



**HUMAN
RIGHTS AND
UNIVERSAL
CHILD PRIMARY
EDUCATION**

FAIT MUEDINI



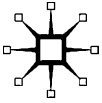
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To all the children who dream of an education

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Child primary education is a crucial right for children. Throughout the world, youth have stressed the importance of learning. For example, a child named Komla, in 2008 stated, “I work in the fields with my parents . . . [b]ut today I am going to school. I want to learn to read and to count in order to be a good businessman. (UNICEF, 2008c). These comments were made after state officials announced that Togo had decided to follow recommendations by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and would begin implementing free education for its children. Unfortunately, many children in Togo were previously not able to attend school prior to this announcement because of their families’ “lack of funds to pay for school fees, which amounted to roughly 4 U.S. dollars per child per year” (2008c). In addition to being unable to pay for school, parents in Togo have also needed their children to work in order to bring in extra income for the family, and thus, could not afford the opportunity costs associated with having their kids attend primary school. Unfortunately, this position is quite frequent among parents, and in particular parents with daughters, who often see little economic benefit of sending them to school (whether it is due to a belief that employment will be difficult to come by, or that they project marrying their daughter, and thus, feel as if they will not receive the economic rewards of this investment in education). For many, any benefit may not be worth it compared to the high opportunity costs that are associated with educating a child (Herz & Sperling, 2004). However, with the move to free education, the hope is that all children in Togo, and

elsewhere, will be able to attend school (UNICEF, 2008), as the ability to take the economic burden off parents will hopefully result in much higher enrollment rates.

Such stories about the challenges to accessing primary education are not limited to Togo, but rather take place in many parts of the world. One of the more recent and highly publicized cases regarding the right to primary education has been the story of Malala Yousafzai, a teenager who faced the repressive Taliban in Pakistan, and was shot twice in the face over her demands that girls be given the right to go to school. After her recovery, Malala has since spoke throughout the world on the rights of education for girls, and for all children. She has stood up to the Taliban, who have attempted to restrict rights for women. Concerning child primary education, while the limitations to educational access are often due to economic factors (as mentioned in the case of Togo), political reasons, or otherwise, the results are the same: children are out of school, and in turn, will have much more difficult lives when it comes to income, employment, health, and the safety and longevity of their families.

These two examples clearly illustrate the importance of education for children. Although they may be young, many children clearly understand how critical education is to their lives, not necessarily in terms of future career prospects, but rather for the fundamental development of the self. In fact, to many kids, this is often the one wish they have: they want the ability to attend school. In many interviews, when asked what they would like, children are often recorded as saying that they would like to finish school in order to enter the profession of their choice, while others merely speak about their desire to learn. And yet, the sad truth is that education is still not a reality for millions of the world's children. According to the most recent figures, 57 million children are currently not attending primary school (United Nations, 2013). In addition, "250 million children primary school-aged children lack basic skills..." (Anderson & Crone, 2014). But yet, despite the dire numbers regarding children who are not enrolled in school, free child primary education has received a great deal of attention in the international community in the past years, and arguably even more so in 2015, the year the United Nations (UN) has pegged as a marker year for the "World Millennium Development Goals," which include improving health conditions related to pregnancy, reducing poverty, fighting diseases

such as HIV/AIDS, addressing gender equality, promoting universal primary education, and reducing child mortality rates.

What I set out to do in this book is to examine the various issues surrounding universal child primary education in human rights and international politics. Namely, I aim to break down the state of child primary education, the challenges that exist in providing such a right, and the positive developments in this goal of ensuring that all children have free schooling, all the while discussing the roadblocks to reaching this objective. In this work I hope to provide support for the importance of free child primary education, while discussing the factors that are preventing free education from taking place as well as addressing the limitations to the schooling that currently exists. In the first chapter, I shall discuss the benefits to free primary education in the world system. I will talk about the effects that child education has on the individual when it comes to their health, their home life, as well as their work life. Namely, I shall examine all of positive effects that result from a child being educated. I will also discuss how education can help families as a whole. As we shall see, education has numerous benefits, both for the state as well as for the individual. For example, education is said to increase overall income greatly. In addition, health improves drastically due to better decision-making as a result of information learned from schooling. Individuals who have attended school also live much longer on average, compared to those who did not receive a formal education.

After going over the wide range of benefits that primary education offers to individuals and to society, I will then examine what support exists for the human rights of child education in international law. As I shall argue, the human rights corpus protects the right of free primary education for all children and has done so for close to 100 years. I shall look at early statements by the International Labor Organization (ILO) regarding the education of children as it relates to working conditions. Next, I will look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how this document cemented the rights of the child in the context of universal education. Then, I shall examine additional international legal documents such as the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which itself has been one of the most

concentrated legal documents with regard to the protection of children's human rights. But along with examining the legal protections of the right to education as stated in international human rights law, I will also discuss the role of international actors in their work toward universal education. Here, the majority of the discussion will center on the role of the UN in terms of promoting universal education, as well as the World Bank initiatives such as the World Millennium Development Goals. It is in this chapter that I shall also introduce any criticisms levied toward these organizations' approaches toward universal education.

Following the chapter on what rights exist toward education in international human rights law, as well as analyzing the actions and strategies of international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank, I shall then go on to discuss why, in spite of all of these protections, millions of children are not able to attend primary school. And as we shall come to see, there are many reasons for this: there exist factors at the individual level and the state level, as well as actions (and also lack of action) at the international level among states that have hindered full enrollment rates for primary schooling. For example, as I will discuss later in the book, one of the primary reasons why children are not in school is because they are often unable to afford the costs that are frequently associated with education. The introduction of school fees, as well as opportunity costs for sending children to school often limit their ability to be in the classroom or to stay in school for long periods of time. Here, I have also run my own quantitative analysis looking at the effects of free schooling on primary school enrollment rates across countries based on existing data. I also examine how free schooling affects female enrollment rates. But in addition to analyzing the role of fees (or the lack thereof in relation to primary school), I will also discuss the shortage of teachers and how this can also inhibit learning; high teacher to student ratios make effective learning difficult to attain. Moreover, an insufficient number of schools, as well as the inadequate conditions of existing schools have also introduced additional challenges to efficient learning. Furthermore, the lack of necessary resources such as textbooks, along with limited national and international resources toward education have led to the gap between the goal of universal education for everyone and what we are seeing today in primary schools throughout the world.

But despite these disparities and roadblocks to universal and high-quality schooling, a number of states have implemented free child primary education. I will in fact look at a number of case studies of countries that have decided to implement free schooling. I consider how these different states first made the decision to offer free schooling, as well as the initial reaction to the then new policy. Next, I will examine what some of the challenges have been to insuring that this new policy was working. Here, I will point out some of the difficulties that states, local administrators, and teachers faced with the new program. As we shall see, although the national government provided free schooling, the influx in students often led to cramped classrooms and insufficient numbers of books, as well as a limited number of qualified teachers. I will then review the positive effects of the program, as well as what the state would need to do to ensure that such free child primary education programs are most efficient.

