Conflicts and the right to Education in Africa

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Abstract
This literature research explored how conflicts in Africa tend to act as constraints to the right to education for all. The paper argues that while we may be cautious about inferring simple causal links between lack of education and conflict, it is important to note that such links are unavoidable. It is within this framework that the paper assesses the right to education in terms of access, equity and quality. Across Africa, it may be useful to promote wider understanding of the intersections between right to education and conflict. The central argument of this paper is that, at times of conflict the right to education is even more likely to be disregarded, particularly with respect to the exclusion of girls from school. We suggest a sterner approach where the international community needs to re-think the categorisation of education as a part of social, economic and cultural rights in order that it can be effectively protected in conflict situations. Our motivation for presenting this paper lies in the fact that it will provide relevant insights on the connections between conflicts and education for peace practioners at large and in particular policy makers in Africa; in arriving at policies that will promote the long-sought for education of our people within the continent.

Key Words: right, conflict, Africa, education, aid

Introduction

In 2011, the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR) focused attention on a 'hidden crisis in education' brought about by armed conflict, a crisis that was receiving insufficient international attention (UNESCO, 2011). The longstanding evidence that 82 per cent of the reported 113 million children out of school are living in crisis and post-crisis countries, points to the devastating effects of conflict on access to education (Ngwata, 2001; Smith and Vaux, 2003). This concept paper argues that while we may be cautious about inferring simple causal links between lack of education and conflict, it is important to note that such links are unavoidable. It takes off from a framework of education as a right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) enjoins the world to provide conditions for the individual to assert those rights. One of the implications is that the right to education is meaningless except it is provided in safe environments in which the cost of access is not death, rape, kidnapping, amputation or a recruitment to join combat groups to fight, other than being in school. Realising rights does not only rest on stating Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals.

A recent development in discussing the right to education is the '4 As' framework credited to the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski (see Tomasevski, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). The '4 As' theory argues that as a human right, access to basic education has four aspects - availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability - described as the '4 As' (Tomasevski, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Rashid, 2005). *Availability* means education is funded by government, where proper infrastructure and facilities are put

in place with adequate books and materials for students. This requires that school buildings meet both safety standards, and that sanitation facilities such as toilets and clean drinking water are available within the school environment. Education that is available implies active recruitment, proper training and appropriate teacher and retention methods to ensure that enough qualified staff is available at each school (Right to Education Project, 2008). It requires that all barriers including distance, cost of textbooks and transport to school are removed. Also required is the removal of the cost of school uniforms or the removal of the requirement of uniforms all together.

Accessibility refers to non-discrimination against marginalized groups. It requires that education is made accessible to all groups and individuals without any form of discrimination based on location, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, financial status (economic accessibility). Schools must be within a reasonable distance for children within the community, otherwise transportation should be provided to students, particularly those that might live in rural areas, to ensure ways to school are safe and convenient. Education should be affordable to all, with textbooks, supplies and uniforms provided to students at no additional costs (Right to Education Project, 2008).

Acceptability means the quality of education provided should be free of discrimination, relevant and culturally appropriate for all students. To be acceptable, education must be relevant and pluralistic. For example, students should not be expected to conform to any specific religious or ideological views. Quality teaching and quality instructional materials must be made available to facilitate learning in all situations at all times. Methods of teaching should be objective and unbiased and material available should reflect a wide array of ideas and beliefs. Health and safety should be emphasized within schools including the elimination of any forms of corporal punishment. Professionalism of staff and teachers should be maintained (Right to Education Project, 2008).

Adaptability means educational programs should be flexible and able to adjust according to societal changes and the needs of the community. Religious or cultural holidays should be respected by schools in order to accommodate students, along with providing adequate care to those students with disabilities (Right to Education Project, 2008). It requires that education is adapted to the specific needs of the children, to their local context, the changing needs of society and contributing to gender equality.

