armed struggle in Sri Lanka to the genocide in Rwanda; from what has been alternatively called the “civil war,” the “war of aggression,” and the “ethnic cleansing” in BiH 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 subnational levels, even if they have sometimes been integrated into wider regional or international conflicts.

Discussions within the project team pointed to uncertainties about the relevance of using terms such as “ethnic conflict” as a means of describing the nature of the conflict in these societies. The authors of the Rwandan study, for example, present an analysis of the inadequacy of the various theories of ethnic conflict as a means to fully understand the tragedy of the 1994 genocide. They point to serious academic debate, which questions the validity (and racist conception) of the origins of the term. They go on to argue that

[...] it is not the existence or nonexistence of ethnic groups that is important. The problem is that people believe in them and then behave accordingly. Therefore, if Rwandans want to find solutions to social divisions, it is important to talk about ethnic categorizations, ethnicity, and ethnic groups, in order to express a consensus as to the truth about them as they are experienced and defined.

(Rutayisire, Kabano, and Rubagiza)

The concept of “ethnic conflict” appears inadequate to understand situations of violent conflict because it overlooks, diverts attention from, or obscures the political, economic, and social issues at stake. We propose “identity-based conflict” as a term that appears to be both more accurate and more appropriate, as it makes the central question of identity more explicit. This is important because

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 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.

(Burgess, 2002)

The preceding quote 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, and 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. Viewed this way, the range of conflicts explored in the seven studies can be further understood on the basis of issues of legitimacy of the nation-state and associated conceptualisations of citizenship and national identity.

In Guatemala and Mozambique, for example, where the legitimacy of the nation-state is not in question, each society is undertaking a radical reconceptualisation 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 Guatemalan national identity based on the principle of “unity in diversity.” Contemporary Guatemala challenges the traditional conception of identity as a dualistic “self”/“other” and goes beyond the juxtaposition of “integrated” multiple identities in the definition of national citizenship, to arrive at a vision of “*el otro yo*” — a fusion of self and other as complementary and simultaneous. Mozambique is rediscovering a national (African) identity that was partly recovered at the end of its war for independence (1964–75). The current efforts to incorporate cultural and linguistic diversity

have been long delayed by the civil war between FRELIMO and RENAMO (1976–92).

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 are seeking 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 1975–89 civil war reflected the lack of agreement on the definition of a common Lebanese national identity and a sense of civic loyalty. 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.

In BiH, Sri Lanka, and Northern Ireland, on the other hand, the contours of the nation-state and the idea very idea of the nation itself, are being critically questioned. This is clearly reflected in the Tamil separatist struggle in Sri Lanka, at least until the recent signing of the ceasefire agreements in 2002, as well as in Northern Ireland, where the “legitimacy of the state is still in question, with no consensus as yet as to its nature (and) with a range of identities.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in BiH, a nation-state that emerged in 1995 as a result of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, the fact that the constitution speaks of “three constituent peoples” politically organised into two “entities” reflects the lack of any basic consensus on the nature of the state and of citizenship.

In each case, the specific nature of the conflict has implications for the conceptualisation of citizenship and a direct incidence on the challenges posed to educational policy reform in terms of (re)defining national culture and identity through methods of governance and sensitive learning areas.

### **The nature of peace**

The nature of the cessation of hostilities and of the peace achieved is crucial to defining the possibilities for social and civic reconstruction through education policy. The nature of the political settlement, whether internally developed or externally imposed, has implications for the nature of political will to reform education, as well as for the construction or consolidation of legitimating mechanisms which give education policymakers a mandate for change. In the case of Northern Ireland, for instance, the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement (1998) “created a new political context in which issues like the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, policing, and the role of human rights suddenly became open to debate. Society was challenged to define what democracy means or could mean in Northern Ireland”. In Lebanon, the 1989 Taef Agreement that brought an end to fifteen years of civil war in Lebanon articulated the need “to unify history and civic education textbooks” as part of declared efforts to counter political sectarianism. Finally, the case of Guatemala is particularly rich in establishing the links between socially constructed peace accords, negotiated over a period of many years, and the perceived need to undertake a process of educational and curriculum policy reform. The authors insist on the 1995 Accord on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples because of the fact that it “established the right to a cultural identity” and of the importance of the peace accords in general for the acknowledgment not only of the enduring exclusion of the indigenous people but also of the enduring resilience of the Mayan experience in spite of it.

This is the main reason why the peace accords and the national dialogue and consensus entrusted the education of new generations in a culture of peace and intercultural dialogue to the education system.

(Salazar Tetzgüic and Grigsby)

## EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE

After an examination of the background to the conflict, it is necessary to analyse the context of the education system in which curriculum reform is being undertaken. More specifically, analysis of the context of educational governance implies an examination of the nature of the management system, the structure of the school system, the institutional setting for curriculum development, the nature of donor involvement (where relevant), and their combined implications for reform. The guiding questions listed below are a representative sample of those that were identified to guide this contextual scan of the educational system.

- What is the *nature of the management system* (centralised, decentralised, fragmented) and where is the locus of decision-making authority?
- What is the *structure of school system* (segregated, assimilated, integrated, other; school types and share of each)
- What is the impact (if any) of *dependency on donor support* on curriculum policy choices (rationales and direction of change, as well as modalities for consultation)?