After looking at specific case studies of countries that have provided free schooling—and the effects of this policy—in the next chapter, I shall examine the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as they relate to human rights, and specifically, how they have been effective in their advocacy toward primary education. Along with state and international actors, NGOs are also at the forefront of the primary education movement. Here, I discuss the rise of NGOs in global affairs in recent decades, as well as address how they have been successful in advocating for human rights. NGOs—through information sharing, network politics, and lobbying at domestic and international levels—have been able to alter policies toward human rights. I will then move to a more specific discussion of how NGOs work on issues of primary education. I cite a number of examples of NGO activity throughout the world. In this chapter, I speak about how NGOs have been able to raise awareness about education, how they mobilize groups within countries, and how they have worked with international actors at the UN on ways to improve education enrollment and quality, as well as coordinated their efforts with national governments.

Lastly, I will conclude the book with a summary of the main points of the book, as well as recommendations on what needs to be done within the international community in order to reach the goal of universal primary education. Here, I will lay out the necessary responsibilities of different actors: I will look at what states need

to do to implement free child education policy, as well as discuss the role of the international organizations (IOs) moving forward with regard to primary education. Furthermore, I will address how NGOs should continue to work on these issues of education, as well as what parents and local civil society can continue to offer regarding the rights of education. Furthermore, I will also speak about the importance of cooperation among these different groups. I will cite examples of how cooperation between local and international actors has helped enhance education rights, all the while noting where cooperation efforts have failed and the policy outcomes that have arisen as a result of what has at times been a disconnect between the different actors. Here I will specifically emphasize why state and NGO relationships often sour.

The goal of this book is to lay out the complexities that surround universal education, to explain in detail the reasons why millions of children are still not in school, what is being done about it, and ways in which we as an international community can continue to work on these objectives. As an international community, there is little that is more important and deserves more attention than the right to education, since education often overlaps with many other human rights. This work aims to shed some additional light on ways in which the world can continue to advocate for the right of all children to be given access to learn, while providing a comprehensive discussion on the various facets of child primary education.

CHAPTER 2

The Importance of Education: What Are the Benefits of Providing Free Child Primary Schooling?

One of the first questions that arises when discussing free child primary education often concerns just how important schooling is to children, families, and society as a whole. And while it is well understood and quite obvious that education is essential for the development of the individual, what we find is that by offering primary education to children, a host of benefits resound throughout the community, often for years (and decades) following the schooling itself. In fact, it seems that almost every aspect of one's life, particularly as it relates to socioeconomic rights, is in some way or another connected to the right to education. Thus, I shall discuss just how important education is to personal health, the welfare of children and family, and income and employment opportunities, among other things.

I want to focus on the range of benefits that providing free and universal schooling can offer to children, their families, and their communities. In this chapter, I will argue not only that free child primary education is not merely a “moral” and an “ethical” obligation set forth by international human rights toward the rights of the child but also that providing free education actually serves various economic, health, and other interests. As we shall see, numerous studies by scholars, policymakers, and human rights activists show just how beneficial schooling is to the individual, to the family, and to the domestic community, as well as to the international

community as a whole. In fact, the evidence is quite clear as to how great the benefit of education is to those who have the ability to attend school.

Education is arguably the most important policy option with regard to domestic and international development. The National Institute of Medical Statistics in India (2012) explains that “[e]ducation is not only one of the most important socioeconomic factors that is known to significantly influence individual behavior and attitudes, but educational attainment is a fundamental indicator of a country’s level of human capital development” (25). Others have argued in a similar fashion, saying that

Education is first and foremost the vehicle through which societies reproduce themselves, both the inputs and the outputs in an education system may more rightly be thought of as a set of ideas about how a society is structured and should be structured in the future. This means that the concept of providing every child with a good-quality education is not simply a function of having enough schools, textbooks, and teachers. It is very much a result of a social context in which education is seen as a right for all and in which all people have the opportunity to improve their economic and social welfare and participate in public life. (Birdsall, Levine, & Ibrahim, 2005b: 23–24)

And with this opportunity, numerous positive outcomes in the fields of health, politics, and human rights can (and often do) arise. This can be especially the case for those economically disadvantaged; their having access to education can allow them the ability to be more active in making political choices, and help in their calls for greater government representation as related to their rights (Birdsall et al., 2005). Bill Felice (2010), for example, argues that education “should create an informed citizenry able to hold leaders accountable to the norms of basic civil and political rights. An educated citizenry is essential for a democracy to flourish” (63). In addition, education also contributes to increasing human rights and lessens poverty, as well as offers other improvements such as a reduction in crime (McMahon, 1999: 6).

When one is examining ways for economic development in a society, it becomes clear that education is one of the key factors for the economic prosperity and growth of a country. Primary

education has numerous benefits to citizens and their communities, both in terms of private economic and social benefits that education provides, and overall benefits within the society itself. In fact, it is difficult to discuss economic growth without understanding that much of this is related to individual benefits to education (Stevens & Weale, 2003). And looking that the different studies on this question of education and state growth, we do indeed find a positive relationship between education and individual growth rates (and often, in turn, the state). In terms of a society's overall growth, Ann Golan explains the significance of education for a state by saying,

Investment in human capital is a key element in achieving long-term sustainable economic growth. Macroeconomic studies have shown that education is positively correlated with overall economic growth, with one year additional schooling of the labor force possibly leading to as much as a 9 percent increase in GDP for the first three years of schooling and to 4 percent a year for the next three years. (Golan, foreword, in Summers, 1994)

Others have made similar arguments, saying that “a trained and educated workforce in LDCs (less developed countries) should lead to an increase in the overall purchasing power of the working class and emerging middle class in these countries. Such an increase should in theory lead to an increase of imports of products from the developed countries and other LDCs, thus stimulating production in the rich and poor countries and increasing world trade” (Felice, 2010: 63). Others have found that education does indeed have a direct positive relationship with economic growth. For example, Stevens and Weale (2003), looking at data from the 1800s to the early twentieth century for the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Japan, and Korea, concluded that higher percentages of students enrolled in primary education years later, led to greater GDP per capita (2). Looking at this compared to other analyses, their result output “suggests that a 1% increase in the enrolment rate raises GDP by 0.35%” (5). They also found that “[f]or a less-well educated population an increase from 2 to 3 years achieved by an increase in the enrollment rate of 50% or 0.41 log units would raise GDP by 15.4%” (5). According to a cross-national study by Dollar and Gatti (1999), looking at female education, a 1 percent increase in female secondary education will

result in 0.3 percent increase in yearly per capita income (in Herz & Sperling, 2004). Other studies that consider South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have found that ensuring greater equality in education between the genders can also lead to GDP growth of just under 1 percent (Klasen, 1999, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam (2003), citing a 2002 United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report, explain that education has also shown to significantly increase levels of development in developing states. For example, in this study of 19 developing states, UNESCO researchers found that “a country’s long-term economic growth increases by 3.7 percent for every year the adult population’s average level of schooling [increased]” (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003: 1–2). And according to the United Nations Global Education First Initiative (2012), “[g]etting all children into basic education, while raising learning standards, could boost growth by 2% annually in low-income countries” (11).