The '4 As' theory supports international human rights conceptions of the State as prime duty-bearer, guarantor of education and the provider of last resort (rural areas should have special education provision). Implicit in this rights based theory of access is the condition that access should be "means blind" (Lewin, 2007). From the premise of indivisibility of rights, a violation in one of the four dimensions - availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability - constitutes a problem for access to basic education. The theory foundationally resents any simplistic conceptualisation of access since merely getting children into schools does not mean they have access (Adzahlie-Mensah, Golo & Agbevivi, 2017). Access means full participation in an education that is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. GER and NER figures are useful but not as essential indicators of access. Lewin (2007) argues that aspirational planning which seeks to achieve EFA and MDGs indicated by universal enrolment is problematic because indicators are not contextualised. How access is provided and explanations of schooling conditions are more useful determinants of access. The reason children do not complete the full cycle of basic education may be as a result of inadequacies in how education is being provided. There are patchworks of research which link access to long distances to school (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Avotri, 2000) quality of school (Yeboah, 1997) lack of school infrastructure, non-availability of trained teachers (McWilliam and Poh, 1975; Akyeampong, 2006) and in-school factors may impede access to schooling. Rural schools described by the World Bank as worst resourced 'bush schools' in off-road rural communities have difficulty in attracting teachers and parents who can ill afford any cash contributions chose withdraw their children from school (World Bank, 2004:16). There is need for systematic research to explore these in-school context factors in much detail in terms of how it impedes children's right to basic education.

Conceptualising the Relationship between education and conflict

Every child of school-going age should be in safe schools with quality teachers, materials and facilities. Things are not so in Africa and conflict is a major contributor. Nearly all countries on the African continent are experiencing some kind of conflict and this tends to negatively affect the right to education. Conflict in this paper is conceived of as a situation where two or more parties clash over a set of incompatible demands leading to strained relationships because the parties have developed interest and identity as a result of their persistent parallel claims (Adzahlie-Mensah, et al., 2017; Adzahlie-Mensah, Golo & Gyamfuaa-Abrefa, 2016). The clashes and tensions create emergency situations in which the life of individuals are threatened or disrupted.

The starting point is that the right to education is articulated in several human rights applicable in conflict situations including the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and the Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Later protocols, UN declarations and resolutions have tried to update accepted 'rules of engagement' to accommodate the more complex nature of modern conflicts, but in these situations, where conflicts are often waged by groups within countries and with no sense of accountability to international authority, the main problem is a complete disregard for the values and norms represented by the Geneva Conventions. Geneva Conventions make specific reference to protections related to education at times of war. These include provisions that:

- Parties to a conflict ensure that children under fifteen, orphaned or separated from their families are provided with appropriate education; (Article 27)
- Occupying powers should facilitate the maintenance of education; (Article 28)
- Education should be provided for interned children and young people; (Article 29)
- Education should be provided for children throughout non-international conflicts (Article 30)

In terms of conflicts, the right to education must be put into perspective and understood as a protective right which must not be sacrificed in the name of a state of emergency or even under the most severe conditions of conflict (Adzahlie-Mensah, et al., 2017). Propositions from the IRC (2016) are informative. First, education keeps children safe and gives them the skills essential to survive, recover and gain control of their futures. Second, education is absolutely critical for school-aged children living in communities affected by crisis and disaster. Third, school is where children in conflict affected children develop the foundational skills of reading and math, as well as the social and emotional skills to help them recover, persevere, learn and be resilient in the face of adversity.

According to UNESCO (2015) education can promote tolerance as well as the global citizenship skills outlined in the proposed SDG targets as important for peaceful and inclusive societies. Education provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection which can be both life-saving and life-sustaining in situations of emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction. Education sustains life by offering safe spaces for learning, as well as the ability to identify and provide support for affected individuals – particularly children and adolescents. Education mitigates the psychosocial impact of conflict and disasters by giving a sense of normalcy, stability, structure and hope for the future during a time of crisis, and provides essential building blocks for future economic stability (INEE, 2006). In the midst of conflict, international humanitarian law has a particular importance.

