

Innocenti Working Paper

**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND
RECONCILIATION**

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IWP 2010-10

June, 2010

Innocenti Working Papers

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ISSN: 1014-7837

For readers wishing to cite this document, we suggest the following form:

Smith, Alan (2010), 'Children, Education and Reconciliation', *Innocenti Working Paper* No. 2010-10. Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

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Children and Transitional Justice Working Paper Series

The Children and Transitional Justice Working Paper Series is intended to generate dialogue and consensus, and to better inform children's protection and participation in ongoing or planned transitional justice processes in diverse country situations. Based on experience, the papers document and identify challenges, dilemmas and questions for further debate and formulate recommendations to better protect the rights of children involved in transitional justice processes.

The research conducted has created broad interest and visibility, helping establish a child rights-based approach to transitional justice that addresses advocacy, policy and programme concerns within UNICEF and among partners. Key areas of focus include:

- International legal framework and child rights
- Children and truth commissions
- Local processes of accountability and reconciliation
- Transitional justice and institutional reform.

The identification of topics and authors in this Working Paper Series was undertaken in the context of strategic partnerships with the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School, and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The review of the Series was guided by a peer review oversight panel, chaired by Jaap Doek. A network of practitioners, academics, legal experts and child rights advocates participated in the peer review. The Series was initiated and overseen by Saudamini Siegrist, with the support of Ann Linnarsson.

An Expert Discussion on Children and Transitional Justice was convened by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) in June 2008 to provide comments to individual authors and to assess the range and coverage of the Series. A subsequent conference on Children and Transitional Justice was jointly convened by the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School and IRC in April 2009 in Cambridge, MA USA.

UNICEF IRC's research on children and transitional justice was generously supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Cooperazione allo Sviluppo) and by the Government of France.

This series of Working Papers supports and complements the publication *Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation*, edited by Sharanjeet Parmar et al., published by the Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA, March 2010.

Titles in this series, with authors' affiliations, are:

Children and Transitional Justice Working Paper Series 2010

- No. 7: Children and the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor Leste. Megan Hirst, International Criminal Court, Victims' Participation and Reparation Section; Ann Linnarsson, UNICEF, IRC.
- No. 8: Children and Reparation: Past Lessons and New Directions. Khristopher Carlson and Dyan Mazurana, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.
- No. 9: Children and Security Sector Reform. David Nosworthy, Independent Consultant.
- No. 10: Children, Education and Reconciliation. Alan Smith, University of Ulster.
- No. 11: Child Victims of Torture and Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment. Dan O'Donnell, Independent Consultant; Norberto Liwski, Ministry of Social Development, Argentina.

- No. 12: Genetic Tracing, Disappeared Children and Justice. Michele Harvey-Blankenship, Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta; Phuong N. Pham, Human Rights Center, University of California at Berkeley; Rachel Shigekane, Human Rights Center, University of California at Berkeley.
- No. 13: Prosecuting International Crimes against Children: The Legal Framework. Christine Bakker, European University Institute, Florence.
- No. 14: Psychosocial Support for Children: Protecting the Rights of Child Victims and Witnesses in Transitional Justice Processes. An Michels, Independent Consultant.
- No. 15: Restorative Justice after Mass Violence: Opportunities and Risks for Children and Youth. Laura Stovel, Department of Global Studies, Wilfred Laurier University; Marta Valinas, Catholic University Leuven.
- No. 16: Transitional Justice and the Situation of Children in Colombia and Peru. Salvador Herencia Carrasco, Advisor Constitutional Court of Peru.
- No. 17: Transitional Justice and Youth Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups. Theresa Betancourt and A'Nova Ettien, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights.

Other papers produced by the project have been published in *Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation* (UNICEF and Harvard Law School, 2010), and are available on the UNICEF IRC website.

- Chapter 1: *Child Rights and Transitional Justice*. Saudamini Siegrist, UNICEF IRC.
- Chapter 2: Basic Assumptions of Transitional Justice and Children. Alison Smith, No Peace Without Justice.
- Chapter 3: International Criminal Justice and Child Protection. Cecile Aptel, ICTJ.
- Chapter 4: Children and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Piers Pigou, South African Archives.
- Chapter 5: Child Participation in the Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Philip Cook and Cheryl Heykoop, International Institute for Child Rights and Development, University of Victoria.
- Chapter 6: Children and the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Theo Sowa, Independent Consultant.
- Chapter 7: Accountability and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda.
- Part I: Accountability for Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes by the Lord's Resistance Army. Khristopher Carlson and Dyan Mazurana, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.
- Part II: The Potential and Limits of Mato Oput as a Tool for Reconciliation and Justice. Prudence Acirokop, Norwegian Refugee Council.
- Chapter 8: Disappeared Children, Genetic Tracing and Justice. Michele Harvey-Blankenship, Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta; Rachel Shigane, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley.
- Chapter 9: Truth Commissions and National Curricula: The Case of the Recordándonos Resource in Peru. Julia Paulson, University of Oxford.
- Chapter 10: Realizing Economic Justice for Children: The Role of Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Societies. Sharanjeet Parmar, Access to Justice Program, Global Rights.

. Children, Education and Reconciliation

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Summary: This paper examines truth and reconciliation commissions that have made reference to a longer-term role for education in coming to terms with the past and contributing towards future reconciliation. The countries reviewed are Guatemala, Liberia, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Timor-Leste. Some have developed strategies for children's participation and made recommendations for inclusion in the formal school curriculum. However, recommendations regarding a role for education have usually been very general in nature, with little specification of what is expected of educators in practical terms and little follow-through by education authorities. The paper therefore identifies a number of challenges if education is to have a role in truth and reconciliation. It also identifies potential areas for educational development and recommendations for future actions.

Keywords: child rights, education, truth commissions, reconciliation, participation, peace-building

Acknowledgements: With grateful thanks for assistance from Brenna O'Rourke and Clare Magill.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This working paper follows the publication of *Children and Transitional Justice* (2010) by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the International Center for Transitional Justice. This book identified a number of issues requiring further consideration including reparation programmes, institutional reform, reintegration and the role of education. The starting point for this paper is the few examples of formal truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs) that have made reference to a role for education, but its broader remit is to consider the possible contributions of education in longer term processes of post-conflict reconciliation.