In fact, according to some, the returns on education are equal to or greater than noneducational programs for developing nations. Tilak (1988), citing Psacharopoulos’ (1981) studies on education returns, explains that “returns to education are higher than returns to investment in physical capital on the one hand, and on the more important side, returns to education are higher in developing countries than in advanced countries” (316). Many argue that an increase in education leads to economic growth, less poverty, more equal income, and a stronger civil society as education has been found to have a significant effect on economic growth in developed and developing nations (Tilak, 1988: 316). Education is also said to have a positive impact on an increase in technology and to encourage stronger attitudes toward “popular involvement in democracies” (Gonzales, 1999: 119–120). In fact, Valverde (1999) argues that “[e]ducation has been one of the most commonly cited prerequisites for democracy” (401). Some scholars, looking at African states, also argue that by being able to improve universal primary and basic education at rates some of the top-performing states, the likelihood of state failure will decrease by almost 8 percent (Gehring et al., 2011: 1). A final argument for the support of education as it relates to the state as a whole suggests that developed countries increase their economic growth with the development of poorer nations, since, as some argue, in order for the entire world to economically develop and prosper, the developing

nations must address education and poverty issues. Because of this, it has been suggested that developed nations and IOs have a duty to help developing nations (Tilak, 1988).

And while it has been pointed out that education costs might affect the overall benefits that schooling provides (due to the additional expenses of such programs) (Stevens & Weale, 2003), the findings from various studies nonetheless suggest that there is indeed tangible value to education, despite any of the economic costs that may be associated with free schooling programs. In fact, these are far from the only research studies that support the findings on education and positive growth for states. Arusha Cooray (2009), for example, finds a relationship between enrollment ratios and growth. He also finds that how much a government spends, interacting with the quality of education, can have an effect on the overall growth of a state. Thus, it is not enough to merely provide resources for education, but, as he says, “[t]hese countries should increase government expenditure on education with a view to increasing education quality. Education policy that focuses on the provision of facilities aimed at improving the number of trained teachers, survival rates, reducing pupil-teacher ratios, schooling life expectancy and performance levels based on test scores will promote economic growth” (18).

Others have made similar findings when it comes to the quality of education and growth. Hanushek and Wößmann (2007) find that the type of education clearly makes a difference in terms of individual and state economic benefits, since not all education is alike, nor are its effects. In fact, they understand that merely providing schooling for all children will not necessarily lead to higher outcomes. As they explain when discussing the notion of schooling for every child, such as is one of the objectives of the UN Millennium Development Goals,

There are also some nagging uncertainties that exist with this strategy. First, developed and developing countries differ in a myriad of ways other than schooling levels. Second, a number of countries—both on their own and with the assistance of others—have expanded schooling opportunities without seeing any dramatic catch-up with developed countries in terms of economic well-being. Third, countries that do not function well in general might not be more able to mount effective education programs than they are to pursue other societal goals. Fourth, even when schooling policy is made a focal

point, many of the approaches undertaken do not seem very effective and do not lead to the anticipated student outcomes. (1)

Thus, they suggest that the type of education matters, as well as the sorts of schools that offer education. And as we shall see later, one of the challenges related to universal education is not merely the difficulty involved in enrolling all students in school but also what sort of education will be provided to children in the classroom. In addition, we shall also discuss effective mechanisms to improve learning, as well as other approaches that might not play as great a role in educational attainment levels as may be traditionally argued (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007).

Individual Benefits

Yet, state growth is far from the only positive effect of education. In fact, there are numerous benefits to the individual who receives an education. For example, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2013), “[a]dults who have attained higher levels of education are generally more likely to portray greater satisfaction in life than those with lower levels of educational attainment. On average, the gap in self-reported life satisfaction between adults with high and low levels of education is 18 percentage points” (2–3). In areas with a committed investment in education, it may be more likely that such communities have within them persons who bring valuable knowledge, knowledge that is often applied to ideas and programs that can benefit the community as a whole. In addition, citizens who have more education can in some cases apply the additional knowledge directly to their field. For example, “[w]ages of educated workers are higher, as are earnings of farmers in settings in which education helps them take advantage of new seed and other technologies” (Jamison & Lau, 1982, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 25). And as Sawhill, Tebbs, and Dickens (2006) argue,

A more educated labor force is more mobile and adaptable, can learn new tasks and new skills more easily, can use a wider range of technologies and sophisticated equipment (including newly emerging ones), and is more creative in thinking about how to improve the management of work. All of these attributes not only make a more

highly skilled worker more productive than a less skilled one but also enable employers to organize their work places differently and adjust better to changes necessitated by competition-by technical advances or by changes in consumer demand.

Other studies on the effects of education on farming also find that education can be used for improved approaches to farming, which in turn can reduce malnutrition (Smith & Haddad, 1999, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). Related to this, there have also been findings to suggest that even those who have individual businesses have been able to benefit by higher pay due to education, compared to those that were not educated (T. P. Schultz, 1993, 2001; T. W. Schultz, 1963, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 25). Thus, education helps the economy of the individual and the family in many different ways.

Income

Many argue that education helps the individual develop, along with education's serving as an additional benefit to her/his family (as well as the community) in terms of the increased income potential (McMahon, 1999). Examining the effects of education for an individual, the evidence is quite similar in terms of findings. One of the earlier studies regarding this question was conducted by Jacob Mincer (1974, in Stevens & Weale, 2003), who found that one year of additional education could add anywhere from 7 to 10 percent in earnings for the individual (5). In another study, every year of schooling is said to increase individual wages by anywhere from 5 to 20 percent "in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria and Burkina Faso" (Schultz, 1999, in Gehring et al., 2011: 2). Psacharopoulos (1997), examining the impact of primary, secondary, and tertiary education on private returns in Venezuela in 1989, finds that, while those with no education earned an average income of 39,625 Bolivars (Bs) a year, those who had primary education earned an average of 69,452 Bolivars. Further evidence of increased private returns of education can be found when looking at the average incomes of those who went to secondary school and those who studied at a university. For those who received a secondary education, they earned an average of 106,337 Bolivars a year. For those who had a college education, their income increased to 178,293 Bolivars. In addition to private returns, Psacharopoulos (1995) also finds significant social returns with

education as well as returns that benefit females more than males (12). And while income increases with higher levels of education, primary education has the greatest level of return (Psacharopoulos, 1995). The reason for this is because primary education gives individuals the ability to read, thus increasing the benefit of that education (Psacharopoulos, 1995). In other studies, some scholars such as Sawhill et al. (2006) have even found that even pre-primary education has various economic benefits.

Involvement in Civil Society

As I alluded to earlier in this chapter, education is also found to have a profound impact on citizens' involvement in civil society, and more specifically, in the political system of their state. It has been found that "adults who have attained higher levels of education are generally more likely than those with lower levels of educational attainment to report stronger civic engagement, in terms of voting, volunteering, political interest, and interpersonal trust" (OECD, 2013: 2). This relationship shows itself when in voting patterns of those who have education compared to those without education. In an OECD study of "25 OECD countries with available data, the gap in the self-reported voting rate between adults with high and lower levels of education is on average 15 percentage points. This gap widens considerably to 27 percentage points among younger adults (25–34 year-olds)" (OECD, 2013: 2). In addition, "[m]ore generally, education appears to increase political interest and other forms of political participation, as well as the extent to which individuals are informed about politics" (Lochner, 2011). In a study on Bangladesh, educated women had a higher rate of attending political meetings than women who were not educated (UNESCO, 2000b, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). Other research shows that women who are not educated are less likely to engage in political discussions compared to those with an education (Inglehart, Basanez, & Moreno, 1998, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). Moreover, additional "research has suggested that governments and other institutions function better and with less corruption as women gain education and approach parity with men" (Basu & King, 2001, in Herz & Sperling, 2004: 39). Moreover, educated individuals have access to information on human rights, as well as the ability to understand ways to ensure

these rights (Center for Global Development, 2004: 1). Thus, one cannot undersell the importance of education in raising women's rights to complete equality.