### Fragmented decision-making in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a unique example of the fragmentation of educational governance in which the uncoordinated, supervisory presence of the international community -- including the unique Office of the High Representative -- functions as the “ultimate constitutional authority in BiH, superior to that of democratically elected governments.” The “unhealthy levels of political involvement,” fostering strong distrust and lack of confidence, and the creation of “thirteen education policymaking authorities with no state-level mechanism or framework for inter-authority, countrywide policy dialogue,” have translated into the development of three parallel school curricula, reflecting the distinct, often inflexible, and mutually exclusive ideologies of the country’s three constituent peoples. A major obstacle to curriculum reform then is that there is no identifiable and widely accepted national education authority. In the absence of a strong national identity, and the presence of a partisan environment characterised by a fierce defence of cultural autonomy, curriculum policy reform in learning areas such as history and geography, language and literature, and religious instruction, or what is referred to as the “national group of subjects”, is strongly resisted:

[a]t a systemic level, the high number of people with a professional education—particularly holders of university degrees—ensures that there is a keen awareness of the importance of education as a means of defending cultural identity and disseminating politico-cultural ideology. Moving from “socialist” education (with the interests of the state as its underpinning ideology) to “ethnic-nationalist” education (with the interests of an ethno-political group as its underpinning ideology) has been conceptually a simple matter.

(Stabback)

### **Parallel school systems and diversified curricula in Lebanon**

The case of Lebanon implicitly questions the degree to which schooling could possibly serve as a unifying mechanism, given the existence of parallel public and private school systems and of diversified curricula. Not only did the private education sector historically precede the public one, but it continues to represent the overwhelming share of school enrolments with over 60 percent of students at all levels. The efforts of the Lebanese government since 1946 to unify school curricula may therefore be seen as a way of countering the fragmentation embedded in the legacy of private schooling and the right of religious groups to manage their own schools as enshrined in Article 10 of the Constitution:

[e]ducation is free in so far as it is not contrary to public order and good morals that it does not affect the dignity of the several faiths. There shall be no violation of the rights of the religious sects to have their own schools, subject to the general prescription concerning public education which is decreed by the state.

(Frayha)

Efforts made in 1946, 1969 and more recently in the 1990s following the end of the civil war, have all aimed to centralise the education system, strengthen the supervision and control of the private sector, and strengthen the supervision of textbook design and production and the renewal of school curricula. Recent efforts of the Ministry of Education to develop and introduce civics education at all levels of school education are to be seen as an effort to overcome the divisive effects of parochial schooling.

### **Curriculum responses to segregated schooling in Northern Ireland**

The complex structure of the parallel school systems in Northern Ireland, characterised as it is by segregation essentially on the grounds of religion and class, reflects the divisions in the society as a whole. The fundamental question in such a context is the impact of segregated schooling and of parochial socialisation on the nature of relations between communities. The debate that emerged following the outbreak of the violence in 1969 as to the extent to which the causes of the sectarian violence could be attributed to the segregated school system have remained inconclusive. Despite this lack of evidence, the Department of Education Northern Ireland in the 1980s clearly stated its position relative to the responsibility of public policy:

[t]he Department wishes to emphasise that it is not questioning the right to insist on forms of education in schools which amount to segregation. It considers, however, that this right is coupled with an inescapable duty to ensure that effective measures are taken to ensure that children do not grow up in ignorance, fear or even hatred of those from whom they are educationally segregated.

(Arlow)

Although a promising alternative to the segregated educational structure in Northern Ireland, integrated primary and post-primary schools developed since the early 1980s to educate Protestant and Catholic students together represent only approximately 4 percent of total school enrolment. Given the limited scope of decreasing the segregated nature of the school system, an array of curricular responses, ranging from official Education for Mutual Understanding and Cross-Community Contact schemes, to pilot projects (discussed further below) such as Social, Civic and Political Education, have thus also been developed to overcome the negative and divisive socialising impact of the segregated schooling structure.

## **The impact of donor support in Mozambique**

In addition to fragmented education authority structures and the highly segregated education systems of parallel school systems, the nature of educational governance on which curriculum policy choices depend may also be linked to the degree of donor involvement. In this regard, Mozambique stands out as one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world. This reality makes it difficult to determine to what extent “aid dependence and indebtedness have undermined Mozambique’s sovereignty so that the conditions attached to aid have forced the country to accept some controversial policy changes” (Balegamire Bazilashe, Dhorsan, and Tembe). Moreover, the fragmented coordination of aid has further undermined the government’s capacity to set priorities and design its own programme. Unable to devote adequate funding to curriculum reform, the government is dependent on priorities set by donors which appear to provide more support for pilot monolingual programmes than they do for bilingual programmes. Finally, implementation of decisions made within the national project of curriculum reform is set back by lengthy administrative procedures to access funds needed for implementation.

