Children and Transitional Justice

Truth-Telling, Accountability and Reconciliation

Edited by:
Sharanjeet Parmar
Mindy Jane Roseman
Saudamini Siegrist
Theo Sowa

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CHAPTER 10

REALIZING ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN: THE ROLE OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

Sharanjeet Parmar

A boy, 16, who was forcibly recruited into a rebel faction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and is now reunited with his family in a village near Goma.

1 Sharanjeet Parmar is the Director of the Access to Justice Program at Global Rights, USA. Ms. Parmar is a former lecturer and clinical instructor with the Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School. From 2002 to 2005, she worked as an assistant trial attorney for the Office of the Prosecutor, Special Court for Sierra Leone. The author would like to thank Christof Kurz, Roger Duthie and Cécile Aptel for their input and insightful comments on the chapter.
INTRODUCTION

How can we tell what happened to us? There are no words to describe what we have witnessed. What we saw, what we heard, what we did, and how it changed our lives, is beyond measure. We were murdered, raped, amputated, tortured, mutilated, beaten, enslaved and forced to commit terrible crimes.2

– Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report for the Children of Sierra Leone

Children suffer grave violations of their fundamental rights as a result of war.3 The violations committed against them during armed conflict include their recruitment and use by armed forces and groups; killing and maiming; rape and other sexual violence; abductions; the denial of humanitarian access; and attacks against schools and hospitals.4 However, war also deprives children of their basic rights to survival and development. As reported in the Machel Study ten-year strategic review, Children and Conflict in a Changing World, the impact on children is “more brutal than ever,” and the indirect consequences of war – “the severing of basic services, and increased poverty, malnutrition and disease” – continue to exact a devastating toll.5 The task of restoring the lives of war-affected children must therefore involve redress for social and economic violations, as well as for violations of children’s physical well-being.


4 These violations have been identified by the Security Council as “grave violations against children during armed conflict.” UN Security Council Resolution 1539 (2004).

5 Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review, at 4, 5.
Transitional justice mechanisms, an integral part of post-conflict recovery, have generally engaged in truth-telling and accountability for gross violations committed during war but have not deeply considered questions of social and economic rights. In exploring the relationship between transitional justice and post-conflict development, this chapter aims to identify how transitional justice processes can complement, motivate and improve efforts to realize children’s social and economic recovery from the destruction caused by armed conflict.

The field of transitional justice generally seeks to support justice and peace in societies emerging from armed conflict or political violence by identifying, accounting for and redressing the harms resulting from the commission of gross human rights violations. Transitional justice measures can include prosecutions, truth-telling, reparations and institutional reforms. This chapter considers how transitional justice resources can be mobilized for the recovery of war-affected children, particularly through development initiatives that can lead to economic justice for them. Children and young people can be agents of change when given access to education and opportunities for reasonable livelihoods. Thus, it is critical in the planning and implementation of transitional justice processes to consider how to complement and reinforce development initiatives in order to realize the rights of children in post-conflict societies.

For the purposes of this chapter, economic justice is considered to encompass a range of social and economic rights, including the rights to health, education, housing and livelihoods, as protected under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other

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6 Consider the discussion in the UN Secretary-General’s report, in which transitional justice “comprises the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation. These may include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof.” United Nations Report of the Secretary-General on Rule of Law and Transitional Justice, S/2004/616 (New York: United Nations, 23 August 2004) at 4-5.
international human rights instruments. Realization of these rights is recognized as critical to combating poverty and supporting long-term social progress,\(^7\) in addition to maintaining children’s survival and development. As will be demonstrated, economic justice is necessary to enabling children to become healthy, educated and well-adjusted individuals who can make meaningful contributions to society as adults. This chapter argues that transitional justice processes should consider how to support the realization of economic justice for children, as it will help them to sustain transitions from conflict to peace as adults. Through examples from western Africa, the chapter will demonstrate the importance of realizing the economic rights of war-affected children and show that failing to do so can undermine efforts to establish just and peaceful societies.

The chapter considers the complementary role that transitional justice processes can play in promoting and shaping the realization of economic justice for children. First, it addresses the relationship between human rights and development and presents the international legal framework that obliges states – and correspondingly, transitional justice processes – to prioritize the realization of the full range of children’s rights in post-conflict recovery efforts and institutional reforms. Next, it explains how war-related rights violations can leave children vulnerable to further exploitation and abuse in the aftermath of war, and demonstrates the potential benefits of economic justice for post-war social recovery and reintegration of children. The destabilizing effect of failing to address economic justice for children is also examined. The final section considers how transitional justice mechanisms can influence and complement measures to realize economic justice for children in post-conflict societies.

\(^7\) Consider the Millennium Development Goals, which include ending poverty and hunger, achieving universal education, realizing child and maternal health and gender equality; see www.un.org/millenniumgoals. Consider also the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy, E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1, which recognizes the importance of a holistic approach in strengthening national protection systems for children.
HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACE-BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Social and economic rights have received increasing attention during post-conflict recovery and peace-building. Practice concerning the implementation of the CRC confirms the importance of a holistic, integrated, rights-based approach to development, which aims to achieve an enabling environment for children, as opposed to simply meeting their immediate needs. In post-conflict societies, the CRC provides standards through which domestic and international actors can pursue protection of children’s rights as part of reconstruction and recovery efforts.

Rights Protection and Development

Starting with a recognition of the “deep and mutually constitutive links that exist between” development and freedom, Amartya Sen uses an economic argument to explain the need to remove major sources of “unfreedom,” which include poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systems of social deprivation, neglect of public facilities and intolerance. Building on the work of Sen and based on his eyewitness accounts of human suffering resulting from structural violence, Paul Farmer argues that promoting the social and economic rights of the world’s poor is the most important issue facing the world today. Doing so involves analysis and redress of the mechanisms and conditions that generate violations of human rights, since these violations represent “symptoms of deeper pathologies of power that are linked

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8 Freedom is defined as including basic political and civil rights as well economic rights, which together are “instrumental,” “constitutive” and “constructive” for development. Amartya Sen, Development As Freedom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

intricately to the social condition that so often determines who will suffer abuse and who will be shielded from harm.”