Benefits of Female Education

I want to expand on the previous points mentioned above, namely, that the benefits of education can also help those who historically have not been given the same access to schooling. In particular, there seems to exist a strong effect of education for women in various societies. This of course is not limited to immediate benefits to girls. Education also has an impact on the lives of mothers (in terms of health, life expectancy, employments), as well as a positive effect on their families. For example, Summers (1994) has argued that one of the best forms of action for increasing the role of women in society and “cutting into the cycle of female deprivation” (7) is for governments to spend resources on education. By governments' investing in education, women will not only have high rates of return in terms of private and social returns but the returns for women will outweigh the returns for males. Women who are schooled are more likely to have children who will in turn go to school (Filmer, 1999; World Bank, 2003; UNICEF, 2004, in Birdsall et al., 2005). Looking at a couple of cases, for example, “[i]n Pakistan mothers' education is the single strongest determinant of schooling for their children, especially for girls” (Sathar & Lloyd, 1993, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 26). And in “Peru mothers' education increases girls' school enrollment as much as 40 percent more than fathers' education” (Herz & Khandker, 1991, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 26).

Other scholars have found similar results suggesting that education benefits women (Behrman, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 1995). In fact, when looking at the effects of female education, Summers (1994) argues that education for “girls yield a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world” (7). In terms of private returns, wages for women increase drastically with higher levels of education, often as high as “10 to 20 percent for each additional year of schooling” (Summers, 2004: 8). By investing in female education, women are more able to vie for resources, which in turn increase the number of opportunities for women (Behrman, 2003). And regarding issues like birth rates, it has been found that

those who have had access to schooling tend to delay marriage, and, often, have fewer kids compared to someone who did not go to school. Some have argued that fewer kids can lead to a greater ability for women to send their children to school (Birdsall et al., 2005) (as we shall discuss, school fees are one of the most impeding factors for schooling). For example, “[a]n extra year of schooling for girls reduces fertility rates by 5–10 percent. In Brazil and Peru women with no education have about six children, while women with a secondary education have about three” (Herz & Khandker, 1991, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 26).

Health

There are also many health benefits that result from increased educational opportunities for women. In fact, “[a] mother’s education is important because it facilitates her integration impacted by traditional customs, exposes her to information about better nutrition, use of contraceptives to space births and knowledge about childhood illness and treatment” (National Institute of Medical Statistics, 2012: 41). In addition, “[e]ducation heightens a mother’s ability to make sure of government and private health care resources and it may increase the autonomy necessary to advocate for her child in household and in the outside world” (National Institute of Statistics, 2012: 41). For example, in an analysis on the effects of universal primary education (UPE) in the 1970s in Tanzania, it was found that “mothers who were marginalised by lack of education saw their position worsen relative to those with more education over time” (Sabates, Westbrook, & Hernandez-Fernandez, 2011: vi). In the same analysis, the authors also found that “children whose mothers belonged to the pre-UPE cohort and whose mothers had secondary education were more likely to have educational access than children of mothers of the same cohort but who did not have educational qualifications” (Sabates et al., 2011: 15).

Psacharopoulos (1995) explains that by investing in education, a country will be improving the ability for individuals and families to earn additional income, and also that investing in education serves specific “social” benefits such as “lower fertility or lives saved because of improved sanitation conditions...” (4). And while such returns may not be as high as “private returns” (Psacharopoulos,

1995: 4), they are nevertheless important in the overall development of a society, both in the public and the private sectors. Some have projected that by continuing to improve primary and secondary education enrollment at the rate of the most stellar performing states, by 2050, 3.5 million fewer children will suffer from malnourishment, and “the number of people living on less than US \$1,25 per day [will fall] by 60 million” (Gehring et al., 2011: 1).

Summers (1994) outlines a number of other social returns (with regard to health) that arise from a state’s investment in female education. First, when a state invests in an education that girls can afford, we see an increase in health benefits, such as a decrease in child mortality rates in the society. In fact, education seems to be one of the greatest factors in reducing child mortality rates (Caldwell, 1979; Martin, Trussell, Savail, & Shah, 1983; Bhuiya & Streatfield, 1991, in Boehmer & Williamson, 1996: 334; Hao, 1990; Mayer & Sarin, 2000; Sastry, 2004, in Adeyele & Ofoegbu, 2013). With an increased focus on education, women not only have knowledge that will help them in terms of employment but they are also gaining knowledge that will also improve “the willingness to seek medical care and improves sanitation practices” (8). In fact, infant mortality rates (IMR) decrease significantly depending on the number of years of education that a woman has received (Summers, 1994). It has been found “that for each additional year of education for a mother in a developing country, there is a 5–10 per cent reduction in infant mortality” (Cochrane, Leslie, & O’Hara, 1980, in Gehring et al., 2011: 2). Others who have looked at a range of less economically developed countries have found that the higher the status of women in the society, the lower the IMR. In this measurement of status, one of the statistically significant sets of variables driving the relationship between status and reduced infant mortality is that of education. In fact, various measurements of education, such as female primary school enrollment, secondary school enrollment, and tertiary post-secondary enrollment were all found to lead to lower levels of child mortality in some capacity (Boehmer & Williamson, 1996).¹ Chris Papageorgiou and Petia Stoycheva (2008) also find that education inequality differences among women also lead to differences in child mortality rates. Moreover, in a 2005 study on Uganda, the authors (Ssewanyana & Younger) found that a “[m]other’s education has a significant impact on infant mortality, and the reduction is larger

for mothers with more education. Mortality rates for infants whose mother is a primary graduate are 20 per thousand lower than those whose mother did not complete primary school. For the infants of mothers who attended or completed secondary school or higher, mortality rates are 34 per thousand lower” (13).²

According to studies on India, “a child born to an illiterate mother in India has a 65% chance of dying in the first month of birth as against just 20% to a woman with 12+ years of education” (National Institute of Statistics, 2012, in Sinha, 2012). Furthermore, “Post-neonatal mortality rate (deaths after 28 days of life but before one year) is as high as 49% in case of a child born to an illiterate mother as against just 8% to a mother with 12 years of formal education” (National Institute of Statistics, 2012, in Sinha, 2012). What is more, “[t]he IMR is 110% in case of an illiterate mother against 28% in case of those with education” (National Institute of Statistics, 2012, in Sinha, 2012). Looking at the overall study based on 1981 until 2005 five-year periods, as education increased, child mortality decreased (with 12 years of education at one end of the spectrum, and 0 years of education at the other end) (National Institute of Statistics, 2012). In addition, “[e]ducated mothers have better nourished children, who are less likely to die in infancy. On average, one additional year of schooling for a mother results in reduction in children or infant mortality of 9 per 1,000” (World Bank, 1993, in Birdsall et al., 2005: 26).