## **SHIFTING CURRICULUM PARADIGMS**

### **What is meant by curriculum?**

Although there is no agreed definition of the term “curriculum,” a broad definition often adopted in the literature refers to the organisation of sequences of learning experiences in view of producing desired learning outcomes. The official planned intended school curriculum is articulated in a series of documents that include legislative decrees, policy documents, curriculum frameworks or guidelines, standards frameworks, syllabi, textbooks, and other instructional materials. Many rightly argue that while officially prescribed curricula clearly define the content, methods, and structures of intended learning experiences, they fail to account for the actual conditions of implementation (or “real” curricula) that ultimately shape learning experiences and define learning outcomes. In addition, examination of official curriculum overlooks the importance of the unplanned learning of the hidden curriculum in which meanings are conveyed indirectly by the way language is used, the behaviour and attitudes of teachers, the interactions that occur in the classroom, and the assessment methods practiced. From this perspective, curriculum may be broadly conceived to encompass educational philosophy, values, aims and objectives, organisational structures, teaching and learning materials and methods, student experiences, assessment, and learning outcomes. It is a process that includes both intended or officially prescribed curriculum, as well as actually implemented or real curriculum.

### **Curricular renewal as a reflection of changing approaches to social cohesion**

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” (Rosenmund, 2000). Processes of curricular change are often introduced on the basis of a recognised weakness in school education. This weakness is defined in terms of the weak relevance of existing curricula in reflecting the ways in which society has changed as a result of conflict, and/or in promoting the types of social changes perceived as being necessary to ensure transition out of civil strife, reconciliation, and the consolidation of peace. The types of knowledge, skills, values, norms,

attitudes, and behaviours that encourage *respect for human dignity and diversity* are mainly located within often sensitive areas of learning that touch upon the often sensitive issues of collective memory or collective amnesia, identity, sense of citizenship, and of shared destiny.

- How is curriculum conceptualised?
- What are the rationales for change?
- Has there been any assessment of the role of schooling, in general, and of curriculum, in particular, in the exacerbation of social divisions and/ or in the tensions leading to the outbreak of conflict?
- If the conflict has provoked a shift in curriculum paradigms, what is the nature of that shift? Does this reformulation move toward reinforcing a common national identity or toward the recognition of multiple identities in the process of reconciliation and of social reconstruction?

### **How is curriculum conceptualised?**

Conceptualisations of curriculum as contained in this volume vary somewhat in each context. On the one hand, this includes a traditional and narrow view of curriculum as simply a list of subjects, as is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where

There would appear to be no commonly agreed definition of “curriculum” as an overarching concept. This absence of a consensual definition, compounded by the fragmented nature of educational responsibility, explains the absence of any broad curriculum statements or documents and the lack of a countrywide curriculum policymaking body.

(Stabback)

Conversely, other conceptualisations are based on very broad definitions that encompass unplanned learning and the hidden curriculum. Advantages of such broad definitions can be particularly useful in contexts of highly segregated school systems, as is the case in Northern Ireland, where the complex structure of the education system reflects the divisions in the society as a whole, and could arguably be considered to be part of the hidden curriculum. One level of curriculum defined in that particular context is that of:

Structured learning experiences that are supported and informed by curricular documents, resources, training, assessment, and evaluation. These experiences may or may not take place in the classroom; and may derive from the informal socialising impact of school life and human interaction.

(Arlow)

Despite variations in the way in which curriculum is conceptualised in each of the studies presented here, there is a general consensus around the idea that curriculum is to be defined in relation to “structured series of intended learning outcomes” (Sri Lanka) that are planned and which, according to the context, may or may not go beyond the classroom or the school environment and encompass other institutionalised education settings. An essential aspect referred to explicitly in some of these approaches is that of “*desired*” knowledge, skills, and

attitudes (in Guatemala and Rwanda), which emphasises the crucial issue of the authority to define and select legitimate knowledge.

Clarifying how curriculum is conceptualised in each context is important in that it determines curricular paradigms and the way in which these relate to educational/pedagogical tradition(s) and how these may be changing. To a very real extent, the societies discussed in the seven studies are undertaking curriculum change as a process of social self-reflection, pointedly reflecting the links between curriculum and identity noted by Popkewitz and Brennan (1998):

curriculum is continually a practice of inclusion/exclusion, of constructing reason and nonreason that have critical moments in the construction of ‘self’ and the world.

### **Reconceptualising the nation through inclusion in Guatemala**

The case of Guatemala makes explicit the systematic exclusion that has resulted from the homogenising nature of monolingual and monocultural policies, rooted in the official denial of multilingual and multicultural reality of national society. In addressing this legacy, there has been a critical examination of educational policies in a broad public debate that has necessitated a fundamental paradigm shift, moving away from the previous hegemonic educational vision and reconceptualising national identity. Educational paradigms are explained as having shifted from principles of assimilation in the pre-1944 era, to acceptance and integration in the post-independence years, and finally, to the current paradigm of interculturalisation based on the 1985 political constitution, and in which the concept of national citizenship is based on the acceptance of multiple cultural identities. The education reform of 1998 that followed, “established the foundation and profile of a new form of education whose source would be the specific cultures of the peoples of the nation, as well as universal knowledge and cultural values” (Salazar Tetzagüic and Grigsby). In a radical departure from the centuries of repression...

Education is now considered to be a decisive factor for promoting the cultural identity of each of the peoples that make up the country and for affirming the national identity. It is through education that a peaceful and harmonious coexistence between the people and communities is fostered—a coexistence based on inclusion, tolerance, solidarity, respect, equality, equity, and a mutual enrichment that eliminates all discriminatory manifestations.