While considerable progress has been made at the international level through formal commitments to mainstreaming human rights into development programming, there remains “a very long way to go before such approaches become the norm” in domestic practice.

In situations of armed conflict, the relationship between human rights, peace-building and development is especially complex. These contexts require policies, actions and solutions that integrate both “negative peace”, which can be understood as the absence of violence, and “positive peace”, which involves the long-term process of transforming attitudes and institutions in order to create and sustain a peaceful and just society. Protection of the full range of human rights, including social and economic rights, is an integral component of peace-building.

The CRC is a pathbreaking human rights treaty in that it includes social and economic rights, as well as civil and political rights. Supported by the work of UNICEF, this aspect of the CRC has been noted as reflecting the intention of the international community to “insinuate at least a part of the overall human rights agenda into development activities as they relate to children.” Indeed, under the right to survival and development (one of the

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11 P. Alston and M. Robinson, eds., *Human Rights and Development: Towards Mutual Reinforcement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), at 1, 2 (outlining the developments by the international community to promote “meaningful and productive linkages” between the human rights and development agendas), [hereinafter Human Rights and Development].


CRC’s four core principles\(^{14}\), development of the child has been defined as “including physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development, in a manner compatible with human dignity, and to prepare the child for an individual life in free society.”\(^{15}\)

Programs implemented during post-conflict reconstruction are internationally obligated to lay the foundation for the survival and development of children. Under the CRC, States parties must consider the needs of children and undertake measures to promote the “physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse...or armed conflicts” through measures that “take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.”\(^{16}\) Moreover, States parties must provide appropriate assistance for the “physical and psychological recovery” and the “rehabilitation and social reintegration” of children involved in armed conflict.\(^{17}\) Finally, states have been called upon “to take all necessary measures, as a matter of priority, to mitigate the impact of conflict on children that inhibits their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”\(^{18}\)


\(^{16}\) CRC, article 39.


Rights-Based Approaches to Post-Conflict Development

The international community has affirmed the need to place children at the center of the peace and security agenda.\textsuperscript{19} The Machel report notes that the “task of rebuilding war-torn societies is a huge one that must take place not only at the physical, economic, cultural and political, but also at the psychosocial level.” Reconstruction must thus relate to the child as well as to the family, the community and the country.\textsuperscript{20}

In many contexts, children’s social and economic rights may in fact be indirectly realized through the realization of the same rights for their parents and families. However, child rights programming can play an important complementary role to broader reconstruction efforts aimed at repairing the societal devastation of armed conflict. Specifically, as the Machel ten-year review highlights, a child rights-based approach “seeks to create an ‘enabling’ environment that is conducive to children’s overall well-being.” The text further states, “in addition to encouraging practical actions and delivery of services, child rights programming is balanced with efforts to protect children against violence, abuse and exploitation, encourage their participation, build the capacity of institutions and systems, support community networks, and hold authorities to account.”\textsuperscript{21}

A child rights-based approach can also provide important standards or points of reference for developing national policies and benchmarks against which interventions can be monitored and assessed.\textsuperscript{22} Consider the right to education: Both the CRC and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

\textsuperscript{19} Consider, for example, UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005).


\textsuperscript{21} Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review, at 107.

(ICESCR) set a clear obligation to ensure free and compulsory primary education;\textsuperscript{23} under the CRC the realization of this right is to be undertaken to the maximum extent of a State’s available resources\textsuperscript{24} Through the joint implementation of CRC articles 28 and 29, education must be made available and accessible at primary and secondary levels. The availability criterion encompasses establishing and maintaining an educational system of good quality, subject to the developmental context of the State. The accessibility criterion encompasses three parts: children should have access to education without discrimination, education should be provided within a safe and reasonable distance, and education should be affordable to all.

Notwithstanding these signposts, the actual realization of children’s right to education remains a struggle for war-affected societies. The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has recently reported that the “education and livelihood aspects of reintegration

\textsuperscript{23} See ICESCR, article 13(2)(a) (“Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all.”); CRC, article 28(1)(a) (“Make primary education compulsory and available free to all”). Secondary education – both general and vocational education – must also be made available and accessible to all, including through financial assistance when necessary. See ICESCR, article 13(2)(b) (“Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.”); CRC, article 28(1)(b) (“Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need”).

\textsuperscript{24} Under the ICESCR, realization is subject to the concept of “progressive realization”, which reflects recognition that resource limitations constrain state action. However, progressive realization of a particular right imposes upon states an “obligation to move as expeditiously and effectively as possible towards that goal. Moreover, any deliberately retrogressive measures in that regard would require the most careful consideration and would need to be fully justified by reference to the totality of the rights provided for in the Covenant and in the context of the full use of the maximum available resources.” Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 3: The Nature of States Parties’ Obligations, para. 9, UN Doc. E/1991/23 (14 December 1990).
programming require greater investment and identification of effective models.”

In sum, efforts to protect and implement human rights are both “essential to the constructive management of conflict” and an integral part of development. Opportunities exist for the fields of transitional justice and post-conflict development to collaborate in protecting children’s social and economic rights. The remainder of this chapter discusses the importance of working toward the realization of the social and economic rights of war-affected children, and seeks to enhance understanding of the complementary and mutually reinforcing relationship between transitional justice and post-conflict development.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS VIOLATIONS EXPERIENCED BY WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN

The experience of child miners in Sierra Leone demonstrates how children’s social and economic rights are violated during war and how these violations leave them vulnerable, in war’s aftermath, to further exploitation and abuse. Empirical research also demonstrates the potential benefits of economic justice for the welfare and social development of war-affected children. Finally, social science research undertaken in western Africa explores the relationship between systemic failures to realize economic justice for children and youth and the root causes of political violence.

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26 Human Rights and Conflict, at 513.