Behrman (2003) explains that those who are educated are better able to use the knowledge learned in school to address issues of health and to teach their children (237), since studies have found that women with increased levels of education often put the knowledge they learned in school to use in family situations as well as toward their career goals. And because these women make choices reflecting their ideal family size, the children they do have are often in better health. For example, Roudi-Fahimi and Valentine-Moghadam (2003) find that mothers in Egypt with schooling were over twice as likely to give their children “antenatal care” (4). Others have also found similar relationships. For example, “[a] woman with six or more years of education is more likely to seek prenatal care, assisted childbirth, and postnatal care, reducing the risk of maternal and child mortality and illness” (Center for Global Development, 2004: 1). Moreover, also according to the Center for Global Development (2004),

“[e]ducated mothers are 50% more likely to immunize their children than mothers with no schooling” (1). Thus, as Psacharopoulos (1995) explains, by investing in education, a country will be improving the ability for individuals and families to earn additional income, but investing in education also serves specific “social” benefits such as “lower fertility or lives saved because of improved sanitation conditions . . .” (4). And while such returns may not be as high as “private returns” (Psacharopoulos, 1995: 4), they are nevertheless important in the overall development of a society, both in the public and the private sector.

Along with the various benefits that primary (and often also secondary education) provide in the form of reduced child mortality rates and a decrease in malnutrition, numerous studies have also found a specific relationship between education and/or literacy rates and the reduction of HIV rates in a society.³ For example, women with increased secondary education are better able to help “prevent mother-to child transmission of HIV . . .” (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012: 11). Also, according to the Center for Global Development (2004), “young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those with little to no schooling” (1). In a study on Uganda, “[y]oung rural Ugandans with secondary education are 3 times less likely than those with no education to be HIV-positive” (De Walque, 2004, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). And in Zambia, the AIDS virus is said to spread much more quickly (double the rate, in fact) among uneducated women than educated women (Vandemoortele & Delamonica, 2000, in Herz & Sperling, 2004).

Not only has education been helpful in reducing the likelihood of HIV but it has also led to an increase in life expectancy and a decline in other diseases. Education does seem to lead to an increase in life expectancy; those who have gone to school tend to live longer compared to those that have not gone to school. As the OECD (2013) explains,

Data show that life expectancy is strongly associated with education. On average, among 15 OECD countries with available data, a 30-year-old tertiary-educated man can expect to live eight years longer than a 30-year-old man who has not completed upper secondary education. Among men in Central European countries there are

particularly large differences in life expectancy by level of education. A 30-year-old tertiary-educated man in the Czech Republic can expect to live 17 years longer than a 30-year-old man who has not completed upper secondary education. In the 15 OECD countries analysed, differences in life expectancy by level of education are generally much smaller among women. On average, a tertiary-educated woman can expect to live four years longer than a woman without an upper secondary education. (1)⁴

And according to the United Nations Global Education First Initiative (2012), “[o]ver the past four decades, the global increase in women’s education has prevented more than 4 million child deaths. In sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 1.8 million children’s lives could have been saved in 2008 if all their mothers had at least secondary education” (11). Other studies have found that even when direct effects may not lead to reductions in HIV/AIDS, indirect effects between education and HIV/AIDS reduction, where education enrollments will lead to higher levels of income, which then, the “increases in levels . . . lowered infection rates” (Brent, 2009: 18–19).

Thus while there have been arguments posed by some regarding the high price a state will have to incur in investing in education, as we shall see, the benefits far outweigh such costs. One quantitative example of the positive benefits of education is that of funding schooling for women. For example, in a specific cost-benefit comparative study on investment in women’s education in India and Kenya, Summers (1994) analyzes what it would cost in order to educate 1,000 women in each of the respective societies, and then measures the private and social returns from that investment. He compares this to the costs of achieving similar benefits (of fertility and health returns) by means other than investing in education. Summers (1994) argues that the “results are striking” (15). Specifically, he finds that

In India, providing 1,000 girls with an extra year of primary schooling would cost US [\$] 32,000. It would avert two maternal deaths, forty-three infant deaths, and 300 births. Even after discounting to take account of the time lag between when girls are educated and when they grow up and have children, the social benefits of educating girls are enough to cover the costs without taking into account any of the market return or the benefits for environmental protection and AIDS control. (15)

Based on such findings, Summers (1994) wonders, “Considering the very low cost of equalizing educational opportunities for men and women, the question is not whether countries can afford this investment, but whether countries can afford not to educate more girls” (Summers, 1994: 18). Overall, “[e]ducated women are more likely to have decent work conditions, delay childbearing, resist violence, denounce injustice and participate in political processes” (The Global Education First Initiative, 2012).

Yet despite evidence of the importance of education related to development, states often fail to invest in education for all children, and especially girls. And because of the lack of investment in free education, children, and particularly girls are unable to attend school. In Egypt, for example, one of the major reasons why mothers keep their daughters from going to school is because school fees are often too expensive for families (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003: 3). Thus, this book argues that by investing in free education, we are not only increasing private returns for individuals and families, but are also aiding in decreasing IMR and disease, as well as increasing respect for human rights. Furthermore, while such programs will benefit all states, we should expect to see additional benefits to economically developing societies.

But while much of the attention on educational benefits tends to rest on issues of income growth for individuals and families, there are many other benefits of education for a person, for their children, as well as their society as a whole (OECD, 2013). The OECD has published a detailed study on the various benefits of education in the lives of individuals and the positive effects on society as a whole. They, along with many other research studies, confirms in fact that education provides a multitude of benefits, and thus, should be taken quite seriously when discussing domestic and international public policy. Thus, by providing UPE, it is with the hope that such investments in education will lead to the multiple societal benefits mentioned. We shall now turn our attention to legal protections for universal primary schooling.

CHAPTER 3

Child Education in International Human Rights Law

Having examined the various benefits that education has for children, their families, and overall economic development with regard to the state in the last chapter, I now want to move to a discussion about just what support and protections exist at the international level in terms of human rights documents and laws for the rights of children, as well as the more specific right to primary education. When discussing human rights, one of the first places people look for protection and fulfillment of that right is to the state and to the laws set out by the international community. The legal protections that ensure the idea of these provisions become reference points for people who are facing human rights abuses. Domestic and international law therefore becomes the focal point to which activists direct their demands; claims once understood as being so because we are human now have a form of legal legitimacy and guarantee. This is why such binding laws are vital for the advancement of human rights.

While references to human rights can be found throughout the history of human civilization, and spread out over various cultures and traditions, codified human rights law itself is arguably still in its infancy, with some of the key international documents on human rights evolving following the Second World War with the creation of the UN. Part of the reason why the international human rights movement developed in this period is because of the crimes committed by the Nazi regime, as well as the centuries long dominance of

the idea of sovereignty. State sovereignty is the notion that a leader can dictate the politics of her/his own state and that outside states have no say in what transpires in a country outside its own borders. A leader is free to govern how s/he sees fit. This idea of sovereignty as we understand it in international relations today arose in 1648. Following the Thirty Years War in Europe, various powerful states came together and agreed to individual areas of control without outside involvement and interference. Ever since, states have continued to hold onto the idea that within their borders what happens is of no concern to others. They, as rulers of their own land, have the right to govern their own territory. In fact, to this day, leaders will often claim state sovereignty as an argument when international actors or critics challenge their domestic politics. It was only after the Second World War that the idea of sovereignty became more frequently challenged.

Therefore, international law has only recently developed, and thus so have the rights for children in the international human rights corpus. Many of the key documents surrounding children's rights are only a few decades old. In this chapter, I will examine the different references in international human rights law as they relate to the rights of the child, and more specifically, where the rights to free child primary education exist. I shall survey the different declarations, covenants, and treaties related to the protection of children's rights, as well as any specific enforcement mechanisms that allow for the monitoring of the assurance of such rights. This discussion is necessary in order to understand the human rights responsibilities that all actors have to ensure children are educated.