A good quality education may not be enough to counter extremism, but could play a critical role in helping young people resist recruitment into extremist causes (CGCC, 2013). In a survey of six countries and territories affected by violence, many citizens believed that poor provision and quality of education is one of the drivers of conflict (World Bank, 2011). Education can also save lives by protecting against exploitation and harm, including abduction, recruitment of children into armed groups and sexual and gender-based violence. It also provides the knowledge and skills to survive in a crisis through the dissemination of lifesaving information about landmine safety, HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. This is the context in which education is assessed in order to ensure that it is granted as a universal right without exceptions.

Education is increasingly seen as one means to reduce and overcome the effect of violence and can help bring a sense of normalcy and stability into an otherwise chaotic situation.

Impacts of conflict on the right to education
The effects of conflict on advancing the right to education are widely documented in development publications. For example, the IRC (2016) 62 million out-of-school children and youth are living in nations affected by crisis and are in desperate need of educational support. A UNESCO (2015) policy paper noted several concerns. It noted among other things that education urgently needs to be made a priority in conflict-affected countries as these countries currently have some of the world's worst education indicators. A further concern was that millions of children in those countries are being deprived of their right to an education that could transform their lives. According to UNESCO, conflict-affected states, in particular, remain off track from reaching many of the education goals in spite of tremendous global progress towards reaching the EFA goals.

Without focusing on conflict-affected countries, the education targets agreed at the May 2015 World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, will not be reached by the target date of 2030. Additionally, there is clear evidence that a good quality education is central to reaching many of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); without significant efforts towards universal access to education, many of these goals will not be achieved (UNESCO, 2014). Education, for example, can help prevent conflict. One study showed that doubling the percentage of youth with secondary education from 30% to 60% has the potential to halve the risk of conflict. Another study of 55 countries between 1986 and 2003 indicated that where educational inequality doubled, the probability of conflict more than doubled from 3.8% to 9.5% (UNESCO, 2014).

The issue of conflict as an impediment to the achievement of EFA goals was highlighted at a strategic session on Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis as part of the Darkar World Education Forum in 2000. As a consequence, the main declaration of the Dakar Framework for Action states that,

> *Countries in transition, countries affected by conflict, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.*' [And] '*Countries in conflict or undergoing reconstruction should be given special attention in building up their education systems*. (Dakar World Education Forum Framework for Action, main declaration, paragraph 12, 14).

The Dakar Framework identified twelve strategies that are likely to contribute to the achievement of Education for All. One of these is to '*meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict...*' The essential point is that the issues represent an international acknowledgement that conflicts affect education systems for which reason support is needed to help conflict affected education systems. It is in this context that we can assess the effects of conflict on the right to education in terms of access, equity and quality.

Some have argued that 'schools are increasingly the targets of military activity' (Smith and Vaux, 2003; DFID, 2001). The historical literature explained that 40% of schools were destroyed during the Mozambique's (Smith and Vaux, 2003). We are informed that 80 per cent of the 2400 schools in Liberia were put out of operation by the conflict; the teacher training institutes in south-east and central Liberia were also destroyed; and about 12,000 teachers who were on the public school payroll in pre-war Liberia took up alternative employment to make ends meet during the war (Dukuly, 2016). Smith and Vaux also suggested that the focus is often on the most visible impacts of conflict on education, such as destruction of infrastructure and disruption to education provision. However, it is crucial that the relationship of education to conflict should not only be considered at times of crisis, but also be a routine ingredient of development thinking within the formal education sector. In this perspective the impacts of conflicts on the right to education can be discussed under three major themes namely – education as part of international human rights, Education for All and Education as part of Millennium Development Goals.