The objectives of the paper are to:

- Describe how truth commissions have so far addressed and involved education and curriculum development in their proceedings, including strategies for children's participation and lessons learned;
- Identify challenges, issues and questions related to the role of education in the process of post-conflict reconciliation;
- Note where and how international child rights standards were used in determining the course of action vis-à-vis children and identify where further reference to such standards would ensure more appropriate results;
- Reflect on how the differences in vulnerabilities and risks between boys and girls were taken into account in the TRC process;
- Formulate recommendations for engaging education experts and officials in the processes of a truth commission and longer-term reconciliation.

The paper does not address the specialized area of psychosocial support for children affected by trauma and conflict or those involved in transitional justice processes. This is the subject of another paper in this series and clearly will give rise to issues about the potential role of teachers and others involved with the protection and education of children.

2. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONS

In February 2006, a press release from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) announced the inauguration of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In the announcement, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission in Liberia stated:

For many countries emerging from prolonged periods of conflict and war, truth and reconciliation has proved to be one of the best ways to bind up the wounds of the past, to confront impunity, and to liberate the energies of the people to focus on the urgent business of national recovery. Liberia's traumas of the past will not disappear by simply ignoring them.¹

Truth and reconciliation commissions have become more common in transitional justice, and as they gain currency around the world, their role is becoming better understood.² While

¹ UNMIL 2006.

² Hayner 2002.

some countries have used TRCs as a process towards or in lieu of criminal justice, others have used them purely to establish the truth – accounts of past abuses and human rights violations – and have it acknowledged by all parties, both victims and perpetrators. Truth commission expert Priscilla Hayner points out that, through statement-taking statements, investigations, research into the causes and consequences of the abuses and writing a public report, a truth commission is able to formally acknowledge what was often before denied. In particular it can shed light on abuses perpetrated by the state; show respect and give voice to victims; inform the greater public about the extent of past crimes; and help to give shape to other justice mechanisms that may follow, such as trials or reparations.³

TRCs have evolved to aid the transition of war-damaged states, specifically post-conflict states that lack capacity to deal with past crimes through the judiciary. National systems of justice (courts or tribunals) are often neither effective nor efficient in post-conflict countries. War and widespread violence often destroy not only physical infrastructure but also the functional capacity of internal judiciary systems. In addition, the number of perpetrators who should be tried for crimes committed during conflict is often so large (such as in Rwanda and Timor-Leste) that it would put impossible stress on the judiciary, making this an impractical option.

While international courts and tribunals have stepped in to fill the gap in state judicial capacity in poorly resourced, war-damaged states, truth commissions have become a practical complement to, if not replacement of, formal (national or international) criminal courts and tribunals. This is partly due to the limited reach of the courts and partly out of recognition that even successful prosecutions do not resolve the conflict and pain associated with past abuses.⁴

Compared to a western-style judiciary, TRCs emphasize truth rather than criminal justice. Their mandates thus often include some degree of amnesty for perpetrators of crime in order to uncover and acknowledge the true extent of abuses and scale of violence that might otherwise be covered up. TRCs may therefore provide a societal function as well as meet the needs of individuals, as noted by Abrams, who points out that for the nation as a whole, finding the truth about the past is a more important goal than meting out punishment to the guilty, as the truth lays a sounder foundation for future democracy.⁵

Hayner argues that TRCs should be adapted to local culture and history, stating that no one model is right, nor should any country ‘import’ a mechanism used elsewhere. A number of states have attempted to incorporate traditional practices in their truth commission process. These include traditional beliefs about the dead in Mayan culture in Guatemala, *gacaca* courts in Rwanda, *ubuntu* in South Africa, the *lisan* system in Timor-Leste and *mato oput* in Uganda (described elsewhere in this series). The most significant challenge that such processes present is the extent to which they are consistent with international norms and standards for children’s rights. Where tensions exist this will also provide challenges for educators, most of whom are part of the communities they serve, and who may find it an

³ Hayner 2002: 24.

⁴ Hayner 2002: 14.

⁵ Abrams 2001.

uncomfortable but necessary responsibility to defend children's rights over local customs and practices.

3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AS A BASIS FOR ACTION

Ensuring the rights of the young generation who have grown up in armed conflict is not only a humanitarian concern, but is also of significant political importance in ensuring human resources needed to develop post-war societies and in the interests of national security. It is the most important investment that can be made in the interests of peace, development and human security.⁶

3.1 International Standards

International standards on children's rights are a common starting point for recommendations about children and education in TRCs. A United Nations University policy brief states that, "the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is particularly useful in supplying the main ingredients of a framework within which any form of concrete action or intervention should take place..."⁷ However, the lack of effective fulfilment of such rights in conflict settings remains a challenge despite gains resulting from the establishment of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children affected by armed conflict. This office, which reports annually to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the situation of children in conflict settings, has succeeded in institutionalizing the practice of sending child protection advisors with United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Children are also on the agenda of the Security Council, which since 1998 has passed five resolutions on children in situations of armed conflict, focusing above all on their protection from recruitment into fighting forces. The Security Council also holds annual debates on children affected by armed conflict with major human rights/humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

All these measures have undoubtedly increased the visibility of the situation of children in conflicts at international level. This has meant more funding for humanitarian work and also increased long-term support to war-affected children.⁸ However, few efforts have been made to build capacity for enforcement of such rights in post-conflict initiatives for reconciliation.

Following is a summary of treaties that address the rights of children in conflict.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most recognized and respected international treaty on protecting the rights of children, includes two optional protocols that are particularly relative to post-conflict situations: one on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the other on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In addition, CRC article 12 pledges the child's right "to be heard in any judicial and

⁶ Elizabeth Jareg in Save The Children Norway (2005).

⁷ United Nations University 2006.

⁸ Save the Children Norway 2005.

administrative proceedings, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.”

European Union Charter

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) includes a commitment to the right to education (article 14) and the right of children to protection, care and freedom of expression and for their views to be taken into account in matters concerning them (article 24). The EU has developed guidelines on children and armed conflict, and a mechanism exists allowing the EU and its ambassadors to assess and report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict.⁹ The EU also supports the Paris Commitments to Protect Children from Unlawful Recruitment or use by Armed Forces or Armed Groups (adopted 6 February 2007).

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

In 1990 Member States of the Organization of African Unity adopted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which entered into force in 1999. The Charter includes specific provisions regarding armed conflicts (article 22), addressing (1) respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts that affect the child; (2) measures to ensure that children do not participate directly in hostilities and are not recruited; and (3) protection of civilian populations, including children. Such provisions also apply to children in situations of internal armed conflicts, tension and strife. The Charter also makes specific provisions for children who are refugees. However, the Charter lacks accountability and enforcement in terms of the legislation and behaviour of a state to ensure children’s rights.