International Labour Organization

One of the earliest instances in which a child's right to education was written into international law was at the beginning of the twentieth century with the ILO. The ILO was created in 1919, decades before the UN, although it "became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946" (Mertus, 2005: 142). The ILO has had nearly a century of commitment to the labor rights of individuals. As Julie Mertus (2005) explains, "[e]ven though the ILO only explicitly conceptualized its work as *human rights* promotion in 1998, the ILO has set detailed, widely accepted standards on workers rights and created

an unusual high participatory system of enforcement since its inception” (142). She goes on to say that “[t]he standard-setting work of the ILO has long been related to the human rights system. Many of the rights enshrined in the early ILO conventions provided language for the ICESCR and ICCPR, and the later conventions have likewise been elaborated upon through recent ILO conventions” (142). This can be seen when looking at labor and the rights of the child. Regarding children’s rights, in 1921, the ILO passed Convention C010—Minimum Wage (Agriculture) Convention: The Convention Concerning the Age for Admission of Children to Employment in Agriculture (which entered into force on August 31, 1923).

The document discusses their position on child labor. Article 1 of the convention states that “Children under the age of fourteen years may not be employed or work in any public or private agricultural undertaking, or in any branch thereof, save outside the hours fixed for school attendance. If they are employed outside the hours of school attendance, the employment shall not be such as to prejudice their attendance at school” (ILO, 1921). Furthermore, Article 2 goes on to state that “[f]or purposes of practical vocational instruction the periods and the hours of school attendance may be so arranged as to permit the employment of children on light agricultural work and in particular on light work connected with the harvest, provided that such employment shall not reduce the total annual period of school attendance to less than eight months” (ILO, 1921).

Interestingly, the developments in children’s rights here by the ILO were actually directly related to education. Movements on children’s rights were really initiated more to help reduce child labor at the time. As Katarina Tomasevski (2006b) explains, “[t]he rule whereby education should be free and compulsory until children reach the minimum age of employment was set in 1921 in order to move towards the elimination of child labour. At the time, the minimal school-leaving age was 14, today’s standard has moved to 18 for the worst forms of child labour” (xxv).¹ Nevertheless, this convention by the ILO is an important reference for child rights and education rights. And later conventions from the organization only further advanced international attention toward the plight of child laborers. Their work has continued to provide a voice for children both in terms of labor laws, and as we shall see, in terms of the protection of children being able to attend school.

United Nations

Along with early references to child education from the ILO, one of the first, more direct references to the specific human right to education for children can be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a document that was written under the guidance of Eleanor Roosevelt. After being finalized in 1948, the final draft went to the UN for a vote on acceptance. The UDHR received 48 votes in support, with no objections (with 9 abstentions).² This was arguably the foundation of the current codified international human rights movement. And despite the fact that it was introduced as a declaration—the document is legally nonbinding—some have argued that the document, because of its heavy citation in various international and domestic laws, has been elevated to “customary law” status. Overall, the UDHR has been viewed as one of the first victories of the human rights legal movement as it set the stage for subsequent binding documents such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The UDHR is comprised of 30 articles on different human rights. The document does also have direct references to the rights of the child. For example, point 2 in Article 25 states that “[m]otherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance [,] [and that] all children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.” And while this specific article does not directly address a child’s right to education, it nonetheless establishes the importance of protection of the child in terms of protection in society. Now this article can have various extensions, as it can be interpreted to fully protect children in all capacities and against all abuses that could occur in society. Thus, while broad, the importance of this article cannot be understated, as it stresses the equality of children with that of adults.

But along with this article, in other sections of the UDHR, there are specific references to the rights of education for children. In fact, the UDHR offers one of the earliest legal supports for a child’s right to education. Article 26 of the UDHR (1948) states that “[e]veryone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible

to all on the basis of merit.” Other sections of Article 26 emphasize the importance of education in the “full development of the child [.]” and also the right of the parents to choose which form of education their children receive. It is thus evident that the drafters of the UDHR took careful consideration to include children’s rights when drafting the document.

Following the UDHR, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) drafted a document taking a stand against discrimination in education. In 1960, this document, the Convention Against Discrimination in Education, was put into force. The convention provides many references to child education. For example, Article 1 of the Convention states that

For the purposes of this Convention, the term “discrimination” includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education.

As we can see from the convention, discrimination can take several forms, including economic discrimination. One could make the argument that charging any sort of fees could be interpreted as economic discrimination against families who cannot afford such fees. But along with this, Article 4 more specifically issues a call “To make primary education free and compulsory...” The same article also calls for equality in education itself, as well as support for training teachers without any bias (5). It even demands “the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language” (of course noting, however, that that education cannot be inferior to the other schools and programs in a country) (6).

Following the Convention against Discrimination in Education, in 1966, the ICESCR was put into force in the UN. This document expands upon some of the social, cultural, and economic rights in the UDHR. The ICESCR began to be drafted shortly after the passing of the UDHR. This document, along with the ICCPR, was highly politicized. Both of the documents were formed due to a

disagreement based on ideology. Some countries, such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), felt that socioeconomic rights should be given priority, compared to US leaders' belief in civil and political rights. Thus, each country, along with its respective allies, supported the documents separately. As with the previous documents, the ICESCR does call for children to be protected, and does accord them rights such as education. For example, Article 10 section 1 of the ICESCR states that

1. The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

Along with Article 10.1, Article 13 is one of the other direct references to the support of education. Article 13 parts 1 and 2 state that

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

- (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;
- (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;
- (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

- (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;
- (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

Furthermore, the document also references states that have not yet provided free education to the children in their country, and calls upon them to work toward the goal of free primary education. For example, in Article 14 of the ICESCR, it states that

Each State Party to the present Covenant which, at the time of becoming a Party, has not been able to secure in its metropolitan territory or other territories under its jurisdiction compulsory primary education, free of charge, undertakes, within two years, to work out and adopt a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation, within a reasonable number of years, to be fixed in the plan, of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all.

From looking at these articles in the ICESCR, it is quite clear that that state has an obligation to provide support for such rights such as education, and that the right to primary schooling is indeed a noncontested and fully guaranteed right in these documents (despite the vagueness of language such as “undertakes” and “progressive implementation”). But the ICESCR does go even further than the direct mention of primary education as a human right; the document also includes additional protections of the child, which, if guaranteed, could further reduce the number of children who do not attend school. An example of this is Article 10.3, which states that

Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be

punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

As I have mentioned, parents often have to make a financial decision between sending their children to school (and pay fees that are often associated with schools), and having their children work in order to bring income to the household. Yet, the state has a responsibility to provide protections and support to children so that they have the opportunity to attend school. In a later chapter, I will discuss policy options for effectively increasing familial and child support toward education attendance, some of which include the reduction of the economic burdens a family may face when sending a child to school.