27 Understandings and definitions of “youth” vary across social contexts; youths can be viewed to include adolescents to middle-aged individuals or extending to anyone who is not in a position of privilege or power. For the purposes of this chapter, references to “young people” include those between ten and twenty-four years and references to “youth” include those between fifteen and twenty-four years, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), which overlap with the international definition of a child (any individual under the
and armed conflict. The research points to how failures to realize children’s social and economic rights can ultimately undermine the development of just and peaceful societies. These findings underline the need for the transitional justice field to consider how it can complement and shape development initiatives to protect the social and economic rights of children in post-conflict societies.

Child Miners of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone’s eleven-year civil war (1991-2002) left children in desperate need of education, family support and livelihoods. Eight years after the official end of the conflict, post-war reconstruction efforts have not adequately addressed the needs of the country’s child miners. Children working in diamond mines represent a cross-section of the country’s most vulnerable groups, including former child soldiers, children living or working on the street, unaccompanied children and children from households living in extreme poverty. Working under grueling conditions for little or no pay, child miners personify a gross failure by the Government of Sierra Leone, as well as donor agencies, to realize economic justice for children living in the areas that were among those worst affected by the war. The situation facing these child miners results from and demonstrates the social and economic rights violations they experienced during war, which have left them vulnerable to continued exploitation and abuse.

The Nature and Impact of Social and Economic Rights Violations

In addition to war-affected children, Sierra Leone’s diamond mines employ many individuals aged eighteen to twenty-five years whose childhoods were disrupted by the war, forcing them into new age of eighteen). For a discussion of the cultural and political influences of the definition of youth, see Tristan Anne Borer, John Darby and Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, Peacebuilding after Peace Accords: The Challenges of Violence, Truth, and Youth (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006) [hereinafter, Peacebuilding after Peace Accords]; see also D. Durham, “Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa,” Anthropological Quarterly 73(3-4) 2000:15-116.
roles with considerable responsibilities. Many of the circumstances that led children and young people to toil in the mining pits can be attributed to violations of their social and economic rights during the armed conflict. These violations include separation from or loss of their parents; disruption or loss of education; and abduction and forced labor or recruitment by armed groups.

These violations left them with economic responsibilities, including caring for younger siblings, which were exacerbated by inadequate material assistance for children who had lost parents. Denied access to education and livelihoods after the war, war-affected children and young people now find themselves engaging in risky income-generating activities such as diamond mining to support themselves, their siblings and their families. The shortcomings of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes drove those who had been associated with fighting forces to the mines.28 Thus, war-related rights violations contributed to the poverty that exposed children and young people to this hazardous form of work.

Socioeconomic Vulnerability and Child Exploitation

Children as young as ten commonly work in Sierra Leone’s diamond-mines.29 Indeed, the country’s Truth and Reconciliation

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28 Consider MacCartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone, June –August 2003,” Interim Report 27-28 (2004), at 9, available at www.columbia.edu/~mh2245/Report1_BW.pdf (DDR programs “discriminated against women, children, and others who participated in the conflict primarily as forced labour or sex slaves, and who may have participated in active conflict when defending their bases or villages from attack”); Human Rights Watch, Youth, Poverty and Blood: The Lethal Legacy of West Africa’s Regional Warriors (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2005) [hereinafter Youth, Poverty and Blood], at 3-4 (Finding that a majority of DDR participants “were kept out of skills training aspects of the program, or did not receive any benefits at all”); and, Paul Richards et al., “Where have all the young people gone? Transitioning ex-combatants towards community reconstruction after the war in Sierra Leone” (2003) (Finding “a strong sense of grievance among young people who believe that they have not been fairly treated”).

Commission (TRC) found that the number of children working in diamond mining increased during and after the war.\textsuperscript{30} Child miners labor under hazardous and unhealthy conditions, shoveling and washing gravel six days a week, for long hours and little pay, and without access to medical attention.\textsuperscript{31} They face the constant risk of collapsing mining pits and live in unhealthy conditions, which include poor shelter and meager food, and expose them to worms, malaria and other diseases.\textsuperscript{32} Many child miners reported having experienced physical pain: “I do not feel well. Since I’ve started this work, my body has not felt well.” These children have little sense of self-worth and express few hopes for the future. As one boy explained, “I have had no achievement; nothing really good has come in my life – I make just enough for survival, for some food.” Expressing the sentiments of many, one child miner said, “If there’s a way for me to get out of the mines, I’ll be very happy, because this is a man’s job.”\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{30} Sierra Leone TRC Report, Volume 3b, Chapter. 4, para. 335 (2004). World Vision found that the “war aggravated the involvement of children in mining activities.” World Vision Report (Based on interviews with 497 child miners conducted shortly after the end of the conflict).

\textsuperscript{31} Daily wages for child miners range from approximately US $0.15-US $0.60, while those digging on contract (i.e., who do not receive any percentage of their diamond finds) reported being paid approximately US $2.10 per day. \textit{Digging in the Dirt}, at 23, 24.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., at 25-28.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., at 31.
Violation of International and Domestic Obligations to Protect Children’s Rights

Sierra Leone’s diamond-mining communities were the hardest hit by the war, and the levels of brutality against civilians were unprecedented. Members of armed groups committed serious violations of international law by targeting children. Among these violations were physical and sexual violence, destruction of homes and schools and forced recruitment of hundreds of children. Children lost their opportunity to go to school, faced separation from their parents, were offered inadequate measures to help them earn a livelihood and in general suffered from a lack of social assistance. Indeed, community leaders and individuals in these areas lament the lack of livelihoods, the poor infrastructure and the denial of basic rights such as adequate housing, food and clean water.