3.2 Implementation of International Standards: Country Examples

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In January 2007 the International Criminal Court announced the trial of a former rebel leader, Thomas Lubanga, for abusing the rights of children – specifically, abducting and training child soldiers and forcing them to participate in hostilities – during the 1998-2003 civil war.

Liberia

Liberia ratified the CRC in 1993 in the middle of a civil war known for heavy recruitment and use of child soldiers. However, “children suffered egregious violations of their rights to life, protection and education and were victims of abuses including forced conscription, beatings, rape and torture, as well as psychological injuries resulting from being forced to kill others”.¹⁰

In recommendations regarding children in post-conflict Liberia, the Security Council emphasized “...the importance of protection of children in armed conflict in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1379 and related resolutions... [and] the need to create a secure

⁹ EU Guidelines On Children And Armed Conflict 2003, revised 2008.

¹⁰ Watchlist 2004.

environment that enables respect for human rights including the well-being and rehabilitation of children”.¹¹

Nepal

The CRC has been the basis of several initiatives for efforts to reduce the impact of conflict on children, including an initiative to declare schools as ‘zones of peace’ based on international child rights measures. With support from Save the Children Norway, the Ministry of Children in collaboration with five political parties formed a ‘children in conflict coordination committee’, committed to respecting and enforcing the zones of peace.¹²

This led to a series of initiatives aimed at realizing children’s rights as a tool for promoting peace: creation of a national coalition of more than 35 organizations supporting children as zones of peace; training for journalists, security forces and NGO networks on the CRC and the zones of peace concept; publication of a child protection guide by the Prime Minister’s office targeting security forces; a code of conduct issued by the National Human Rights Commission for working with children in armed conflict; government announcement of schools as zones of peace; the designation of children and children’s clubs as zones of peace in schools and communities; and the establishment of a child rights desk in the National Human Rights Commission to promote and realize these initiatives.

3.3 The Rights of Vulnerable Children

Child soldiers

In 2000 the General Assembly passed an optional protocol to the CRC concerning children involved in armed conflict, which came into force in 2002. So far 132 countries are parties to the protocol.¹³ UN Security Council Resolution 1460 (adopted in 2003) also called for a halt to the use of child soldiers.¹⁴

International development agencies also address child soldiers from a rights-based perspective. For example, the Canadian International Development Agency has identified disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers as an essential step in post-conflict reconstruction through the framework of providing and protecting children’s rights. Enrolment in formal education is also a goal of reintegration. The 2003 Humanitarian Action Report notes that, “The key to reintegrating former child soldiers and preventing their re-recruitment is long-term investment in education, psychosocial support, vocational training, and support for families and communities... Child soldiers must participate and have a voice...”¹⁵

Refugee and displaced children

During conflict, few provisions are made to ensure access to education by children who are refugees or internally displaced. Many host countries have failed to provide services for

¹¹ Watchlist 2004.

¹² Save the Children Norway (2005).

¹³ http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11-b&chapter=4&lang=enUnited

¹⁴ www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sc7649.doc.htm.

¹⁵ CIDA 2005.

refugee communities due to lack of a cohesive refugee policy or concerns that providing too many services might encourage the arrival of more refugees.¹⁶ A report by Human Rights Watch noted that even inside refugee camps, boys are forcibly recruited into fighting forces and adolescent girls are abducted to be used for sex.¹⁷

While the vulnerability of refugees has received much attention, internally displaced young people often face even higher barriers to education. Some young Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda fared better than internally displaced Ugandan youth because the refugees had help from UNHCR, while no international agency was charged with the protection and care of the internally displaced.¹⁸ In a camp for internally displaced people in Liberia, the primary reason for low levels of education was insecurity in schools. They were cited as the initial target for attacks and looting and were also used as recruiting grounds for child soldiers, making children wary of attending.¹⁹

Girls and boys

Children in conflict and in post-conflict reconciliation efforts face specific problems because of their gender, and these issues need to be addressed directly. A 2005 study by the Women's Refugee Commission concluded that in post-conflict situations girls and boys faced specific problems based on their gender, with girls facing greater challenges than boys in securing support for their rights. Common experiences were recruitment into fighting forces; gender-based violence and discrimination, principally against girls, although boys also faced sexual and other forms of violence due to gender roles; teen sex, parenthood and exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; lack of parental care; and social marginalization.

The report found that girls and young women faced ongoing physical and psychological trauma following their experiences of forced sex during and after the conflict. Survivors experienced health problems related to the violence they suffered, from the risks of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, to depression and suicide. Women and girls who were raped, and especially those who became pregnant, feared rejection by their families and communities and the possibility that they would never be able to marry. Some were subjected to unsafe abortions.

4. CHILDREN AND TRUTH COMMISSIONS

War and armed conflict destroy government, community and family support systems. Family security is essential for a child's survival and physical and psychological development. "War violates every right of a child – the right to life, the right to be with family and community, the right to health, the right to the development of the personality, and the right to be nurtured and protected," states the UNICEF report *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. Karen Brouneus has noted that, "In war, children lose their childhood. They witness brutal acts, are subjected to all kinds of terrible abuse. The adult world can many times not protect and,

¹⁶ Watchlist 2004.

¹⁷ Watchlist 2004.

¹⁸ Women's Refugee Commission 2005.

¹⁹ Women's Refugee Commission 2005.

afterwards, it may not want to hear. In conclusion, the issue of how to manage the entire population's truths is an extremely complex one."²⁰²¹

As victims, witnesses, forced or voluntary perpetrators, or survivors, children and young people are directly and indirectly affected by violent conflict. However, most TRCs have excluded or ignored children, addressing them only in the context of reparation for the death or forced disappearance of their parents during the conflict. Children who are excluded from the national reconciliation process may struggle to recover individually, yet they will be responsible for maintaining the future peace. Given that young people, especially young men, are often the perpetrators of violence, whether forced or voluntary, it is essential to include them in the truth and reconciliation process, both formally and informally. Lacking such an opportunity, young people's unresolved trauma, fear and divisions may be perpetuated into the next generation.

4.1 TRC Recommendations Addressing Children's Issues

Most TRCs recommendations regarding children are for reparations, specifically reparations for children of victims or for children otherwise directly affected by violence. Below is a summary of TRCs that have made specific recommendations for children.

Argentina

- Recommended approval of laws to provide the children and other relatives of the disappeared with economic assistance, study grants, social security and employment, and to authorize measures to alleviate family and social problems caused by the disappearances.