(Salazar Tetzagüic and Grigsby)

Undoubtedly, however, it is a promising way of framing the fundamental national debates about identity mentioned previously. Policymakers in Guatemala, for example, are clearly acting to construct their vision of social cohesion through curriculum reform:

Beyond the paradigm shift in curricular theory, curricular changes introduce a reconceptualisation of the school, not only in the reorganisation of its structures to adapt to what is known as modernity, but also—and especially—in the perspective of building a new multiethnic, plurilingual, and multicultural nation that has emerged from an armed conflict that fragmented and polarised the society.

(Salazar Tetzagüic and Grigsby)

## **From failing the nation to promoting national unity and reconciliation in Rwanda**

There is a view among key education stakeholders in Rwanda today that the pre-1994 curriculum was characterised by a lack of values and that it is precisely through the recovery of and redefinition of social values that social and civic reconstruction can move forward. Rutayisire, Kabano, and Rubagiza describe a pre-1994 political environment, which

heavily influenced an education system that did not do much in terms of the prevention of conflict. The Rwandan system was characterised by injustice based on ethnicity, regionalism, gender disparity, and religious discrimination, all of which could certainly have contributed to the 1994 genocide.

While the authors acknowledge the progress made thus far in educational development in Rwanda, they nevertheless note that:

... a closer look at the education system before the 1994 genocide reveals that the education system—and specifically the *school curriculum*—failed the nation. How else would one explain the criminal activities of teachers, doctors, lawyers, priests, nuns, bishops, and any other profession one could think of? What had gone wrong with the education system?

The study suggests that learning content, teaching and learning methods and school structure has historically exacerbated and fuelled social tensions and even created social fissures. Mention is made of the more or less arbitrary mechanisms of identification that were a function of a colonial legacy that had little to do with a “true” Banyarwanda identity. The critical and deeply reflective questioning of the relationship between the education system, group identity, and the causes and the extreme violence is informing the nature of curriculum policy change in Rwanda based on the premise that

[t]he curriculum is the heart of any education system and that the establishment and delivery of effective curricula will contribute significantly to achieving both quantitative and qualitative targets including reconciliation, social cohesion, and national unity.

(Rutayisire et al)

## **Education reform and political violence in Sri Lanka**

In discussing the education reforms of 1972 and 1981 the authors note that while they may have been initiated in response to socio-political crises that surfaced in the course of the war, the reforms did not appear to be grounded in any “conscious effort” to address the pressing issue of national cohesion. The reforms did represent an attempt to correct perceived imbalances in educational provision, but altering forms of access did little to address the fundamental problems of inequity in the system. Only the most recent (1997) reforms have struggled directly to identify the

major divisive systemic features such as segregation of children by ethnicity, the need to enable children to become bilingual and thereby facilitate communication among them, and the need to introduce a multicultural perspective in designing curriculum.

(Perera, Wijetunge, and Balasooriya)

Despite this more profound understanding of the challenges facing the education system, the authors caution that the crucial areas of assessment and accountability must not be neglected in determining the effectiveness of the envisioned reform. They note that, as yet, any concrete investigation of the extent to which the reforms “have been designed to facilitate, and have actually facilitated, the achievement of the national goals and competencies for social cohesion has not been examined adequately and qualitatively.”

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT POLICY ISSUES

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

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 using 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” (Rosenmund, 2000). 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. Indeed, we have seen above how the specific nature of the conflict implies particular challenges for educational policy reform in terms of reframing national culture and identity through language policies, social studies, and the teaching and learning of history, geography, civics, literature, and religion. The broader the process of consultation and social dialogue that is implemented to elicit and define the aims and goals of education to translate the vision of the citizen of tomorrow, the more extensive will be the links that connect diverse social actors. 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 policymaking processes. National curriculum guidelines and frameworks may therefore be seen as *social contracts* resulting from processes of social dialogue, bargaining, negotiating, and reaching consensus. What, then, are some of the main questions that can guide an understanding of how difficult policy issues are dealt with?

- What are the sensitive or contentious policy issues relative to questions of history, collective memory, national identity, and sense of citizenship?
- Who is consulted and who is consulting in the process of reviewing and changing curriculum policy? What is the nature of their participation? Whose voices are heard, and how are they expressed?
- How are conflicting views dealt with? How is consensus reached? What are the risks of polarisation? Might it be counterproductive to discuss certain issues at certain times?

### Linguistic and cultural issues in Guatemala

Multiple ways of thinking about questions of national inclusion are dependent on multiple forms of expression, both at a “practical” level involving linguistic parity (between and among

indigenous languages and Spanish), and at socioeconomic and sociopolitical levels that insist on just educational policies, which are understood to include and be defined by just legislative practices. Characteristic of the recent reform in Guatemala is the effort to build a participatory and representative consultation process, reflecting a crucial extension and application of the political promises made in an effort to bring an end to the civil war. Salazar Tetzagüic and Grigsby note that the reform is fundamentally “a social movement inclusive of and coordinated with other processes of social transformation, which aim at the construction of a plurilingual, multiethnic, and pluricultural state.” Thus, bilingual and intercultural curriculum reform is seen as both belonging to the community and also as the means of transforming that community. It prioritises and insists on the source of social transformation as one that has grown out of the process of dialogue:

...the cultural and social resurgence of the Mayan People and of other indigenous peoples, is leading Guatemala to redefine itself as a nation and reorganise itself as a state. It is a dynamic process that is moving along a path of justice and equity, towards unity in diversity, whose source and support is the new education and intercultural dialogue.  
(Salazar Tetzagüic and Grigsby)

### **Language policies and national unity in Mozambique**

Schooling in Mozambique was subject first to the assimilationist policies of the colonial authorities and then, after independence, was inscribed within the broader ideological changes in the socialist world. Thus, desired curriculum reforms after independence (in 1975) languished throughout the subsequent civil war (1976–92) and have only recently been given united national attention. Segregation, while first institutionalised under the colonial administration of schooling as a physical separation, took on a linguistic form after independence, as Portuguese persisted as the nation’s official language. Even as the current introduction of local language curriculum is working to ease this form of social division, economic disparities persist in reinforcing challenges of equal access. Despite the continued dominance of the colonial Portuguese tongue, ambitious mother tongue language reforms are the strongest feature of the current policy change.