Yet it appears that the country’s post-conflict reconstruction efforts gave little priority to the recovery and development of these children. Despite consideration of the interests of children and young people in post-conflict peace-building and transitional justice processes, such as the country’s TRC, there persists a lack of official commitment to seriously redressing violations of children’s rights. The situation facing these children puts the Government of

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36 Infra, Section C, Part I. See also Angela McIntyre and Thusi Thokozani, “Children and Youth in Sierra Leone’s Peacebuilding Process.” African Security Review 122003:73-80 (noting the failure to address youth issues during the peace process and the marginalization of
Sierra Leone in violation of its domestic and international obligations to protect the rights of children to life, survival and development, including an obligation to ensure an environment that fosters dignity and respect for the child.  

The experiences of child miners and their vulnerability to post-conflict exploitation and abuse highlight the importance of child-centered approaches to reconstruction and development, including measures that can redress war-related vulnerabilities. While eradicating child mining requires broad-based reforms to address basic inequities, more immediate measures are critical, such as providing affordable and accessible primary education and alternative livelihoods for impoverished children and their families.

Benefits of Economic Justice for the Post-War Recovery of Children

Recent empirical research supports the importance of providing education and ensuring livelihood opportunities for the post-war recovery of children. In an important study published by Psychologists Without Borders on the psychosocial well-being of children affected by war, Theresa Betancourt et al. interviewed two hundred and sixty-six former child soldiers (male and female) in Sierra Leone at the time of their re-entry into their communities. Three years later, the team was able to re-interview one hundred and thirty-three of them, plus a group of self-integrated former child soldiers who were now young people. Many former child youth that persisted in the country’s peace-building phase).


soldiers reported that the post-war socioeconomic challenges they faced were more problematic than their experiences during the war. Others had managed to lead productive, healthy lives, “particularly when provided with some basic assistance to pursue schooling or develop a trade.” The authors concluded that there has been “a consistent failure of development agendas to invest in developing systems of care beyond primary health care and education (i.e., child protection, social welfare systems).”

The loss of educational and economic opportunities experienced by children associated with the fighting forces poses serious threats to their long-term stability. Longitudinal research of former child soldiers in Mozambique, for example, found that “their daily economic situation has been, and continues to be, one of the major obstacles in their transition to daily life.” In research on the reintegration of war-affected children in Uganda, Jeannie Annan and Chris Blattman found that more education led to the

39 Ibid., at 2, 3.

40 *Psychosocial Adjustment and Social Reintegration*, at 51. Adding that particular attention is needed for war-affected girls and women and that “[s]ervice providers must recognize the double indemnity that girl soldiers face as extreme levels of exposure to violence are often compounded by increased risk of sexual violence, unwanted pregnancy and its social consequences.”


increased employment of young people. The authors also noted that those with higher levels of education were less likely to undertake risky income-generating activities.

Social Risks Posed by Economic Injustice, Especially in War

It is difficult to prove a direct causal link between economic inequality and war. The role played by young combatants and child soldiers in the recent civil wars of Liberia and Sierra Leone, however, has been considered extensively in this regard. Human rights and social science research addressing these wars has confirmed that certain factors, especially poverty, produced disaffected young people who “became dependent on the patronage of military commanders as a way to transform their physical vulnerability and economic desperation.” In reviewing findings from this body of work, Jean-Harvé Jézéquel draws attention to how 

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44 The root causes of conflict are deep and complex, and no one factor may be pointed to as the ultimate trigger or cause. See Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” World Bank Working Paper, 2001 (arguing that profit-seeking motivations – or greed – provide a strong explanation for civil war); but see Cynthia J. Arnson and William Zartman, Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed and Greed (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005); and Karen Ballantine and Jake Sherman, eds., The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance (New York: International Peace Academy, 2003).

“involvement in armed movements provides a means of escaping the marginalisation of a society in which social and economic integration has broken down.”46 The research demonstrates that young people are prone to recruitment in armed conflict as a result of “economic, social and political exclusion, threats to identity, layers of trauma, and direct and indirect experience of a variety of forms of violence and displacement.”47

Social science research has long debated the causes of violence in Africa.48 The complexity of this issue makes it important to avoid “monolithic views of male youth as threats,” which can lead to the presumption that “where there are young males...there will be violence.”49 Indeed, Ismail Olawale emphasizes that dysfunctional youth culture should be viewed “as a consequence rather than a cause of state collapse.”50 In view of these findings, it is imperative to remedy the war-related harms and corresponding economic needs of Sierra Leone’s child miners and to prevent the potential repetition of pre- and post-war cycles of exploitation and abuse.

In 2005, Save the Children identified primary responses needed to reduce the recruitment of children into armed forces in western


47 Peacebuilding after Peace Accords, at 42.


49 Peacebuilding after Peace Accords, at 45.

50 Ismail Olawale, “Youth Culture and State Collapse in Sierra Leone: Between Causality and Casualty Theses.” (paper presented at the UNU-Wider Conference, Helsinki, 3-6 June 2004); consider also David Keen’s argument against labels of young people such as “lumpen,” which “run the risk of further stigmatiz[ing]” youth, in Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone, at 65.
Africa. These included ensuring that children remain with their families where possible and are properly cared for and protected; reducing household poverty; and providing children with alternatives through schooling or skills training. However, the situation facing young people in the region appears far from fulfilling these recommendations. The failures are both social and economic. According to an analysis by Human Rights Watch, these young combatants are “suspended in a grim world of deprivation, boredom and poverty,” where “defeated by the socio-economic conditions back home – conditions created in part by their own violent behavior – they slipped, optimistic, across borders and into their next war.” In the case of Sierra Leone, Olawale finds that building a positive “youth culture” has been “regrettably neglected by, and excluded from, post-war reconstruction and peace building.”

**TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND SUPPORT FOR THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF CHILDREN**

This section considers how transitional justice initiatives can complement efforts to protect the social and economic rights of children in post-conflict societies. Through participatory processes, transitional justice can provide valuable information on the nature

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52 See, for example, IRIN, “Sierra Leone: Could Youth Unemployment Derail Stability?” (3 March 2009) (Reporting that according to the UN “just 1.4 percent of Sierra Leone’s annual budget was earmarked for youth issues in 2008”).