Chile

- Recommended reparation for families, including children, of victims. In 1992 legislation was passed to create the National Corporation for Reparation and Reconciliation which established a monthly pension and medical benefits, including psychosocial counselling, for the families of those named in the report and a subsidy for the victims' children to attend high school and college.²²

Timor-Leste

The TRC recommendations included:

- Harmonize national laws with the CRC; develop institutional capacity to implement laws based on the CRC; and promote the CRC in communities through education, media and religious institutions.
- Launch a public education campaign targeting parents, teachers and the community with information about the effects of violence (physical and emotional) on children and provide alternative forms of behavioural control and character development.
- Promote positive role models for children and young people, particularly women.
- Promote sport to bring communities together.
- Develop comprehensive reproductive health programmes.

²⁰ UNICEF (1996).

²¹ Brouneus 2003.

²² Popkin and Roht-Arriaza 1995.

- Support opportunities for contact, reunion and return of children separated or taken from their families.
- Give special consideration to the situation of children who suffered educationally and in other ways because of their work for the liberation of Timor-Leste.

The TRC also made specific recommendations concerning services and aid for children separated from their families, as well as scholarships for all children affected by the conflict.

Guatemala

Concerning disappeared children and children illegally adopted during the conflict:²³

- Create a National Commission for the Search of Disappeared Children, to identify these children and document their disappearance.
- Promulgate legislation allowing the release of information by courts and other state organs on children who were adopted during the armed conflict.
- Develop a massive information campaign in Spanish and all indigenous languages about the activities and measures put in place to search for missing children.
- Adopt legislative measures allowing for revision of adoptions carried out without the knowledge or against the will of the birth parents.

Sierra Leone

Concerning children, young people and girls:²⁴

- Adopt a national child rights law based on the CRC.
- Pass legislation making 18 the age of majority.
- Pass a law forbidding marriage of girls under 18 and sexual relations under age 16 (otherwise prosecuted as rape).
- Establish strict rules to limit school fees for exams, sports, science, drama and other activities. Encourage parents to send their daughters to school and understand the benefits. Make secondary school affordable and require children to attend primary school.
- Through the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, urgently assist the children most severely affected by war, especially girls, and provide them with educational opportunities and vocational skills.
- Pass laws to prevent and end sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and provide special care (health care, vocational training and psychosocial support) to the most vulnerable children.
- Consider altering regulations covering employment of children under 18 to reflect international standards.
- Outlaw corporal punishment at school and home.
- Improve monitoring of violations of children's rights at local, district, provincial and national levels and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Develop recreation centres as a positive alternative to violence.
- Continue children's contribution to social dialogue and decision-making through facilities within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs; the Children's Forum Network; and the Voice of Children Radio.

²³ Bakker 2005.

²⁴ UNICEF 2003.

Concerning youth:

- Immediately implement the National Youth Policy and Youth Plan.
- Create a National Youth Commission in the Ministry of Youth and Sport and begin raising funds to implement the National Youth Policy and Youth Plan.
- Take steps to build partnerships with youth and increase their confidence in government efficiency and integrity.
- Adopt policies on employment and skills training for unemployed youth.
- Have the National Youth Commission publish an annual 'State of the Youth' report on youth concerns and actions needed.
- Make drug rehabilitation programmes free and available for youth.
- Pass electoral laws requiring at least 10 per cent of parliamentary candidates to be aged 18 to 35 years old.

Concerning women and girls:

- Issue a public apology admitting terrible crimes committed against women and girls and committing the government to take action to ensure such crimes are not repeated.
- Through a partnership between government and child protection agencies, work to support and reintegrate rape victims into communities and provide health and psychosocial care.

South Africa

The South African truth commission made recommendations on various reparations for children. Monetary reparations included pensions for children (up to age 25) of individuals killed or disappeared. Also included were housing credits and a waiver of military service for children of the disappeared and non-monetary reparation to ensure that such children receive special support and protection, as well as measures to reunite unaccompanied children with their families.

4.2 Participation of Children and Young People

Apart from Sierra Leone, few official TRCs have actively sought and specifically provided for children to participate in the truth-telling process. However, a 2005 study on children affected by conflict conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission concluded that:

Supporting the rights of adolescents and youth, especially their participation, is not only an obligation, it is essential good practice... [the] findings challenge assumptions held by adult decision-makers about the capabilities and potential of adolescents and youths affected by armed conflict, and make a strong case for promoting the participation of young people in decision-making as an essential means of ensuring their protection.

Participating in decision-making and programme implementation helped young people overcome feelings of social dislocation and build self-esteem, self-reliance and a new sense of identity that allowed them to heal and even thrive... [children] took important steps toward creating peaceful, healthy environments.²⁵

²⁵ Women's Refugee Commission 2005.

For the most part, the entire TRC process has failed to involve children and young people – from development of the remit to give testimony to creating final recommendations regarding children and education. A 2006 International Save the Children Alliance report on education in conflict-affected areas emphasizes the need to incorporate children’s voices into education policy. The report notes that “genuinely listening to children and their needs must be a core part of creating policies, strategies, plans and programmes that will reach children affected by conflict.”²⁶

More recently, truth commissions have begun to address crimes against children and to involve children, including in Peru, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. But there has been no documentation of this process or analysis of good practices, which could lead to recommendations for guiding and supporting children’s participation in truth-seeking and reconciliation processes.²⁷ However, a few commissions have actively sought and supported the participation of children:

South Africa

The policy of South Africa’s Truth Commission was not to take testimony from children under the age of 18, reflecting advice given by child specialists. However, the Commission convened special hearings that publicly examined the experience of children and young people. Children did not testify at these hearings, but their involvement set new international precedents in efforts by truth commissions to address issues surrounding children.²⁸ The final report included a chapter on the special children’s hearings, and the Commission developed recommendations specific to children and their needs.

Peru

Peru’s truth commission (*Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación*, or CVR) created a youth organization to participate in the commission. Children did not participate directly in formulating CVR recommendations, but they were involved through the CVR-created youth organization *Promotores de la Verdad (PROVER)*, composed of 1,400 volunteers aged 18 to 25, who had been children during the conflict. PROVER helped collect evidence and disseminate information through cultural, educational and communication activities, with significant assistance from universities.²⁹

Sierra Leone

To date the Sierra Leone TRC represents the most comprehensive inclusion and recognition of children, both as victims of violence and as TRC participants. Over 300 children voluntarily gave statements between December 2002 and March 2003. They gave their statements in private, confidential hearings, accompanied by a social worker on request. Special care was given to respect the rights and protection of children, particularly girls.³⁰ The commission set aside an entire section of its report to address the effects of war on

²⁶ International Save The Children Alliance 2006.