A World Bank (2005) publication, *Reshaping the Future* enumerated a number of conflict effects on education systems noting "conflict has devastating impact on education, both in terms of the suffering and psychological impact on the pupils, teachers ... and the degradation of the education system and its infrastructure." Teacher training frequently collapses, learners drop out, management development and training policy development breakdown, and resources are channelled to military expenditures and away from education, leaving schools without textbooks and learning materials, teachers unpaid, and schools unsupervised.(p.18)

It was explained that:

> *The most profound and lasting impact of conflict on primary education is, however, is quality rather than access. Quality tends to deteriorate as qualified teachers disperse, as learning materials and supplies become less available... (p. 20).*

This leads to a collapse of the public system of education. Where education systems remain resilient the report argued that "this resilience may be reflected in continued schooling during conflict, but equity, access, and quality usually deteriorate."(p.22) Education may never come to a complete standstill for an extended period but may be affected by a "legacy of dropout and repetition, disrupted attendance, and overage students" which "outlasts the frequently quite rapid recovery of enrolment rates." The teaching force are often severely debilitated by conflicts and in the case of Rwanda, more than two-thirds of the teachers in primary and secondary schools were killed or fled.

A UNESCO study, *Education under attack* (2007) and UNICEF study (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) also highlight some of the negative aspects of education in relation to conflict. The findings were that:

- pupils and staff stay at home because of fear of attacks in the forms of abductions, detention or disappearance
- Children are denied teachers as a result of murders and assassinations
- Pupils and staff flee for fear of being targeted
- School buildings, materials and resources are destroyed or damaged

The use of education as a weapon in cultural repression of minorities, denying them access to education

- Segregated education such as the apartheid system in South Africa
- The manipulation of textbooks for political purposes in telling the 'national story'.
- The inculcation of attitudes of superiority

The UNESCO study concludes that conflicts typically disrupt and undermine the provision of education, access to education and the quality of education; and that by 2007 up to 40 per cent of the 77 million or more children in the world who are not attending school can be found in countries affected by conflict. Smith and Vaux (2003) maintained that the existence of conflict inevitably raises questions concerning government views on the *purpose of education*. They insist that there are three major characteristics of education systems during conflicts. These are

- **Assimilationist** (single institutions operating according to the values of the dominant tradition, where minority needs and interests are often neglected);
- **Separatist** (separate institutions each serving different constituencies with relatively homogeneous populations - processes within institutions may or may not acknowledge broader diversity outside the institution);
- **Integrationist** (common or shared institutions with diversity represented within the population of each institution).

Bush and Saltarelli (2000) argued that this is visible even under conditions of inter-ethnic conflict because these unavoidably find their way into the classroom. An analysis of education structures and educational processes from a conflict perspective could therefore be an important component of a conflict '*early warning system*' (Smith and Vaux, 2003).

A report the UN Secretary-General addressed the issue of education as vital during armed conflicts, offering a sense of community and stability for children and for the whole community (Machel, 1996). The report highlighted that education gives shape and structure to children's lives. When everything around is chaos, schools can be a haven of security that is vital to the well-being of war-affected children and their communities. The report acknowledged the exploitation of children and noted that education systems in war-torn communities often reflect the dynamics of the conflict and the injustices that take place outside the classroom. In terms of gender, the Machel report revealed the increased risk to girls of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation in the midst of armed conflict. Sexual humiliation, mutilation and rape are used as weapons of war. During and after conflict, girls are discriminated against in terms of their access to education. Smith and Vaux (2003) illustrated the gender dimensions explaining that the increased risk to girls in the midst of conflict is attributed to increased likelihood of sexual abuse and the increased contact of civilian populations with armed forces comprised of young, sexually active males. HIV/AIDS has an additional, detrimental impact. The death of parents also leaves children without the adult care that might assure school attendance and the development of important skills necessary for personal hygiene and survival. The compounded impact of HIV/AIDS increase risk to girls in the midst of conflict. The Machel report noted also that the recruitment of children including girls as combatants is a common feature of many armed conflicts. The Machel (2000:4) also estimated that, "at any given time, more than 300,000 children under the age of 18 are being used as hostile soldiers". These children tend to fight instead of being in school.