As Mozambique has only recently undertaken to incorporate cultural and linguistic diversity, it is also seeking to recover a national (African) identity. Yet the challenges of constructing a new curriculum able to integrate a southern African outlook and reinforce local identities, without weakening the idea of a national identity, are significant, and focus mainly on language policy reforms. As expressed by Helge Rønning, in Mozambique:

there existed, and still exists, an attitude in political circles of equating the development of African language with tribalism, and that raising the question of a different language policy is tantamount to questioning the project of national unity.  
(Balegamire Bazilashe et al)

The new language policy and the current introduction of local languages as media of instruction during the first years of primary education mark a clear departure from the past. Local languages, (once considered to be possible causes of division) and local cultures (previously considered to be elements of obscurantism and obstacles to the construction of the modern socialist citizen) are now beginning to be considered by policymakers as a key means to reinforce national identity.

## **History in Sri Lanka**

History is arguably the most contentious area of learning in Sri Lankan school education. In the aftermath of the protracted conflict, the content of history teaching has been seriously debated and such key questions as “Whose history is it? Who should select it? For what purpose?” have been the subject of public discussion. However, the polarisation of views on these fundamental issues of collective memory has obstructed any possible national consensus on the content of history to be taught in schools, and highlights all too clearly the close linkage between the such curriculum policy issues with that of the wider political issues related to the cessation of violence, the resolution of political conflict, and the nature of the peace

Historiography has significantly influenced the conflict, and the painful collective memories and group animosities that have become increasingly polarized over time stand in the way of reconceptualising or rewriting history as a school subject that could facilitate social cohesion and national integrity. [...] the challenges posed by some of the most contentious issues seem to threaten the very foundation of the curriculum framework, indicating that the processes of negotiation and consensus building on the political realm will be crucial, in the final analysis, to how decisionmaking is dealt with at the level of reorganising and restructuring school knowledge.

(Perera et al)

## **National identity and social studies in Lebanon**

One of the main educational challenges in postwar Lebanon was to mould a new generation of Lebanese youth that would have a common national identity based on a set of shared social and civic values and an acceptance of the pluralistic and unified nature of Lebanese society. While educationists considered social studies to be an appropriate vehicle for the transmission and the formation of such principles and values, the process of translating these ideas into the development of common history and civics curriculum was problematic. In addition to conceptual problems around such terms as political sectarianism, pluralism and diversity, one of the central problems faced by the Consultative Committee in the mid 1990s was reaching consensus on Lebanese identity. This was perhaps most clearly reflected in the problematic development of history curricula, where

The question was then how to combine and balance divergent historical narratives, which place a greater emphasis either on the Phoenician or the Arab legacy of Lebanon, and on what sets Lebanon apart from the rest of the Arab world as opposed to what embeds it within that tradition.

(Frayha)

The development of civics education curricula has been based on the implicit assumption that school education “can positively address the sectarianism, clannishness, and regionalism, entrenched during the war, and thereby contribute to national unity.” While the process of developing civics education curriculum has been accompanied by difficulties, compromises and controversies, it has now been effectively integrated at all grade levels. This has not been the case with history where the suspension of the newly designed common primary textbooks for grades 2-6 reflects the persistent difficulties in reaching consensus on Lebanon’s national identity and history. In recent years, the difficulties encountered in the development of social studies curriculum has been compounded by the recent demand, voiced by both Christian and Muslim clergymen, for the integration of religious education in the official public school curriculum.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- What is the role of pilot programmes and what are the ways in which these may (re)inform curriculum policy decisions?
- What evaluation has been undertaken on recent curriculum change? If so, what type, with what results, and with what implications for (re)informing policy and implementation of curriculum changes?
- How do youth/students perceive reform? How do they see education in relation to conflict?

While important as a source of innovation and experimentation in all educational systems, pilot projects at the grassroots level take on particular significance in the context of more challenging policy contexts. It is true that pilot projects in a fragmented educational authority structure such as that of BiH may have limited scope for mainstreaming and informing curriculum policy, particularly as there is no locus for national decision-making for school education. On the other hand, in the context of civil strife with as yet unresolved political conflicts, as is the case in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, pilot projects can play a crucial role. They not only inform educational policy change to foster social cohesion, but also offer the possibility, as in Northern Ireland, to create a context in which policy change becomes possible.