53 Youth, Poverty and Blood, Conclusion (conducting a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of child and youth soldiers during and after the recent conflicts in West Africa).

54 Olawale refers to the positive impact of the National Youth Service in Nigeria as part of wider youth sector reform during the country’s transition from military rule, which he argues was instrumental “to repair the damaged youth culture, to re-channel the energy of the youth population towards productive ventures, to make youth imbibe democratic ethos and to reawaken a spirit of positive nationalism in youth.”
and scope of children’s socioeconomic vulnerabilities, which tend to perpetuate continued violations of their rights. Transitional justice processes can facilitate the direct participation of children and young people in setting priorities for post-conflict development and remedial measures. They can also advocate for giving priority to child-centered development programs that address these vulnerabilities, including through reparations policies. Finally, transitional justice mechanisms can initiate and inform much-needed collaboration with relevant child protection and institutional actors to ensure that institutional reforms are designed to respond effectively to the information gathered. Although the task of realizing economic justice is enormous and faces many practical limits, transitional justice measures can in some cases undertake a complementary role, making considerable contributions to development initiatives.

**Links between International Development and Transitional Justice**

Transitional justice can complement initiatives aimed at advancing economic justice for people living in societies in transition, including children. Efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate societies have historically been at the center of international development practice, while questions of accountability for perpetrators of grave violations have dominated the practice of transitional justice. Recently, however, the transitional justice field has begun to examine deeper questions concerning recovery from structural violence and armed conflict and its relationship with social reconstruction and development. In a review of literature and practice, Zinaida Miller notes the past failures of transitional justice processes.

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justice discourse “to investigate fully the socioeconomic background to the conflicts in question, to elucidate the structural violence of the past or to fully grapple with the economic aspects of transition.” Among the costs of this “invisibility” of economic questions, Miller counts the incomplete understanding of the origins of conflict and the related possibility of future violence.

Reviewing research undertaken in Argentina, El Salvador and South Africa, Lisa Laplante also calls for transitional justice to engage in questions of economic justice, noting that a failure to spread the benefits of economic development “looms like social and economic dynamite,” that, once ignited, can undermine the work of transitional justice mechanisms to sustain peace and reconciliation. Laplante draws attention to the opportunity for transitional justice mechanisms to support development work by framing “socioeconomic roots of conflict in terms of rights...(thus) making social justice a legitimate priority in post-conflict recovery,” facilitating participatory processes to raise such claims and generating rights-based recommendations to promote social justice.

Prioritizing economic justice for children is critical to realizing the overarching objectives of ensuring peace and reconciliation for societies in transition. However, transitional justice and international development initiatives cannot replace state obligations to protect and promote the social and economic rights of children. Indeed, these responsibilities are vast; they require marshaling considerable financial resources and building state capacity over generations. Given these realities, it is important to recognize the risks inherent in ever-expanding mandates of transitional justice mechanisms and the danger of overreaching.


58 For a discussion of the risks inherent to linking transitional justice and development, see Pablo de Greiff, “Articulating the Links between Transitional Justice and Development,” in *Transitional Justice and Development*, at 39, 40, 41 (highlighting questions of significance,
Right to an Effective Remedy for War-Affected Children

Transitional justice features prominently in the post-conflict programming toolkit as an established societal process for considering the past and accounting for rights violations and potentially remedying them. Under international law, the right to an effective remedy presents a robust normative foundation for transitional justice processes to engage in and prescribe remedial measures, such as reparations and institutional reforms that encompass economic justice for children. However, practice to-date has been limited.

Remedying Violations of International Law

As underscored in international human rights treaties and declarations, the right to an effective remedy imposes an obligation on states to investigate, prevent and, in some cases, punish human rights abuses. The right to an effective remedy is reflected in numerous human rights treaties, including the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the

overload and efficacy when transitional justice mechanisms attempt to engage in matters of direct developmental impact from an economic perspective).


60 Consider article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, considered to reflect international human rights law, which states that “everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.” UN Doc. A/810 (12 December 1948).

American Convention on Human Rights,\textsuperscript{62} the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,\textsuperscript{63} and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.\textsuperscript{64}

Several sources under international law acknowledge reparations as a core element of the right to an effective remedy for violations of international law. As early as 1927, the Permanent Court of Justice established reparations as an element of providing an effective remedy: “It is a principle of international law that the breach of an engagement involves an obligation to make reparation in an adequate form.”\textsuperscript{65} Guarantees of the right to a remedy for violations of protections under international human rights

\textsuperscript{62} American Convention on Human Rights, article 25, 22 November 1969. In general, the Inter-American Court on Human Right’s jurisprudence concerning article 1(1) of the American Convention on Human Rights requires State parties to “ensure” the rights set forth in the Convention and affirms the right to a remedy under international human rights law.

\textsuperscript{63} Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, \textit{entered into force} 26 June 1987 (consider the operation of articles 4, 5, and 6).

\textsuperscript{64} International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2(3) expressly states that any person whose treaty rights are violated has the right to “an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity.” Some international legal jurists argue that this right has attained the status of customary law. Bassiouni, for example, has stated that a well-established principle in international law holds that each state has a duty to provide a domestic legal remedy to victims of human rights abuse. See M. Cherif Bassiouni, “International Recognition of Victims’ Rights,” \textit{Human Rights Law Review} 6 2006:203, 213. \textit{See also} Jordan J. Paust, “On Human Rights: The Use of Human Rights Precepts in U.S. History and the Right to an Effective Remedy in Domestic Courts,” \textit{Michigan Journal of International Law} 10 1989:543, 616 (“the right of access to the courts and the concomitant right to an effective remedy are...recognized as fundamental human rights having a basis in customary international law”).