UNESCO (2015) stated that half of all out-of-school children and adolescents in conflict-affected countries are found in sub-Saharan Africa. As more and more children globally are entering and completing primary schooling, the proportion of children who are out of school has become increasingly concentrated in countries affected by conflict. According to UNESCO, based on the most recent household survey data from low and middle income countries, shows that children in conflict affected countries are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared with those in countries not affected by conflict; similarly, adolescents are more than two-thirds more likely to be out of school. In conflict settings, children and adolescents are also more likely to leave school early. While on average 75% of children in countries not affected by conflict complete their primary education, only 58% of those in conflict affected countries do so.

Another issue is displacement. The IRC (2016) identified that, in Lebanon, more than half of the 1.1 million registered refugees from Syria are under the age of 18, and nearly 17% are children under the age of five. Mawson, Dodd and Hillary (2000) and Lowicki (2000) illustrated the need for emergency education for unaccompanied or separated children to ensure their safety and survival arguing that when schooling is halted during conflicts there is little protection particularly for girls. Children in this group are likely to be one of the least educated. The World Bank (2005) explains displacement, either within or without the country's borders, places enormous pressure on education systems and results in millions of learning days lost.

Finally, teachers living in conflict and fragile states often risk their lives to provide an education, with little support through training and psychosocial support. They often go without pay for months on end. Supporting teachers is crucial to prevent the collapse of the education systems in these countries and yet teacher salaries in many Humanitarian Response Plans are rarely funded (Save the Children, 2014).

Conflicts and development aid to the education sector
Aid has been essential to realising the right to education in developing countries, especially in Africa. According to Dembisa (2009) there exist three types of aid: humanitarian or emergency aid, which is mobilized and dispensed in response to catastrophes and calamities – for example, aid in response to the 2004 Asian tsunami, or monies which targeted the cyclone-hit Myanmar in 2008; charity-based aid, which is disbursed by charitable organizations to institutions or people on the ground; and systematic aid – that is, aid payments made directly to governments either through government-to-government transfers (in which case it is termed bilateral aid) or transferred via institutions such as the World Bank (known as multilateral aid).

UNESCO (2015) discussed the issue of Aid and its connectedness to realising educational goals. According to UNESCO, education funding in conflict affected countries is neglected. Conflict-affected countries are spending far below the recommended levels on education. In 2012, just 3.2% of national income was spent on education in 21 of these countries – far below the global average of 5% or the recommended target of between 4% and 6% of national income. The proposition is that inefficient humanitarian and development aid systems, together with insufficient levels of domestic financing, are leaving millions of children and adolescents in conflict-affected countries excluded from education. This is holding back global efforts to ensure school access for all. Humanitarian aid does not prioritize education, translating to little funding. The globally agreed target for the minimum share of education in humanitarian aid to be at least 4% needs to be strengthened to ensure funding reaches all children and adolescents affected by conflict. Development aid does not adequately support countries in long-term crises, nor their education sectors. Donors must better target aid according to need.

Resources for education in protracted crises often fall outside standard. Humanitarian funding as the current aid architecture has been widely critiqued for some time: it compartmentalizes activities into humanitarian, development and security aid. This prevents a more holistic approach during the transition periods between the aftermath of a crisis, recovery, and development (OECD, 2012). Humanitarian assistance is therefore shifting and extending into areas of recovery and basic service provision of which education is a core sector; and yet education continues to receive a small and inadequate share of these funds. Findings from the 2011 EFA GMR estimated that conflicts in low income countries lasted an average of 12 years, longer than most children and youth in these countries would typically spend in school (UNESCO, 2011). There is a danger that the numbers of out-of-school children grow with each year of conflict (Save the Children, 2015). In spite of this, education continues to be neglected in the Humanitarian Response Plans for countries in protracted crises; it is not seen as immediate and lifesaving and is downgraded as a priority. Lifesaving interventions are typically funded first, despite education being identified as a high priority by crisis-affected people (Poole, 2014).