²⁷ UNICEF 2005.

²⁸ Pigou 2010.

²⁹ Bakker 2005.

³⁰ UNICEF 2003.

children, acknowledging the crimes committed against them and re-affirming the need to enforce international and national laws on children's rights.

5. TRCs, EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION

A number of TRCs have made reference to the need to reform education and establish a role for it in explaining the past or contributing to future reconciliation. Examples include:

Argentina

- A recommendation to require teaching of human rights in state educational establishments, whether civilian, military or police.³¹

Chile

- A recommendation for human rights education for the military and civilians, especially lawyers and judges.³²

Guatemala

- A recommendation to include the history of the conflict, including its causes, course and impact, and the peace agreements in primary, secondary and tertiary educational curricula. The TRC also called for the State to co-finance an education campaign, to be carried out by national human rights organizations, on a culture of mutual respect and peace, aimed at the political and social sectors.³³

Peru

The CVR recommended broad education reform promoting democratic values:

- Emphasize educational policies aiming to transform schools into places that respect the humanity of pupils and contribute to the integral development of students' personalities;
- Promote respect for ethnic and cultural differences and adapt schools to respect the country's ethnic-linguistic, cultural and geographic diversity;
- Strengthen participation and democracy mechanisms at school and prohibit and sanction physical punishment or humiliating practices as a form of discipline.³⁴

Timor-Leste

The report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) includes recommendations addressing the right to education, including:

- Collaboration between Government and religious education systems to develop curricula and teaching methodologies aimed at developing key values appropriate to Timor-Leste's traditions, promoting a culture of peace, non-violence and human rights.

³¹ Conadep (1984) *Nunca Más (Never Again)*. Report of National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, originally published in Spanish under the title *Nunca Más*, copyright © 1984 by Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, English translation copyright ©1986 by Writers and Scholars International Ltd.

http://web.archive.org/web/20031004074316/nuncamas.org/english/library/neveragain/neveragain_001.htm

³² Popkin and Roht-Arriaza 1995.

³³ Bakker 2005.

³⁴ Bakker 2005.

- Use of the resources created and collected by the CAVR during its work by the Department of Education, teachers and academics. This is focused on enriching national content in the education curriculum and assisting in the teaching of history, political science, conflict resolution, international relations and law.

5.1 The Importance of Education in Post-conflict Reconciliation

Save the Children's campaign, Rewrite the Future, highlights the low priority often attached to education as part of humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction:

Half of the world's out-of-school population – 39 million children – live in conflict-affected fragile states, even though these countries make up just 13 per cent of the world's population... However, one of the major factors is that these countries are underfunded by donors... In 2006, education received only 1.1 per cent of humanitarian assistance globally, despite representing at least 4.2 per cent of humanitarian needs.³⁵

This is also reflected in the minimal reference to education in TRCs and peace agreements, as Harbom, Höglbladh and Wallensteen (2006) found in reviewing 43 peace agreements from the 1989 to 2005 period. Research by the Women's Refugee Commission in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Uganda found that providing quality education immediately after conflict can aid reconciliation by helping students recover from trauma and return to normal routines.³⁶

“Young people overwhelmingly cited lack of quality education as one of their top concerns, and behind peace and an absence of violence in their lives, they called education *the top solution* to the problems they face across all conflicts.”

The study found that in post-conflict Sierra Leone, lack of access to education was the primary concern of young people, ahead of livelihoods and health. In post-conflict Kosovo their primary concern was insecurity, followed by psychosocial hardships and means of livelihood. Youth in Uganda, where the conflict was ongoing, cited insecurity first, followed by psychosocial hardships, access to education and then health.

Young people believed that education is essential to their survival, protection and full recovery from armed conflict. They saw it as answering their need for self-respect, economic opportunity and a productive role and voice in society. Education universally represented an essential prerequisite to peace and security. Yet despite its central role in their lives, adolescents and youth had more difficulty than younger children accessing education.

So it is clear that education planning and resources are crucial even in the midst of conflict and during the initial humanitarian response. Even where the initial emphasis is on physical reconstruction of the education system, Save the Children identifies four critical elements of quality education needed to support education's role in peace-building and conflict prevention:

³⁵ International Save the Children Alliance, 2007, 'Last in Line, Last in School. How donors are failing children in conflict-affected fragile states'.

³⁶ Women's Refugee Commission, 2005, 'Youth Speak Out: New Voices on the Protection and Participation of Young People Affected by Armed Conflict', <www.womensrefugeecommission.org>.

- *Inclusion/access.* Primary schools must be free and close to home and must attract all children in a community.
- *Safety/protection.* Schools must be safe from attack and must foster intellectual curiosity and respect for universal human rights.
- *Relevance.* Schools must be free of bias and use an appropriate curriculum and relevant educational materials.
- *Accountability.* Schools must be accountable to children, parents and communities and managed transparently and fairly. The opinions of children, parents and the community must be sought and valued.³⁷

Education therefore has a crucial role in post-conflict reconciliation in helping to:

- *Raise awareness.* Where there has been a TRC, education can play an important role in disseminating its findings and developing public support for implementation of the recommendations. Information should reach the public as well as be included in the formal school curriculum.
- *Promote understanding.* Even in the absence of a formal TRC, education can contribute to post-conflict reconciliation by helping children, young people and adults understand societal events.
- *Contribute to reform.* The education system itself may have been implicated in the conflict by reinforcing inequalities and discrimination or by propagating values, knowledge and practices that exacerbate rather than ameliorate conflict.³⁸ In such cases reforming education may be a central challenge of post-conflict reconciliation.
- *Aid social reintegration.* Schools are an important focal point for reintegrating communities affected by conflict, particularly for returning refugees and displaced and vulnerable groups such as out-of-school children, orphaned children, former child soldiers and children with disabilities.
- *Contribute to child protection.* During a conflict, school can register and keep track of children while providing security and a normal routine for them, and it can help in re-establishing these safeguards as part of post-conflict reconstruction. Schooling also plays an important role in protection through landmine awareness, HIV and AIDS prevention, and teaching of life skills.
- *Support economic regeneration.* Investment in education helps to get the economy functioning after a conflict. In all likelihood the economy has suffered badly, but the end of conflict potentially brings a ‘peace dividend’ that may include investment by

³⁷ International Save the Children Alliance 2008
www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/rewritethefuture/peace/peacewhere.html.