### The role of pilot projects in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's society still seems to be characterised by a lack of consensus around issues of central importance in any democratic society. [...] Historically, civic life and the law enforcement and legal system had been experienced, by some, as sectarian. A sense of shared ownership of these crucial areas of public life is, at best, only beginning to emerge. (Arlow)

Prior to 1998, the political impossibility of discussing and addressing segregation at a policy level was circumvented through pilot grassroots efforts undertaken by committed volunteers and individuals who envisaged social reconciliation through educational initiatives. Furthermore, had the curriculum reforms been undertaken in the area of civics/citizenship (in particular) as a standard "top-down" development exercise by the educational authorities, there would likely have been "accusations of social engineering." The crucial importance, therefore, of the ("bottom-up") pilot initiatives is that they have been credited with having changed "the nature of discourse in Northern Ireland" by introducing a language that "allows people to express their support for cultural pluralism and political dialogue rather than sectarianism and political violence."

The revision of civics curricula within a wider social context is a way of allowing for the emergence of alternatives to contentious issues by no longer taking their irresolution for granted.

It is not accidental that concepts contained in the thematic areas are difficult. The difficulty of the language reflects the nature of citizenship education and the complexity of the issues we are asking young people to engage with. In Northern Ireland, the very concept

of citizenship is problematic; it is therefore important that the conceptual areas be seen as problematic as well, in that they give rise to issues that are open to multiple, conflicting, and changing interpretation.

(Arlow)

The pilot projects promote an analysis of the multiple, conflicting, and changing interpretations of contentious issues—in other words, making the definitions and codes themselves problematic inspires a different kind of shared civic ownership in vital areas of public life.

### **Critical examination of established scholarship**

In other cases, such as Rwanda, research is crucial to defining fundamental questions relative to the experience of violence before any significant effort may be made to promote reconciliation and national cohesiveness through formal education. Because Rwanda is, as yet, engaged in relatively early stages of curriculum policy reform, much of the discussion in chapter seven is a blend of both early data analysis and conceptual rigor, mapping out questions and facilitating consultation for possible responses. From the very beginning, the study's authors question the blind importation of "scholarship," including (as mentioned previously) the relevance of theories of race and ethnicity in explaining the genocide, thus raising the fundamental question of the responsibility of scholars in the dynamics of identity-based, or so-called "ethnic conflict." Such questioning leads to the search for a valid response to the authors' concerned refrain of "Why Rwanda?" The current challenge to write an official national history whose purpose is to strengthen a common national identity, requires a redefinition of citizenship, which, in turn, requires, at least partly, a redefinition of scholarship and its incumbent responsibility.

We maintain that in contrast to the robust efforts to restore security and infrastructure following the devastation in 1994, not enough critical attention has been focused on analysing and assessing the ways in which schools understand and teach about the Rwandan genocide. This is true with respect both to analysing and assessing how schools develop this understanding and also to the means that they have at their disposal. Education has clearly been used to divide the Rwandan society. However, the authors are convinced that through restoring memory and reconstructing history as objectively as possible, Rwandans can gradually be helped to draw together as one nation.

(Rutayisire et al)

## **CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES**

The studies presented in this book focus on the (political) process of reconciliation and of social and civic reconstruction embedded in (sovereign) educational policy reform. The central question is to determine how societies are reconstructing themselves regarding sovereign and sensitive issues related to the (re)definition of national 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? And, equally crucially, how is this done? In terms of the direction of curriculum policy reform, such questions 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.

The construction of national imaginaries provides a way to think about the discourses of educational reform and research. They should not be thought of as descriptive of change

but as embodying a deep reshaping of the images of social action and consciousness through which individuals are to relate to the multiple global and local contexts in which they participate.

(Popkewitz, 2000)

In each of the seven societies presented in this book, the specific nature of the social divisions has implications for the conceptualisation of citizenship and a direct influence 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. The examination of education and conflict in these societies demonstrates the ways in which schooling can be the primary and contested terrain within which the structure of national identity is formed. Each of the contexts of conflict may be characterised as identity-based in which national monocultural state or subnational sectarian identities have been claimed as the legitimate basis for political violence. Questions of identity, as they relate to social cohesion, are essential to investigate given that they relate to inclusion/exclusion, and often to division and conflict.

How social cohesion is defined with regard to educational policymaking in the wake of violent political conflict is largely linked to the way in which the goals of schooling are conceptualised. In examining education policy in the seven societies presented here, there are three things being asked (more explicitly in some cases than in others) of the curriculum development process, namely, that it<sup>4</sup>

1. become aware of its own potential role in having served as one of the underlying causes of the conflict (assessing language policies, history curriculum, and pedagogical and structural approaches adopted concerning identity formation);
2. attempt to deal with the legacy of the conflict (incorporating reconciliation and peace-building philosophies and practices); and
3. attempt to prevent any further outbreak of violent conflict (promoting tolerance, critical thinking, and values commonly esteemed by society).

The resulting aims of curriculum reform reflect different aspects of social cohesion. Furthermore, as it is by no means a static concept, in considering these questions social cohesion is shown to have undergone a conceptual evolution over time in the context of each education system. For example, in the case of Mozambique,

The new curriculum nevertheless introduces important changes as it redefines Mozambican national identity in terms of a multilingual and multicultural society. The continuing effort to “preserve national unity,” in other words, is not in doubt. It is the definition of what constitutes national unity that is undergoing a transformation.