Third, given the low amount of humanitarian aid spent on education, development funding appears to play a more important role in many countries in protracted crises. In 2013, UNOCHA launched 16 Humanitarian Response Plans, of which eight were for countries in protracted crises. In these countries, an average of just 8% of education funding came from humanitarian funding; the remainder, 92%, was provided by development aid (UNDP, 2015). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where there has been a Humanitarian Response Plan since 2001, just 5% of resources for education came from humanitarian resources in 2013; this is largely due to poor funding of the education sector's request within the Humanitarian Response Plan. Just 9% of the education sector's funding requests were met; if requests had been met in their entirety then 37% of resources for education would have come from humanitarian resources in 2013.

Fourth, humanitarian aid appeals continue to neglect education needs Not only does the education sector have one of the lowest requests for resources in Humanitarian Response Plans, but it also receives a small share of what is requested – a double disadvantage. In 2014, the education sector's share made up just 2.9% of total humanitarian aid requests. It was the third lowest request after 'mine action' and 'safety & security of staff and operations'. Furthermore, just 36% of the sector's request was met compared with an average of 60% for all other sectors (UNESCO, 2015). As a result, just 2% of humanitarian appeals went to education, which is half the minimum target of 4% agreed by the UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2011. Less than 1% of total humanitarian funding was allocated to education for 9 of the 21 appeals that included a request for the education sector in 2014. No funding whatsoever was received for education in 4 of these 9 countries – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia and Nigeria – despite requests being made and in spite of the large numbers of out-of-school children and adolescents. The relatively poor funding of education in development aid and humanitarian appeals starkly contrasts with the high prioritization that communities and children place on education in the context of emergencies.

Fifth, Countries in need are left behind because of funding asymmetry Humanitarian aid is under-resourced and also under sustained pressure from the increased numbers of protracted crises and large-scale natural disasters. This means that, at 'peak demand', funding is often diverted to meet the most visible, immediate and acute needs (FHF, 2015), reflecting the competitive nature of the humanitarian financing system where donors divert resources to appeals with high media visibility. In 2010, for instance, many chronic crises saw a marked reduction in the proportion of their funding requirements met, as donors committed large volumes of funds to the Haiti Earthquake that happened earlier in the year (FHF, 2015). By mid-February 2014, the UN was facing the momentous challenge of coordinating and responding to four 'Level 3' emergencies – in the Central African Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Philippines and South Sudan. Acute needs in the Syrian Arab Republic meant substantial funds were directed from protracted crises such as that of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Bennett, 2015). This asymmetry is also seen in the differences in requests for funding and what is received. While the gap between the results of the best and worst funded appeals has been decreasing since 2007, there remains a stark imbalance. In 2011, funding for Haiti's education humanitarian appeal received 110% of requests; in Chad, which has had a regular Humanitarian Response Plan since 2004, the education cluster received only 9% of its requests. The Democratic Republic of Congo, which has had a regular Humanitarian Response Plan since 2001, had the poorest funded education appeal in 2013 and in 2014, receiving just 9% and 3%, respectively, in these years.

Crucial elements of education are not funded. An analysis of education projects under the Humanitarian Response Plans indicates that many have focused on the construction of school buildings and the purchase of textbooks, teaching materials and other equipment fared much better with their funding requests. Quality fared worse and are largely funded by UN pooled or un-earmarked funding (Save the Children, 2014). However, pooled funding mechanisms make up a very small share of total humanitarian funding for education. Many education funds are spent on school feeding. In 2014, the Central African Republic, Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic all had projects administered by the World Food Programme. In the case of the Central African Republic and Sudan, the share of funds requested and received for school feeding programmes was significantly higher than the share funded for all education projects. In Sudan, from 2010 onwards, the overwhelming majority of what was funded from education appeals was for school feeding programmes administered by the World Food Programme, rather than for learning.