³⁸ Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Smith and Vaux 2003.

the international community to encourage stability and peace. Education in this period offers a second chance to those who missed out during the conflict; provides an opportunity to modernize the curriculum; supports the development of skills necessary for a competitive workforce; and allows development of specific skills to support economic regeneration, such as professional and vocational education.

Clearly education has a key role in dealing with the past (truth telling and understanding what happened); the present (addressing current needs, recovery from the legacies of conflict, educational opportunities that have been missed); and the future (contributing to reconciliation and sustainable, peaceful development).

5.2 Sensitivity to the Context

Any process that proposes to address the past and contribute to post-conflict reconciliation will be constrained and shaped by the conflict itself. Many factors will influence the role of education in reconciliation – such as the nature of the conflict, the parties to the dispute, the level of violence, the damage done, the number of casualties, the level of grievance, the nature of any peace agreement and the political arrangements that have been negotiated. Not all parties to the conflict will necessarily want a truth recovery process; those that do may have their own views on how it should take place and what ‘truth’ should be recovered. Similarly, the degree of trust within and between communities and the extent of ‘unfinished business’ will influence what can be addressed through education.

Another dimension of sensitivity to context relates to the social and cultural norms and behaviour that are appropriate or acceptable in dealing with the past and its legacies. Educators may need to consider a range of factors in designing education truth and reconciliation programmes, such as:

- Societal norms about addressing sensitive, painful and contentious issues about disclosure, confidentiality and truth telling;
- Attitudes towards children and their relationship to the conflict;
- Patterns of interaction and communication between adults and children;
- The diverse experiences of children during the conflict – as witnesses, participants, relatives of the bereaved, perpetrators, victims or survivors, each with distinct family backgrounds and a broad range of political, religious and moral values and beliefs.

Educators need to anticipate sensitivities and ethical issues that are likely to arise in dealing with such complexity and must have strategies for handling them. This reinforces the case for incorporating such work into a planned, legitimized process managed by education officials, with intensive training for teachers and other educators. No matter how enthusiastic and committed teachers may be, this work has too many potential pitfalls to leave it to individual teachers without institutional support or training.

Underscoring the importance of context, many truth and reconciliation processes have adopted cultural or traditional methods. However, some may have come about because of an ineffectual or nonexistent state criminal judiciary; the impracticalities of using state courts due to the high volume of perpetrators; and more blending and acceptance of civil participation and TRCs with traditional practices. Local norms and practices must not be

simply adopted uncritically, as they may not always be in the best interests of children or consistent with a human rights-based approach. Indeed tensions between international human rights standards and local values, beliefs and practices provide an important focus for education enquiry.

5.3 Sensitivity to the Time Frame

Timing is crucial in terms of education's contribute to truth recovery and reconciliation. Recent experience suggests that the education sector cannot take on this issue immediately after the end of a conflict, for many understandable reasons. Most conflicts generate cultures of fear, avoidance and silence, reflecting concerns about personal safety and reprisals, which make people reluctant to speak openly about controversial events. This is both a survival mechanism that protects people during conflict and an indicator of lost trust between individuals and groups, which is likely to endure long after the ceasefire and formal peace agreement. People need time to recover from damage and hurt, and they need evidence that peace will endure, particularly where they have experienced previous 'false dawns' through agreements that failed. And people have a natural reluctance to revisit painful experiences.

For these reasons, there will probably be resistance to truth recovery for a significant period of time. The most realistic educational approach may be initiatives to build trust between former adversaries and communities; begin to document resources related to the conflict; and initiate pilot reconciliation projects in schools and youth and community groups. This is also a good time to explore opportunities to include reconciliation in formal education and the official curricula; education reform takes time, and innovations are unlikely to be included unless they are part of the initial planning.

The success of these approaches ultimately depends on local commitment, but the international community can play a role in supporting local initiatives during a period when truth recovery is unlikely to be a priority for government or education authorities.

Opportunities to strengthen education's role in post-conflict reconciliation come in three phases. In the short term (1 to 3 years following the cease-fire or peace agreement), the emphasis will likely be on physical reconstruction of the education system, but there may be opportunities to start initiatives for structural and curriculum reforms. In the medium term (3-10 years) the emphasis is typically on peace building through educational initiatives that develop trust between communities; document and develop resources; increase confidence in the future and the durability of the peace; and pilot initiatives to help people understand the conflict. In the longer term (10+ years) education will focus more on explicit approaches to truth recovery through testimony, story-telling and the formal inclusion of the reconciliation concept in curricula.

While every conflict is unique and these time frames are only indicative, it is impossible to overstate the importance of being realistic about the time and resources that will be required for truth and reconciliation processes. This is also supported by country examples.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Dayton peace agreement ending the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed in 1995, and since then significant education reform programmes have been initiated with funding by the World Bank and the European Union. These have concentrated on developing a skills-based curriculum and revising textbooks. However, a report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education³⁹ found that the country's post-war education system has been characterized by division and segregation, with the vast majority of children learning separately according to their ethno-national group. This division is magnifying ethnic differences and creating three different groups of future citizens who are mistrustful of each other. It is seen as a threat to future security in the region.

Northern Ireland

The EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region was first introduced partly in response to ceasefires by paramilitary groups on both sides of the conflict in 1994. Since then two further phases have brought the total provided by the EU to more than €2 billion through PEACE I, II and III over a 20-year period (1994-2013). An early emphasis on economic recovery and employment has evolved into a focus on the legacies of the conflict and dealing with the past. By the end of PEACE II the weighting for 'reconciliation' in assessing whether projects would be funded had changed from 6 per cent to 20 per cent. PEACE III (2007-13) provides explicit support for 'addressing legacy and truth in public memory', through the development of television programmes, web resources, archives, exhibitions and educational materials.⁴⁰ This initiative parallels a 10-year curriculum reform process that has introduced a citizenship education programme with specific reference to reconciliation.

5.4 Epistemological Dilemmas

A significant challenge for education concerns the nature of 'truth'. Is there an 'objective', verifiable, single version of historical events? Or is truth 'relative', with different versions and perspectives given equal weight? Or is it 'inter-subjective', with multiple versions, interpretations and perspectives that are judged according to their authenticity or validity? These are not simply abstract debates, because each of these positions will lead to a very different formulation of curriculum, use of resources and educational practices.