(Balegamire Bazilashe et al)

It is worth bearing in mind while reading the chapters that follow how the different perception of what social cohesion means and how it functions plays out in the national policy arena. The study of Rwanda, for instance, demonstrates the possible tension between the aims of the economic policies and the aims of the education policies, both of which are ostensibly operating under a paradigm of social cohesion.

[I]n spite of the emphasis on increasing the access to and improving the quality of education for young Rwandans, very little attention has been paid to investing in an assessment of how schools understand and teach about issues related to values that reinforce social cohesion, citizenship, human rights, peace, unity, and reconciliation.

(Rutayisire et al)

Are policymakers and other stakeholders operating under the same national paradigm of social cohesion when determining different policies? How are assumptions framing consequences? In developing education policy under the paradigm of social cohesion, the majority of these seven societies are redefining and reconceptualising what “diversity” and inclusive policies are able to contribute as inputs. Examining these processes enriches our understanding of social cohesion. In the cases of Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Guatemala, there appear to be clear steps in the process of reflecting on what social cohesion has meant in the past, how that definition has itself been exclusive, what the dangers and consequences have been, and how the concept has thus transformed and evolved along very similar lines to those of education policies in societies emerging from civil strife. Social cohesion, which is also described as “national unity,” “national cohesion,” “social harmony,” “internal social peace” (*silm ahli*), “unity in diversity,” and “unity and reconciliation” is thus increasingly understood as an idea that acknowledges and legitimates the presence of multiple national identities. Its effective meaning can be seen in processes of curriculum development.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> International workshop organised by the World Bank devoted to *Curricula, Textbooks, and Pedagogical Practices and the Promotion of Peace and Respect for Diversity* (Washington, March 24–26, 2003); OECD brainstorming meeting devoted to *Promoting Social Cohesion Through Education* (Paris, July 3, 2003); UNESCO IBE regional seminar on *Curriculum Reform and Social Cohesion in Central America* (San José, Costa Rica, November 5–7, 2003); International Conference organised jointly by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention and the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO on *Conflict Resolution in Schools: Learning to Live Together* (Soesterberg, The Netherlands, September 15–16, 2003); International summer school on *Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Education Sector* organised jointly by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and the World Bank Institut Paris (July 7–15, 2003); internal seminar at the UK Department for International Development (DfID) devoted to *Education and Conflict* (London, December 5, 2002); and UNESCO international experts meeting on *Textbooks and Learning Materials: Component of Quality Education That Can Foster Peace, Human Rights, Mutual Understanding and Dialogue* (Paris, December 12–13, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> It is also to be noted in this respect that Chapter 2 on Bosnia and Herzegovina does not provide a historical context both because the author is not from the region nor specialised in the history of the Balkans, and because the recent history of the region and the analysis of armed conflict in the Balkans in the 1990s remains highly controversial.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Arlow, statement made during international seminar (Geneva, April 3, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> The authors would like to thank Nat Colletta at the Institute for Peacebuilding and Development (Washington) for his comments in this regard.

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## Appendix 1: Analytical Framework

<b>1. Background to conflict</b>	
Nature of social divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of social divisions</li> <li>• Nature of group identity (language, religion, “ethnicity”)</li> <li>• How group identity is articulated with social/political divisions</li> <li>• Issues of “cultural defensiveness” and inflexibility.</li> </ul>
Nature of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of conflict: internal armed conflict/disturbances; political violence; sectarian violence; “ethnic conflict”; civil strife—“identity-based conflicts” in which very existence of communities is perceived to be under threat</li> <li>• Difficulties in naming the conflict</li> <li>• Scale and intensity of violence</li> <li>• Duration of violence/recency</li> </ul>
Nature of peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of political agreement</li> <li>• Nature of external involvement</li> <li>• How the role of education reform/curriculum change is articulated in peace agreements (if at all)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Characteristics of present-day education system (with historical background as relevant)</b>	
Management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of centralisation/decentralisation</li> <li>• Level of democratisation of policy structure</li> <li>• Fragmentation?: potential difficulties in identifying locus of decisionmaking authority</li> <li>• “Real” decisionmaking power</li> </ul>
School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure of school system (segregated, assimilated, integrated, other)</li> <li>• School types: public, private, community, other</li> <li>• Share of overall enrolment in each school type</li> </ul>
Institutional setting for curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is/are the department(s) that translate policy decisions and develop curricula materials ? (institutional mechanisms &amp; structures)</li> <li>• What is the relative degree of authority/autonomy of this/these department(s) with regard to central education authorities?</li> </ul>

<p>Educational/curricular traditions</p> <p>Implications for reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is being built on?</li> <li>• What are the national pedagogical traditions?</li> <li>• What are the curriculum traditions?</li> <li>• What has been done in the past?</li> <li>• What are the characteristics of the examination system?</li> <li>• What is the pedagogical style?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do these traditions impact on possibilities for effective curriculum changes/innovations?</li> <li>• To what extent do educational traditions influence present policy decisions?</li> <li>• What are the implications for teacher training?</li> </ul>
<b>3. Economic context of reform (internal and external)</b>	
Resource assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does economic context determine possibilities for consultation (languages, translation, evaluative research, surveys, national workshops/debates)?</li> <li>• How do resource assessments (textbook development, teacher training) impact on the scope of policy change?</li> </ul>
Nature of donor involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the degree of dependency (if any) on external funding, expertise, and/or initiatives for implementation of curriculum change?</li> <li>• What impact (if any) does this have on curriculum policy choices (rationales and direction of change, as well as modalities for consultation)?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Rationales for curriculum policy change: Schooling as a factor of conflict and reconciliation</b>	
Rationales for curriculum change (why change?)	<p><i>Change is introduced on the basis of a recognised weakness in the relevance of existing curricula in reflecting the ways in which society has changed as a result of conflict and/or in promoting the types of social changes perceived as being necessary in order to ensure transition out of armed conflict and political violence and the consolidation of peace.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assessment (evaluative research, surveys, national workshops) of the relevance of curricula have informed the need for change?</li> <li>• What has been identified as having potentially contributed to the conflict in the first place?</li> <li>• How has this been identified and by whom?</li> <li>• What is the level of political will to undertake change?</li> </ul>