The central argument is that violent conflicts and wars have destructive impacts on education that need to be addressed (Nicolai, 2015). It could be argued that this needs to happen even whilst hostilities continue, but to date the dominant and pragmatic view of most aid organisations, is that the main opportunities to recover from conflict arise as hostilities subside or cease (Scott, 2015). Fortunately, the fact in any conflictology is that it is difficult to put a finger on whether a conflict has ended because in some cases it may simply have transformed into a longer-term dispute with less intense or different forms of confrontation, intimidation or violence (Nicolai & Hine, 2015; Scott, 2015). Events such as ceasefires and peace accords may simply mark transition points along the way.

Sinclair (2001) provides counter-arguments to three main spurious arguments against emergency education for conflict affected children: that education might prevent rapid voluntary repatriation; that humanitarian staff are too busy or that there are insufficient resources; and that education is neither urgent, nor life-saving. Sinclair replies that in practice the provision of education of itself is unlikely to deter refugees desire to return home; that emergency education specialists are often available; and that education provides protection and essential knowledge and life skills for health care and survival (Nicolai, 2015; Scott, 2015). Away from these arguments countries are classified as High will and low will. Rwanda classified as 'high will' because the state was in control of education receives a lot of development aid. However, Somalia where structures do not exist is classified as low will and receives little support. These are the challenges the Education Fast Track Initiative is determined to address by identifying strong local leadership which can be supported. However, it implies that conflicts create conditions for less education aid where structures are broken down.

Macrae (2001) also argued that reconstruction and development aid should not be attempted after war until the state has been established. The inherent problem is that conflict affected nations would be without development aid, and have little opportunity to 'manage' conflict to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, EFA and education as an international right. There is also a danger that an artificial distinction can be created between 'conflict countries' and others (Smith and Vaux, 2003). In reality there is no absolute distinction but rather a set of gradations through tension towards violence. Conflicts in the past may qualify a country for conflict-related inputs when its problems may not be entirely different from those of its neighbours.

Efforts to ameliorate the effects of conflicts on the right to education

There are various international and national organisations involved in ameliorating the effects of conflicts on the right to education in Africa because they are concerned with education; international development, children and managing or preventing conflict and emergencies. UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR jointly produced a discussion document, 'Rapid Educational Response in Complex Emergencies' (Arguiilar and Retamal, 1998) in order to '*open a dialogue among educators working in the area of complex emergencies*'. The emergency education programmes have been organized in various shades. These include Teacher Emergency Package (TEP), sometimes known as 'school in a box'. These include basic materials to operate classes in situations of emergency and crisis. They were initially developed by UNESCO in Somalia and later used in 1994 in Tanzania and Rwanda. UNICEF has also been involved in the development of kits of educational resources and the concept of 'Child Friendly Spaces'. From its mandates for the protection of children UNICEF has education programmes to address a variety of issues related to conflict, including girls' education, child protection, HIV/AIDS and education in crisis and conflict.

As a consequence of the Machel (1999) report to the UN Secretary General, UNHCR's Executive Committee established the provision of basic education and recreation activities for refugee children and adolescents as principal protection objective in the initial phase of an emergency. In May, 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing 18 as the minimum age for participation in hostilities so that children can attend school. The 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement' of the UN Commission on Human Rights assert that authorities should ensure that displaced children in particular receive free and compulsory education at the primary level which respects their cultural identity, language and religion; that women and girls should have full and equal participation; and that education and training should be made available to all internally displaced people whether or not they are living in camps. In March 2001, UNHCR convened a workshop on 'Refugee Education in Developing Countries: Policy and Practice' which developed thematic papers for the provision of education in emergency situations. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) assists the UNHCR to provide emergency responses and the role of youth councils in school governance of refugees in Guinea. UNICEF and UNESCO have been associated with formal education issues such as policy and curriculum development across the world and in Africa and this attracts enormous sponsorship (World Bank, 2005). For example, in 2007 the government of the UK granted 20million pounds to UNICEF to promote education for children living under conditions of fragility.