Those who believe that truth is objective take the view that 'the facts' should be established, that there is one objective account of reality. This approach tends to be favoured by fairly rigid education systems with a syllabus and prescribed texts. Those who see truth as relative place a high value on 'subjectivity', believing that there are many versions of reality, although there is a danger of relativism if all are regarded as equally valid. For others truth is inter-subjective, a philosophy that accepts many subjective views of the truth, but emphasizes 'interrogating' each, coming to conclusions by weighing the evidence and assessing the credibility of accounts. What reform is possible may depend on the epistemology (view of truth, knowledge) represented in the curriculum and the pedagogy of the teacher.

³⁹ United Nations (2007), www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/rapporteur/visits.htm.

⁴⁰ European Union (2007), [www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE III Reports Pubs/PEACE III Operational Programme.sflb.ashx](http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE_III_Reports_Pubs/PEACE_III_Operational_Programme.sflb.ashx).

A second challenge concerns the lack of a clear definition of reconciliation. It is difficult to persuade teachers and other educators that they have a significant role to play in a process that addresses a concept for which there is no universal definition; little guidance on what it might involve in practice; what might be regarded as evidence that the process is achieving positive outcomes; and for which they have had no specific training.

The concept of reconciliation is problematic, both conceptually and in terms of the difficult and controversial issues it evokes. Reconciliation may be necessary at many levels – between individuals, between groups in conflict, between peoples or nations at war. Education can facilitate reconciliation by addressing the legacies of conflict. These include the impact on the bereaved and injured, remembrance and commemoration; debates about forgiveness, expressions of regret, apology and symbolic events; understanding the role of amnesties, prisoner releases, alongside concepts of restorative and transitional justice. These are challenging, long-term tasks that link reconstruction programmes into the mainstream education sector and the longer-term goal of conflict prevention.

A further challenge is to identify a range of concepts related to reconciliation that are likely to arise and these need to be considered in advance of the introduction of any educational programme and themselves be the focus for teacher in-service education and training (they cannot be addressed in an ad hoc way). These include problematic concepts such as ‘apology’, ‘amnesty’, ‘reparations’, ‘justice’, ‘revenge’, ‘forgiveness’.

6. EDUCATIONAL ENTRY POINTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

A systemic approach is needed if reconciliation activities are to be included in the formal education system. It requires simultaneous actions at various levels – political, policy, administrative – addressing curriculum (content, skills, values), pedagogy (multiple perspectives, narrative approaches, inter-generational learning), resources (witnesses, texts, NGOs, museums, media), teacher education and parent and community involvement.

6.1 Systemic Change and Institutional Reform

Some understanding is now emerging as to how the education system itself can be implicated in the dynamics of conflict, through inequalities in access to schooling and education outcomes; discrimination perpetuated through administration, governance, power and control; and intolerance and lack of respect for children’s rights.⁴¹ Whether or not these issues are addressed in education reform, they are crucial elements in working towards longer term reconciliation. Early engagement with the TRC process by the Ministry of Education, educators, parents and children provides an opportunity to assess the role previously played by the education system and recommend systemic reforms necessary to restore trust and confidence.

6.2 Legitimacy for the Task

The post-conflict political, social and economic context has a formative influence on what is possible and permissible through education. Schools, teachers and other educators must not

⁴¹ Bush and Saltarelli (2000); Smith and Vaux (2003).

be expected to engage with these issues in an isolated and unsupported way. Political commitment and institutional support may be difficult to secure, but they are an essential prerequisite. Educational initiatives are likely to take place within a broader social debate about whether the past should be forgotten or confronted. Perpetrators, victims, survivors and those unaffected are likely to have diverse positions on this, and it is unlikely that any one educational approach will receive universal support. Particularly problematic is the concept of a 'hierarchy of victims', in which some casualties are given more sympathy than others, particularly where the state has been a party to the conflict.

6.3 Curriculum Approaches to Reconciliation

There are three broad approaches to addressing reconciliation in formal education: (1) the knowledge-based approach, which addresses the topic explicitly, with dedicated texts, resources and time; (2) the skills-based approach, which emphasizes the process and highlights development of life skills; and (3) the values-based approach, which is more nuanced and emphasizes human rights and peace education. The challenging nature of the concepts associated with truth and reconciliation makes them an ideal focus for educational enquiry. Teaching reconciliation is not just a matter of transmitting accepted knowledge. It emphasizes questioning concepts and creating new knowledge from a variety of sources, including the experiences of learners themselves. A variety of specialized areas of the curriculum – such as history, civics/citizenship and peace and human rights – can play a crucial role in addressing reconciliation.

6.4 Reconciliation Resources

Choosing resources requires great care, given the sensitivity of the topic. In contested societies arguments over the content of textbooks can become cultural and ideological battlegrounds. For example, education reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina has involved removal of material considered offensive from history textbooks. Such a process necessarily raises questions about how 'offensive' is defined, who should participate in deciding and how the process is implemented. A shift from content-based syllabuses to a learning-outcomes model has significant implications for learning resources. Drawing on a variety of texts and incorporating different media and new technologies may help develop multiple perspectives, but it is expensive and requires new teaching skills. There are also questions about the extent to which it is possible to draw on people with direct experience of conflict as resources. Educators will need to make judgements about the use of resources such as remembrance sites, events, memorials and museums that commemorate genocides, war or peace.⁴²

6.5 Teacher Education and Development

Ensuring that teachers have the capacity to undertake reconciliation education is an enormous challenge. Probably the conflict will have reduced the pool of teachers, making it even harder to find those with the skills to teach this sensitive new topic. Teachers themselves are part of the culture and have their own values. The emotional issues surrounding conflict make enormous demands on the traditionally technical background of teachers. Addressing conflict

⁴² See for example Muzaini (2008).

and reconciliation also requires knowledge of child rights, expertise in pedagogy and skills in facilitating discussion of controversial issues.

Curriculum, pedagogy and the nature of learning resources are all linked. Teachers are probably the single most important factor in mediating the curriculum and the values it conveys, and any education strategy needs to take account of their central role. Factors related to teachers that may affect the extent to which education can be a positive force include:

- The status that teaching has within a society, which may be related to issues such as entry qualifications, rates of pay and terms and conditions of employment. These factors also affect morale and motivation.
- Diversity-sensitive recruitment and deployment policies, such as ensuring adequate recruitment of male and female teachers from different ethnic groups and a sufficient supply of teachers who can teach different groups in their first language.
- The quality and type of initial teacher education and training, including the value of training teachers through separate, faith or language-based institutions; their background in human rights education; and the extent to which personal values and perspectives are challenged.
- The extent to which teachers understand a learning-outcomes model of curriculum; the opportunities it provides to develop critical thinking skills; and the challenges it presents in terms of addressing controversial issues.