<b>5. Rethinking what is “legitimate” knowledge (understood broadly as “learning content”)</b>	
Changes in curricular paradigms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the conflict provoked a shift in curriculum paradigms?</li> <li>• If so, how has the curriculum paradigm shifted from the “pre-conflict” period to the present?</li> <li>• How has the curriculum model or approach changed?</li> <li>• What philosophical premises are these decisions based on?</li> <li>• How is curriculum conceptualised and by whom?</li> <li>• What is curriculum policy reform thought/assumed to be capable of in terms of its contribution to peace-building, stability, reconciliation, social cohesion etc ?</li> <li>• Does hope (future orientation) play a role?: Is the curriculum reform asking the present to confront the future, the past, both?</li> </ul>
Direction of curriculum change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What needs to change as a result of the paradigm shift?</li> <li>• In what ways are the aims and principles of education reformulated?</li> <li>• Does this reformulation move toward reinforcing a common national identity (through assimilation) or toward the recognition of multiplicities in reconciliation/reconstruction?</li> </ul>
<b>6. Policy dialogue, consensus building, and resistance: Challenges posed by sensitive learning areas</b>	
Modalities of consultation and participation in policy reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is consulted in the process of reviewing and changing curriculum policy (stakeholders)?</li> <li>• What is the nature of their participation?</li> <li>• Whose voices are heard, and how are they expressed?</li> <li>• Whose voices are not heard?</li> <li>• What is the process of consultation?</li> <li>• How does it emerge after prolonged period of conflict?</li> <li>• What are the motives and levels/degrees of influence of stakeholders?</li> <li>• The quality of their input? The genuineness of the consultation?</li> <li>• Who is undertaking to consult?</li> </ul>

<p>Identifying difficult issues with regard to sensitive learning areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any contentious/sensitive/difficult issues to resolve? (particularly in areas of learning such as languages, social studies, civics, religious studies, history, etc., that touch upon collective memory, identity, sense of citizenship?). Which ones?</li> <li>• What are the different viewpoints/conflicts of interest among stakeholders with regard to the learning areas listed below?</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Culture and Languages</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of official national language(s)</li> <li>• Language(s) of instruction</li> <li>• “National” literature</li> </ul> <p><b>Civics/citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic, multidisciplinary approach or discrete subject?</li> <li>• Degrees of flexibility</li> <li>• Questions of contradictions between content and methodology</li> </ul> <p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewriting of official history.</li> <li>• Does the curricular reform perpetuate tradition/status quo or introduce a critical historiography? (necessary preconditions for the latter? Recency of conflict, etc.)</li> <li>• Is the reform questioning a founding myth of a national identity (as opposed to a more “recent” history)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Religion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious instruction versus culture of religions</li> </ul>
<p>Consensus building: Dealing with difficult issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are conflicting views dealt with?</li> <li>• How is consensus reached?</li> <li>• How does consensus building come about or change throughout the distinct phases of policy dialogue, policy formulation, and policymaking?</li> <li>• Is there any risk of polarisation?</li> <li>• Might it be counterproductive to discuss certain issues at certain times?</li> <li>• What are the processes of negotiation and of consensus building adopted in drafting and approving curriculum frameworks and subject curricula?</li> <li>• What strategies are employed to deal with these difficult issues?</li> </ul>

Curriculum balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is learning content reorganised and restructured?</li> <li>• What decisions are involved?</li> <li>• How is a new curriculum balance defined?</li> <li>• How is the issue of overcrowded curriculum approached?</li> <li>• Infusion and cross-curricular models vs. separate subjects.</li> <li>• In an effort to create space for additional content, what is reduced (removed, left out, rejected)?</li> <li>• How does this impact explicit policies about teaching methods?</li> </ul>
<b>7. Research, monitoring, and evaluation</b>	
Pilot programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of pilot programmes and way in which these may (re)inform curriculum policy decisions (What is the scale of pilot programs? Who is involved? Is evaluation taking place?)</li> </ul>
Monitoring policy & practice: Identifying indicators of change (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has any evaluation been undertaken on recent curriculum change? If so, what type, with what results, and with what implications for (re)informing policy and implementation?</li> <li>• Research carried out to identify gaps, obstacles, limitations, etc.</li> <li>• Role of evaluative research in identifying degree of receptivity/resistance in the implementation of curriculum changes.</li> <li>• What is the nature of the resistance that may be encountered?</li> </ul>
Perspectives of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do youth/students perceive reform?</li> <li>• How do they see education in relation to conflict?</li> </ul>