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Factory at Chorzów (Ger. v. Pol.)}, 1927 P.C.I.J. (ser. A) No. 9, at 21. The Permanent Court of Justice was established after World War I; it was followed by the United Nations International Court of Justice. This holding was recently reaffirmed by the Permanent Court’s successor — the International Court of Justice — in its advisory opinion in the Israeli Security Wall case. \textit{See} \textit{Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, ICJ Reports, 9 July 2004} (holding that Israel has an obligation under international law to provide reparations to Palestinians for material damages sustained due to the construction of an illegal wall on their territory).
instruments have also been interpreted to include reparations. For example, article 2(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees an effective remedy to any individual whose rights have been violated, has been determined by the Convention’s human rights committee to require “that State Parties make reparation to individuals whose Covenant rights have been violated.” Finally, the right to adequate reparations in connection with armed conflict has also enjoyed long-standing protection in the body of international humanitarian law.

More recently, the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 adopted the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, which affirm the legal obligation to provide adequate, effective and prompt reparations. Reparations

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66 Consider article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 14, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Article 39, CRC; Article 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.


68 CCPR Human Rights Committee, General Comment 31: Nature of the General Legal Obligation on States Parties to the Covenant, para. 15, UN Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13 (2004). Note, the Committee identified reparations as “central to the efficacy of article 2, paragraph 3.”

69 Consider Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, article 3, 18 October, 1907, 1 Bevans 247 (the Fourth Hague Convention); Article 91 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949; Article X of the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) of 8 June 1977.


71 "Reparations Principles,” Preamble and para. 2.
for gross human rights violations were recognized to include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of nonrecurrence.72

Thus, under international law, the normative basis of the right to reparations has progressively broadened from that of ensuring restitution for a violation of state obligations to encompassing a variety of broader remedial measures, including reparations. These can extend to individual and collective measures, financial and nonfinancial measures and commemorative and reform measures.73 Enjoying a broad foundation under international law, reparations can therefore be considered as grounded in both rights and policy.

As defined, the right to a remedy, including in the form of reparations policy, can and should include measures for economic justice, which can redress rights violations of an economic nature. The formal element of “compensation,” for example, can be provided in the form of education and other social benefits, while “rehabilitation” can include medical, psychological and other social services. Both are critical to repair the type of harms that undermine children’s right to survival and development, in addition to having considerable benefit for the recovery of war-affected children from serious violations. Indeed, “where possible, costs of social and educational reintegration, medical treatment, mental health care and legal services should be addressed.”74


Reparations Policies and Programs for War-Affected Children

Though international law provides a broad foundation from which to consider how to remedy systematic violations of children’s rights during and after conflict, practical challenges remain. These concern how to determine the nature and scope of potential remedial policies, as well as appropriate eligibility criteria and means to ensure program effectiveness. To-date, reparations policies, programs and institutional reforms have yielded little to instruct or inform these questions.

Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson recently conducted a comprehensive survey of eight truth commissions and their consideration of child rights violations, as well as development of reparations policies and programs.75 “With the notable exceptions of Peru and Sierra Leone,” the authors found that “in no other reparations program were child survivors of grave rights violations or child rights organizations systematically consulted to help shape the scope, processes and outcomes of reparation programs.”76

In terms of substance, the reparations programs they surveyed generally failed to recognize or address grave violations suffered by children, which resulted in a failure to consider children as individual rights holders and thus, corresponding failures; to consider and define crimes in ways that include children; and conduct targeted outreach to child survivors. Also, the truth commissions surveyed were generally found to impose barriers that impeded children from accessing reparations, such as age- and time-limited benefits, and a requirement for the child to have experienced multiple harms in order to qualify. Also noted was an


76 Ibid.
overall failure to ensure that age-appropriate benefits accounted for the change in children’s roles and responsibilities after transition.

An argument can be made that such shortcomings could have been avoided if these processes had fully applied the CRC in their treatment of children and had considered child rights violations and remedial measures. The CRC articles and interpretations provide a comprehensive foundation for realizing the full range of children’s rights; indeed, “the interdependence of children’s political, civil, economic, and social rights [under the CRC] suggests that a child-friendly reparations policy” must consider how children have experienced violations of this broader set of rights.77 It may be necessary to explicitly identify children for particular post-transition measures. Consider the conclusions of Piers Pigou in this volume with respect to the South African experience. The author notes that although the integration of reparation and development goals did not “exclude giving priority to specific groups, in practice this has not occurred [especially] with respect to victims and survivors recognized by the TRC.”78

When children are explicitly included in the mandates of transitional justice processes, it appears that more consideration is given to the violations they have suffered and the remedial measures necessary to redress such violations. The Sierra Leone TRC was explicitly mandated to consider the experiences and needs of children.79 They participated in statement-taking and hearings, and the TRC considered child rights violations and corresponding remedies in the final report.80


78 Piers Pigou, “Children and the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” Chapter 4 of this volume,

79 Sierra Leone TRC Report, Chapter Four, Children and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone.

80 The process included the development and publication of a children’s version of the final report. See Truth and Reconciliation Report for the Children of Sierra Leone, Child-Friendly
Despite these groundbreaking advances, serious questions and concerns remain following application of the country’s reparations policy and program. Specifically, in addition to the protection gaps described earlier, initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission\(^81\) and the government agency responsible for implementing the reparations policy (National Commission for Social Action)\(^82\) have been criticized by local and external actors for their failure to meaningfully address the post-war reparations needs of the population, especially children and young people. Armed with US $1.8 million,\(^83\) the Peacebuilding Commission has been found to be “an advisory inter-governmental organ [that] lacks [the] operational executive authority to preside over or affect policy coherence and coordination.”\(^84\) In Liberia, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) “undertook significant preparatory work and acquired the necessary technical expertise through partnerships with a number of specialized [child protection] agencies and civil society organizations.” It did this as part of its mandate to undertake “specific mechanisms and procedures to address the experiences of…children and vulnerable

\(^81\) IRIN, “Sierra Leone” (“In 2006 the UN Peacebuilding Commission [PBC] selected Sierra Leone as a recipient country of its Peacebuilding fund, and together with the Sierra Leone government the PBC identified youth employment as a priority issue for peace consolidation. However, since then the government has downgraded youth on its priority list, according to staff at the Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities in Sierra Leone”).