6.6 Ethical Challenges for Educators

Educators need to be sensitive to moral and ethical issues such as sensitivity to learners' diverse life experiences and ground rules for participation, including how to deal with students who may not wish to participate. The classroom brings together victims and perpetrators as well as children from families on opposite sides of the conflict. Protection issues must be addressed, such as the possibility of re-traumatization, consent to participate, confidentiality, disclosure and legal age of responsibility. Educators need specific resources, guidance and training on these issues.

6.7 Gender Analysis

Violence and conflict always have a gender dimension. This can include the different perceptions of conflict held by women, men, girls and boys; aspects of their involvement in and experiences of conflict; and the impact it has had on them. These issues need to be addressed explicitly. There are also pedagogic considerations about how boys and girls engage with truth and reconciliation, in terms of the context in which they feel safe to express opinions and whether specific issues need to be addressed separately (in single-sex discussions) or jointly.

6.8 Inter-generational Learning

The work of Shriver⁴³ suggests that the issues and attitudes of post-conflict generations may be very different from those who experienced the conflict. One aspect of peace processes that has received little attention is the reality that within just a few years following a peace agreement there will be a generation of children with no direct experience of the conflict. In situations where this is taking place teachers and teacher educators report that many of the children and student teachers find it difficult to relate to discussion about the conflict. This is not to say that such post-conflict generations are unaware of it. But it suggests that their lack of direct experience may give them a different understanding of the conflict and a different approach in addressing the issues arising from it. The challenge for educators of different age groups is therefore to gain deeper insight into the perspectives of different generations on the conflict and what this might mean in terms of securing engagement, developing resources and using appropriate working methods to promote reconciliation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishing a role for education in reconciliation requires these main actions:

- 7.1 Identify why education is important for post-conflict reconciliation.** The main challenge is to identify sound educational rationales that reach across the discourses between educators and those with technical involvement in TRCs. Important rationales include raising awareness and dealing with the past; promoting understanding; contributing to institutional reform; social reintegration; contributing to protection and prevention; and economic regeneration.
- 7.2 Take account of context and secure legitimacy for the task.** The post-conflict political, social and economic context (and how it has come about) has a formative influence on what is possible and permissible through education. It is crucial to ensure that schools, teachers and other educators are not expected to engage with these issues in an isolated and unsupported way, no matter how committed to the task individuals may be. Political commitment and institutional support may be difficult to secure, but both are essential prerequisites. Educational strategies also need to take account of culturally specific practices in terms of attitudes to ‘truth recovery’, including any tensions between local customs and practices and international human rights standards.
- 7.3 Be aware of resistance and the sensitivities of victims and survivors.** It may not be in everyone’s interest for certain truths to emerge. Educational initiatives are likely to take place within a broader social debate about whether the past should be forgotten or whether it needs to be addressed. Perpetrators, victims, survivors and the unaffected are likely to have diverse views, and it is unlikely that there will be universal support for education to take any one approach. A particular concern is likely to arise around the concept of a ‘hierarchy of victims’ (where some casualties are viewed more sympathetically than others), and educators will be challenged about this.

⁴³ Shriver (1997; 2008).

- 7.4 Be realistic about the time frame involved.** Timing involves three main factors: making best use of opportunities for change that arise in the immediate aftermath of conflict; respecting the time needed to recover from hurt and damage; and avoiding ‘avoidance’ of issues that need to be addressed. It is striking that few post-conflict societies that have *not* had formal TRCs have included truth and reconciliation in the curriculum more than 10 years after a transition or agreement. Reconciliation is a process rather than an event, so it may be useful to consider actions to address truth and reconciliation through education in terms of early opportunities, medium-term goals and long-term aspirations.
- 7.5 Identify potential areas for educational development.** Initial approaches are likely to begin through awareness raising and community-based approaches. In terms of inclusion within formal education, three broad approaches are debated among educationalists: those who advocate an explicit approach with dedicated texts, resources and time (knowledge-based); those who see the process as the most important (skills-based); and those who advocate a more nuanced approach based on human rights education and peace education (concepts and values-based). Despite the difficulties and complexity of the area, the problematic nature of the concepts associated with truth and reconciliation makes them an ideal focus for educational enquiry. It requires not just transmission of accepted knowledge, but interrogation of concepts and creation of new knowledge from a variety of sources, including the experiences of learners themselves.
- 7.6 Educational entry points.** Including reconciliation concepts in formal education requires a systemic approach involving simultaneous work at various levels – political, policy, administrative, curriculum (content, skills, values), pedagogy (multiple perspectives, narrative approaches, inter-generational learning), resources (witnesses, texts, NGOs, museums, media), teacher education and parent and community involvement. A number of under-developed areas merit particular attention:
- **Epistemology.** Critical engagement about the nature of ‘truth’. Is there an ‘objective’, single version of the truth of historical events? Is truth ‘relative,’ requiring different versions and perspectives to be given equal weight? Is truth ‘inter-subjective’, involving multiple versions, interpretations and perspectives that can be judged according to their authenticity or validity? While this may be regarded as somewhat philosophical, these are not simply abstract debates, because each of these positions will lead to very different formulations of curriculum, use of resources and educational practices.
 - **Concepts.** Engagement with the lack of definition around ‘reconciliation’ and associated concepts such as ‘apology’, ‘amnesty’, ‘reparations’, ‘justice’, ‘revenge’ and ‘forgiveness’. The process of enquiry into what such concepts mean, grounded in relevant examples, is as important as the outcome.

- **Resources.** Using multiple resources, rather than a single text, is likely to be more successful. Careful attention needs to be given to the collection and creation of age-appropriate resources; the strengths and weaknesses of various types of resources; and guidance on the use of people, sites of remembrance and commemorative events as resources.
- **Gender analysis.** Violence and conflict always have a gender dimension, and different experiences of violence and perspectives on conflict need to be addressed. There are also pedagogic decisions about the way in which boys and girls engage with truth and reconciliation, and whether they need to engage with these issues separately or jointly.
- **Teacher education and development.** Few if any teachers will have had specific training on how to deal with issues of truth and reconciliation. The topic includes an emotional aspect that often goes beyond the traditional technical experience of teachers. It also requires knowledge and understanding of child rights, expertise in pedagogy and facilitation of controversial issues.
- **Ethics and child protection.** Educators need to be aware of ethical issues – ground rules, sensitivity to the diverse life experiences of different learners, and to students who may not wish to participate. They also need to be aware of child protection issues, related to confidentiality, disclosure and legal age of responsibility. Educators need specific resources, guidance and training related to both ethical issues and child protection.

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