In addition to the UDHR, the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the ICESCR,³ another international human rights document, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was finalized in 1979, and put into force in 1981, also addresses child education. The Committee on the Status of Women wrote the document between 1976 and 1979. This committee itself was formed in 1946 under the Committee on Human Rights at the UN, “but [was] quickly granted the status of full commission as a result of the pressure exerted by women’s activists, the mandate of the CSW included the preparation of recommendations relating to urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women’s rights with the object of implementing the principle that men and women should have equal rights, and the development of proposals to give effect to such recommendations” (United Nations, 2009). Despite earlier work on writings related to women’s rights, in the 1970s they began an overarching and wide-ranging document regarding equality for men and women, and “[t]he text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was prepared by working groups within the Commission during 1976 and extensive deliberations by a working group of the Third Committee of the General Assembly from 1977 to 1979” (United Nations, 2009). The document came into being when 130 states voted in favor of the document, and no state voted against it (with ten states abstaining) (United Nations, 2009).

The finalized CEDAW document covers various civil and political rights, along with socioeconomic rights, which of course includes the right to education. There are various references to education in CEDAW. For example, Article 5, part b speaks about family education, stating that the state shall “take all appropriate measures . . . [t]o ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases” (CEDAW, 1979). In addition, Article 10 says that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women . . .” The subsections of Article 10 call for complete equality in all aspects of education, including fields of study, educational training, educational tools, and access to scholarships and grants, as well as attention to female drop-out rates, along with other points related to educational equality for girls and boys.

But along with these various references to the support of free child primary education in the documents mentioned, it was not until the 1980s that the rights of children were placed at the center of a legally binding document with the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Now this is not to say that there has not been strong advocacy for children’s rights. In fact, the activism has been prevalent for well over a century. There is clearly a rich history of advocacy regarding the rights of the child in international spheres such as the League of Nations and the UN. For example, various NGOs, women’s groups, and some international states such as Sweden were quite active in bringing attention to the rights of children in the early 1900s (Fass, 2011). Other activists such as “Eglantyn Jebb introduced the *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* into the League of Nations” (Lee, 2013). This document then was the foundation for the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child passed by the UN (Lee, 2013). This document, although nonbinding, through ten points, advocated for the human rights of children, demanding protections against discrimination, physical, mental, and emotional protection, the right to nationality and name, and health care, as well as education. Regarding education,

point 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) states that

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society. The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

The reason that I bring up this document now is that it set the stage for the CRC, since following the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, the idea of a convention for children's rights was raised in 1978 by Poland at the UN, and following 1979 (the year of the Child in the United Nations), various representatives began writing what is today the CRC (Blanchfield, 2013). Then, the CRC, arguably one of the most important binding documents in the history of international human rights law regarding children's rights, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, and entered into force on September 2, 1990, following ratification by the requisite number of states (OHCHR, 2003). This document has been signed and ratified by 193 states (Lee, 2013) (although, as we are aware, merely signing and ratifying a document in no way suggests that a state is in full accordance with its articles).

This document itself lists various rights that are to be granted to the child (CRC, 1989). Examining the various articles within the Convention, it is evident that the international community has called for the guarantee of children's rights and has declared the responsibility the state has in ensuring that these rights are protected. For example, Article 2 states that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child or her or his parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or

social origin, property, disability, birth or other status” (CRC, 1989). Article 2 of the Convention goes on to stipulate that the state has a responsibility to “take all appropriate measures” to guarantee that a child’s rights are maintained. Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention go on to explain that the state must use various means—including legislation and other avenues—to take care of children’s rights, and “to the maximum extent of their available resources” and also “in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child” (CRC, 1989). The CRC further states that such rights include, but are not limited to, physical needs such as food and shelter, as well as the ability to maintain and foster cultural and religious identity. For example, Article 30 of the CRC (1989) protects the rights of children who are members of ethnic or religious minorities in a state or community by asserting that “[i]n those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.”

In terms of a child’s having the right to education, Article 28 of the CRC repeats the points of the UDHR, and clearly states the importance for children to be able to receive education. Article 28 states that

1. State Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view of achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; (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; (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children; [and] (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. (CRC, 1989)

Article 29 further highlights the state’s job in ensuring that education is given to the child, with the intent and focus on “[t]he development

of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (CRC, 1989).

Thus, the UN has been a pivotal organization for the human rights of the child. Yet along with the UDHR, ICESCR, and CRC, internal UN organizations such as the Human Rights Council have also expressed the importance of child primary education. The Human Rights Council is the main human rights body of the UN, replacing the previous Commission on Human Rights (Pease, 2012). The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) founded the Human Rights Commission in 1946 (Mertus, 2005). Historically, the Commission on Human Rights was quite active in writing the UDHR, and was also quite supportive of the ICCPR and ICESCR (Pease, 2012). And throughout its years, the Commission on Human Rights—and today the Human Rights Council—on several occasions has passed a number of resolutions concerning the right to primary education. For example, resolutions such as 2004/25, Resolution 2005/21, Resolution 8/4 (2005), and so forth all confirm the rights of free education as supported in prior human rights documents, and as mentioned in the UN Millennium Development Goals. The resolutions also address concerns about the number of children who were said not to have access to education, as well as mention the different benefits of schooling. Furthermore, there are yearly meetings in which thousands of representatives gather to work on human rights issues, often drafting resolutions and discussing other pertinent issues (Mertus, 2005: 48–49).

Therefore, we see that international law—through the UDHR, other declarations, covenants, and conventions—has direct support for the rights of education for the child. However, this is not to say that the articles were included in these documents without controversy or debate. When looking at the history of these key articles related to education rights, we find states expressing a range of personal interests that helped shape their policy positions toward the specific states and documents as a whole. For example, when looking at the right to education in the UDHR, this right as it stands in Article 26 of the UDHR went through a detailed process and development during the stages of writing the UDHR (Roth, 2009). In fact, it was only later, during the drafting the UDHR, that the role of education in terms of its critical importance to the development

of the individual became clearer. During the second session meeting of the Commission on Human Rights (Roth, 209: 142), A. L. Easterman of the World Jewish Congress argued for the importance of education in combating racism and hatred, as well as the need for education for the growth of the individual, and that such a definitive statement needed to be included in the future human rights document. Following this, other articles expanded upon the importance of education. After committee discussion on this issue, there were actually plans to include Article 31 of the future document, which would address the importance of education as a human right by saying

Education will be directed to the full, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the human personality, to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the combating of the spirit of intolerance and hatred against other nations or racial or religious groups everywhere. (Roth, 2009: 143)

This proposed article would stand alongside another statement “on basic ideas of education,” such as “everyone [having] the right to education [.]” and that it “shall be free and compulsory” (Roth, 2009: 143). Versions of these two statements were eventually placed within the final version of what came to be the UDHR.

In fact, similar concerns were voiced during the writing of the European Convention for Human Rights. In fact, the right to education was one of the contested rights that was discussed. During the early period of the Council of Europe, the issues of property rights, the right of women to vote, and the issue of education were among the most debated in reference to the European Convention on Human Rights (Wahlstrom, 2009). The major issue related to education was the level of state control in the matter. Yet another central worry by some state representatives was in fact the idea that education was seen as a social right, and thus, they were concerned about the political associations tied to such rights. Again, we must remember that at the time of the drafting of these different human rights documents, the United States and the USSR were involved in a war of political ideologies, with the Western states championing civil and political rights, while the Soviet Union and its allies heralded social and economic rights, which included the right to education. This divide was evident in the split among states in relation to their

support (or lack thereof) for ratifying (or failing to ratify) either the ICCPR or the ICESCR.