The EFA Guidelines for Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis (Bensalah, 2002) presents good frameworks that could be adapted to national needs and followed. The introduction of Human rights as an academic field of study at the University of Education, Winneba which has attracted students from various professions and backgrounds is representative of the commitments of African Academic institutions to champion the course of internationalising human rights on the African continent. This is a first step to entrenching not only the right to education but opening up the broader society including policy makers to the need to preserve human and people rights on the African continent. The International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA) is responsible for keeping basic education on the world's political agenda. Following the World Education Forum in Dakar, April 2000, UNESCO assumed international responsibility for assisting governments in meeting the development targets in education for 2005 and 2015.

Ministries of Education are helpful. In Liberia, the Ministry of Education works with other groups such as International Rescue Committee (IRC) to reduce the impacts of conflicts on education. A publication by IRC, *Teaching Well*, illustrated the co-operation and support that the Liberian Ministry of Education gave to the organisation to ensure that children received education even under conditions of conflict. The USAID, DFID and other development organisations support research and provide funding to help in reconstruction efforts. The Democratic republic of Congo and Sierra Leone have received great funds. In fact Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Guinea have been described as 'donor darlings' because of the volume of international aid to these countries after conflicts. These organisations also support emergency education programmes to ensure that children enjoy the right to education even during situations of conflict. The World Bank is mainly involved with conflict as part of post-conflict reconstruction and have recently outlined a five stage process for involvement that includes a watching brief; a transitional support strategy; early reconstruction activities; post-conflict reconstruction; and a 'return to normal operations'. It also has a Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit and Post-Conflict Fund. The Bank's support for the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) is aimed to progressively expand support for education in fragile states to make progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals while increasing states' commitment and capacity to provide Education for All (*FTI Progressive Framework, 31 March 2008:1*). The Bank has been experimenting the FTI in Somalia.

Arguably, the role of ECOMOG, UNAMIL and other peace keeping missions across Africa are meant to create conditions of peace for children to enrol in safe schools. The Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) developed humanitarian and development framework to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction. The network developed *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* with the participation of over 2,250 individuals from more than 50 countries (INEE, 2004). In addition to reflecting rights and commitments, the standards reflect consensus on good practices and lessons learned across the field of education and protection in emergencies and early reconstruction situations.

Concluding comments

At times of conflict the right to education is even more likely to be disregarded, particularly with respect to the exclusion of girls from schools. System-wide approaches are required at all times to understand and develop conflict-sensitive education systems that protect education for all. In tandem with this there is the need for a more 'systemic' analysis from community level to governmental and inter-governmental levels to find concerted solutions to the impacts of conflicts on education for all groups. There is the need to invest in research concerning how people with disabilities or special needs become more vulnerable when conflicts emerge. Research needs to focus on how stigmatisation may enhance their exposure to risks of killing, marginalisation in education provisions and abandonments. International tracking of the effects of conflicts on the right to education in Africa must help ensure that development strategy gives priority to education/EFA. More countries must be enlisted in Fast Track Initiative (FTI) besides targeted support strategies for disadvantaged groups. EFA plans and Guidelines should have a clear analysis of the conflict dimension and also a focus on the *type* of education being provided, as well as a focus on enrolment rates and levels of literacy and numeracy for all children. The overall challenge is to develop methods of tracking whether 'progress' in the education field might also be creating tensions that could lead to or exacerbate other forms of tensions related to special interest groups. There is an urgent need to develop 'conflict sensitive indicators' for the education sector.

Conflicts represent the greatest threat to the right to education in Africa (Amnesty International, 2007). We suggest a sterner approach where the international community needs to re-think the categorisation of education as a part of social, economic and cultural rights so that it can be effectively protected in conflict situations. This should be framed within the context of education as a pre-eminence right; and how conflicts impact variously on the achievement of EFA, the MDGs and the SDGs on education.

The various efforts being made to ensure that education is not denied to children in conflict affected communities, the various emergency education provision initiatives ranging from donor support to education

systems research, should coalesce around the effects of conflicts on education and the provisions for conflict affected children. The world remains to develop special education provisions for children in conflict affected communities whereby, the concerns of special needs of children are addressed adequately.

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