\(^83\) United Nations, Outcome of the Peacebuilding Commission High-Level Special Session on Sierra Leone, (New York: United Nations, 5 June 2009), para. 4(d).

\(^84\) Severine Rugumamu, “Does the UN Peacebuilding Commission Change the Mode of Peacebuilding in Africa?” Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Briefing Paper, 8 June 2009.
group[s], paying particular attention to...child soldiers” and to give “special attention to...the experiences of children and women during armed conflicts in Liberia.”85 The recommendations proposed in the Final Report of the TRC include a broad-based reparations scheme that encompasses symbolic and material reparations to address the post-conflict needs of children. According to the Commission, “ideally, any reparation schemes will target entire communities and children as a group rather than single out individual children.”86

Role of Transitional Justice in Realizing Economic Justice

How can transitional justice support the work of governments, as well as donor and international and local development agencies, to repair the socioeconomic harm suffered by children during and after political violence or armed conflict? As discussed above, transitional justice processes may not be the best mechanisms for realizing economic rights.87 However, transitional justice processes can determine the nature of the systemic harms endured by war-affected children while identifying and advocating for appropriate forms of redress to fulfill their socioeconomic needs.

Responding to Child Rights Violations Before, During and After War

Fashioning remedies, laws, policies and programs to sustain the long-term protection of children’s rights requires an understanding of children’s war-related vulnerabilities. Reactive and fragmented

85 Ibid., citing TRC Act, Article IV, Section 4e; Article VII, Section 26(f).

86 Republic of Liberia, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Volume Three: Appendices, Title II: Children, the Conflict and the TRC Agenda, at 107.

87 “With their relatively short timeframes and undoubtedly large increase in number of potential victims who would fall under their purview, charging these mechanisms with the causes and consequences of poverty, and with establishing individual guilt for economic crimes may well decrease their ability to accomplish their work in any sort of effective way,” Violence, Truth and Youth, at 37.
efforts to remedy violence against children remain insufficiently funded, and they focus narrowly on symptoms and consequences of violence, as found by the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.\textsuperscript{88} Thus, researchers analyzing child rights violations have been urged to consider “(i) the breakdown of education and health care systems, (ii) child rights violations that happen as part of aggression against the family, (iii) human rights violations targeted directly against children, such as arbitrary executions; (iv) rights violations that are unique to children, for example, family separation; and (v) violations perpetrated by adolescents.”\textsuperscript{89} Transitional justice processes can support information-gathering on these issues, complement the measurement of continuing harms endured by children and consider how they persist despite the end of war.

Children have been the casualties of serious rights violations in times of peace and war. Based on his review of research exploring the societal treatment of children across multiple periods, Jézéquel links the prevalence of child soldiers (and consequently, the abuse of children during war) to a “longer history of child labor in colonial and post colonial African economies.”\textsuperscript{90} Jézéquel emphasizes the need to understand the role and use of children in society because the “omnipresent figure of the child soldier, perceived as an aberration of modern times, prevents us from seeing the continuities in the violence perpetrated on children in times of peace as well as war. Even today the figure of the child


\textsuperscript{89} UNICEF, Expert Meeting on Transitional Justice and Children, convened by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, November 2005.

\textsuperscript{90} Jean-Hervé Jézéquel, “Child Soldiers in Africa,” op. cit. Recognizing the need for deeper historical treatment on the topic of children in Africa, Jézéquel considers the existing work of historians and anthropologists covering the history of children on the continent from the slave trade to the key role played by child labor in colonial economies, which leads him to conclude that “we can, however, put forward the hypothesis that the study of child soldiers would have greatly benefited from being put back in the context of a longer view of history.”
miner, exploited in the pit mines of Sierra Leone or the East Congo, does not arouse the same international mobilisation as do child soldiers.” The present depiction of child soldiers has skewed our understanding of children’s experiences during war because a focus on denouncing those behind the victimization of children during war ignores the influence of pre-war sociopolitical dynamics.91

Major donor agencies and development institutions already give considerable attention and funding to areas such as health and education in post-conflict countries. However, the rights violations of war-affected children can reflect a long-standing systemic failure to protect the social and economic interests of children and their families. Transitional justice mechanisms can thus also complement the development process by enhancing understanding of children’s experiences during war and proposing solutions to violations of children’s rights that are linked to broader economic injustices that persist prior to, during and after war.

Sustaining the survival and development of children requires identifying the causes and the remedial approaches to dynamics that perpetuate endemic poverty, structural violence, social instability and the resulting violations of children’s rights. Consider, for example, the findings of Liberia’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: “Liberia’s history of deprivation of large parts of the country and large segments of the population had left many children extremely vulnerable to potential exploitation and abuse.”92 Specifically, the chapter on children in the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report finds that the “[inequitable] distribution of educational opportunities across the country mirrored the highly unequal distribution of health and other social services across the country. [These circumstances] reflect the deep inequalities inherent to Liberian pre-war society, and [were] translated into economic opportunities, which meant that most

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91 Ibid. According to Jézéquel, failing to contextualize the experience of children with respect to violence tends to “emphasize, unfortunately, the tragic ordinariness of the instrumentalisation of children in war.”

92 Republic of Liberia, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Volume Three: Appendices, Title II: Children, the Conflict and the TRC Agenda, Chapter 7 – “Reparations,” at 3.
children from far-off counties and from rural areas had no prospects of social mobility.\textsuperscript{93}

The Machel Study Ten-Year Strategic Review emphasizes the continuing need to strengthen monitoring and reporting on “all impacts on children and violations of their rights.”\textsuperscript{94} In carrying out their mandates, transitional justice processes have typically collaborated with child-rights advocates and practitioners, including coordinating community-based networks and training of statement-takers in child-friendly techniques. To ensure continued value from this process, transitional justice mechanisms should also consider what measures can be sustained after their mandates to build on these collaborative efforts and to facilitate continued data collection.

Finally, through participatory mechanisms, transitional justice processes can involve children and their families. These processes support the collection of valuable information on community needs and can serve to inform communities about initiatives to ensure that state actors and international agencies are held accountable. This approach is an important complement to development enterprises that do not inherently involve participatory processes or transparency. Indeed, as Pablo de Greiff argues, transitional justice can make a significant contribution to development by strengthening the notion of inclusive citizenship, which promotes participatory rights through which citizens can engage in a common political project.\textsuperscript{95}

Post-Conflict Reform Agenda

Corresponding with the objective to “build trust in the state and

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., at 23.


in its commitment to guaranteeing human rights in the future in an inclusive way, transitional justice processes can help set an agenda in support of children’s rights by prescribing institutional reforms and reparations policies and programs as part of post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Indeed, as visible political actors, transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions have the “legal and/or moral authority” to draw attention to systemic obstacles to justice and to mobilize support for reforms.

Based on international obligations to provide a remedy for serious rights violations, transitional justice measures can prescribe reparations policies and programs as well as institutional reforms. The ability of such measures to systematically highlight violations of the rights of children can lead to “public recognition of their status as victims, public recognition of their suffering and the damage they have sustained, and a serious public effort to repair at least symbolically the harm done.”

Beyond symbolic repair, however, promoting children’s economic rights can influence the development and practice of post-conflict reconstruction strategies, as well as an overall peace and security agenda. Recommendations of transitional justice processes for reparations policies and institutional reform serve as immediate post-conflict pronouncements on the systemic repairs needed to ensure economic and social justice for children. As such, they can enable prioritizing the social and economic needs of

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97 See Rolando Ames Cobian and Felix Reategui, “Toward Systemic Social Transformation: Truth Commissions and Development,” in Transitional Justice and Development, at 146. (The authors argue that transitional justice unfolds “in the field of profound social transformations, and that a central aspect of those transformations is the change in collective beliefs regarding, precisely, the feasibility of achieving justice in practice.”)

98 “Reparation,” at 148.
children in post-conflict programming agendas. Shifting agendas is important, as it can lead to real impacts by reshaping the margins of acceptable action; creating opportunities for redefining reputations and naming and shaming; changing incentive structures and the definition of interests and preferences; and influencing expectations.99

Undertaking a broader approach to socioeconomic reparations and reforms for children is critical for societies in transition where there exists a viable opportunity for institutional and structural reforms. Individual compensation mechanisms alone are not likely to result in the most appropriate and comprehensive responses to gross human rights violations; instead, some combination of individual compensation and broad policy measures to benefit victims is needed to accomplish reparation.100 Considering the redistributive potential of certain transitional justice measures, “reparations must cast an eye to the future as part of a broader effort to sow the ground for future peace and stability” because, “as a utopian project, transitional reparations must be justified by the goal of achieving reconstruction and reform. In particular, reparations must reflect the primary goal of achieving new social and material conditions for former victims.”101

In the case of war-affected children, post-conflict recovery measures should include collective remedies rooted in social programs. According to Betancourt, “systems must be developed to ensure that all war-affected [children and] youth get some basic services and that screening, referral and treatment systems are in place to ensure that individuals needing a higher level of care receive it.”102 For instance, UNICEF’s Child Protection Strategy aims


100 “Reparations in Theory and Practice.”


102 Bettancourt, at 4. See also Erika George, “After Atrocity Examples from Africa: The Right to Education and the Role of Law in Restoration, Recovery, and Accountability,” Loyola
to enable fulfilment of immediate recovery needs and provides a strong framework for assessing appropriate responses to those needs. The framework identifies strategic actions for supporting the development of national child protection systems that can support and strengthen families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation. Directed policies that outline the immediate realization of social and economic rights of children can reinforce their role as “equal citizens in the new political order.”

CONCLUSIONS

I want the TRC to help us have good health and free education for our country Liberia. I want the TRC to help us to redevelop our country Liberia, and finally, I want the TRC to help us have a peaceful nation, not go back to war.

– Statement by a girl participating in a Liberian TRC workshop

For societies to recover from the harms inflicted by armed conflict and to sustain peace, development priorities must include protection of the full range of children’s fundamental rights. The field of transitional justice can play a complementary role in this process. Developing and implementing sustained programs to

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respect the fundamental social and economic rights of children is critical for a number of reasons. First, international law requires realization of children’s rights to development and welfare, including after armed conflict. Second, children become adults, and without a healthy foundation from which they can contribute positively to society, marginalized youth are easy prey for actors seeking to profit from sociopolitical instability.

Transitional justice processes can complement post-conflict reconstruction efforts by informing and advocating for institutional reforms and reparations policies that link multiple social, economic and political variables and ensure that child-focused measures are initiated and sustained amid competing development priorities. Consider, for example, the approach recommended in the chapter on children in the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report. It calls for achieving justice for children and advocates “multiple interventions at many different levels of the political system and society, a mix of measures toward reconciliation and prosecutorial justice as well as renewed attention to offer the young war generation the opportunities they have been missing out on in terms of education, health care, opportunities to advocate for their rights and interests, to earn a living and to be master of their own normal lives.” Embarking on such reforms will not be an easy task. Though the TRC has articulated the way forward, child rights advocates would be advised to repeat this message continuously and to ensure that the interests of children are integrated in all policies of every government ministry.

A large-scale, post-conflict reconstruction strategy cannot completely eradicate childhood poverty and youth unemployment. However, giving priority to the realization of economic justice for war-affected children is clearly a key component of maintaining long-term social stability and of breaking cycles of child exploitation and abuse. Economic justice can thus go far in protecting

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106 Theo Sowa, “Children and the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” Chapter 6 of this volume

107 Ibid., at 104.
children from falling victim to grave rights violations. Transitional justice processes not only provide the means to understand how to remedy violations of children’s rights resulting from armed conflict, but can work to motivate and inform sustainable, child-sensitive post-conflict development initiatives.