The issue of education became a contested point within this ideological battle between the USSR and the United States (and their respective allies) as many states were concerned that if they included education as a right in these international documents, they would be held to this by nondomestic law. They did not want to be told how to invest in their public education (Wahlstrom, 2009: 158). It became clear that states were arguing for sovereignty against what some worried were threats by outside actors to dictate domestic policies. But along with this political concern, other governments within Europe were also concerned about how including education in the Convention would impact parents' rights. Regarding this point about education for the European states,

The fundamental question of protection against indoctrination evolved into a debate on “the right to” or “the right from” denominational education. Expressed another way, it was a debate between the civil rights of parents to decide a denominational education for their children on the one hand and the social right for the child to be educated in a nonindoctrinating atmosphere on the other hand, thereby leaving the choice of the child's convictions until he or she became an educated adult. (Wahlstrom, 2009: 158)

A key issue was how involved the state was in education, and at what expense this would serve the rights of the parents (Wahlstrom, 2009: 160). Thus, from these points above, we have seen disagreements as to the role states feel they should play in regard to funding child primary education, with many taking a less active position in providing adequate facilities and instruction for every child in their country.

This debate regarding who has control over the right to decide a child's education has taken center stage within the overall debate regarding primary education as a human right, and such discussions have not gone away. One of the main divisions among some states regarding education today is whether the parents or international human rights law (which the state is expected to abide by) has control over the education of the child. Englund, Quennerstedt, and Wahlstrom (2009) warn of this conflict, suggesting potential issues between the rights of the child to have a solid education that will

best help her/him grow as an individual, contrasted with the right of the parents to be able to select the type of schooling that they believe is best for their child (135).

The debate as to international human rights documents in relation to the rights of the child—and the power of parents to educate their children—actually took place during the drafting of the UDHR (Roth, 2009). While the third session of the Committee on Human Rights met in 1948 to discuss the education articles in the document that was to become the UDHR, many states, including the Netherlands, Denmark, and Lebanon, brought to the table amendments to the final Article 26 (on education) of the UDHR that outlined the rights of the parents in choosing the type of education that was best for their child. After discussion, this amendment was voted on in the Committee, and narrowly passed by a vote of 17–13. There were also seven states that abstained (Roth, 2009: 144). In fact, one of the main reasons that the amendment guaranteeing parents the overall right to control their child’s education was included was because of the discussion of the word “compulsory,” which is not a part of the UDHR.⁴ Many worried that by drafting the declaration to include the term “compulsory” in relation to education, parents would have to adhere to the state’s requirements in making the decisions on the type of education for their child (Roth, 2009). Thus, Lebanese representatives insisted that, while the statement could include the language of education as being compulsory, this meant that no one could stop a child from receiving an education, but that the parents would have the authority to decide on the type of education given to their child (Roth, 2009: 144). This could possibly have implications for the overall percentages of children attempting to go to school, since it may be seen as a barrier for complete education enrollment.

Such debate between the rights of the parents and the role of the state in regard to education has not been limited to early documents such as the UDHR and the ICESCR, but has also manifested itself as a point of objection by some in regard to the CRC. Quennerstedt (2009) explains that we have seen a “tension” since the writing of the UDHR between the role of the parents in deciding their child’s education versus the influence of the state in controlling such decisions. During the early drafting of the CRC, representatives debated whether the language of the document should suggest that “the

best interest of the child” should be “*the* overriding and paramount consideration in questions involving children . . .” (Quennerstedt, 2009: 165). And while some suggested that this language should be included in the CRC, later discussions about the impact such wording might have on parental rights moved the CRC to rework the language to instead suggest that “the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration” (Quennerstedt, 2009: 165).

In fact, this is one of the major critiques by many “pro-family” organizations in the United States as to why the United States should not ratify the CRC (as the United States is one of the few states that has not ratified the CRC). Rutkow and Lozman (2006) explain that one of the major criticisms of the CRC within the United States comes from those who believe that if the CRC is ratified, the parents will no longer have control over the decisions of the family in relation to their children. There is a concern that the state will be given power and influence in terms of choosing what is best for the child. However, Rutkow and Lozman (2006) explain that a number of US domestic court rulings have maintained that the parents—and not the state—have the ultimate right to educate their child. For example, in the case

Pierce v. Society of Sisters, the Court affirmed the rights of parents by striking down an Oregon statute that required parents or guardians to send children between ages eight and sixteen to a public school in the district where the child resided. The Court found that the statute “unreasonably interfere[d] with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control.” (178)

Furthermore, many critics of the CRC also suggest that by ratifying the Convention that children will not be granted a level of “autonomy” from the parents (179). They argue that in fact “children are too immature to handle the tremendous responsibility that adult ‘freedoms’ carry with them [,]” thus the ever so importance of the rights of the parents in monitoring the development of their children (Rutkow & Lozman, 2006: 179).

But while these criticisms are often cited as to reasons for not supporting the CRC, these critiques do not hold up upon examining the meaning of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Rutkow & Lozman, 2006). Specifically related to the concerns that the CRC

will override the rights of the parents, the CRC makes it clear that the parents have the right (and are actually expected) to raise their children. Furthermore, the CRC allows for individuals and states to decide the values structure for how the children should be raised. The CRC does not provide suggestions for or requirements of its own values to be taught to children. Moreover, the CRC actually stipulates that the parents have the right to educate and “raise their children in accordance with the parent’s religious beliefs,” explaining that States Parties “shall respect the rights and duties of the parents . . . to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her own right” (Rutkos & Lozman, 2006: 187).

Nevertheless, despite these various objections and concerns raised by some with regard to articles concerning children’s rights as they relate to parental control, as well as the subsequent debates on the issue, the human rights movement through the UN has been able to successfully include articles that call for and protect the rights of children with regard to the right of primary education. These become all the more important for activists, who now have the ability to reference a state’s ratification of the Convention when holding such actors accountable on human rights. But despite the importance of codifying these rights in documents such as the UDHR and CRC, the international community has also taken additional steps to build on the calls for such rights within multinational organizations. Specifically, the UN has been very active in working toward the goal of providing all children with the right to education. Where this has taken place has been within what they have called the UN Millennium Development Goals.

UN Millennium Development Goals

Having discussed the legal context for which education is guaranteed in international human rights law, it is important to then look at the different international programs that have been developed in an attempt to reduce the number of children not attending primary schools. It is necessary to examine IOs and their efforts toward improving child education rates because international human rights law is important in protecting and promoting human rights. As previously discussed, the UN is among the major IOs that have set out to improve child primary education enrollment numbers. And

within the UN, the primary educational program related to this task has been its Millennium Development Goals, in which the main objective is that, “by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (UNDP, 2007: 11). Looking at the enrollment figures at the time, the UN explains in its 2007 report that “the net enrolment ratio in primary education in the developing regions increased to 88 per cent in the school year 2004/2005, up from 80 percent in 1990/1991” (11). And more recently, in 2010, according to the UN (2013), the overall enrollment rate was said to be at 90 percent.

But while this is a great improvement in the level of education rates among children, as mentioned at the beginning of the book, the number of children said not to be attending primary school is 57 million children. Again, this is much better than in 2000, when 102 million children were not attending primary school (United Nations, 2013). This, of course, is still from the 2015 goal that all children will be in primary school. Moreover, further concerns have been the percentage of girls among that 57 million. Out of the 57 million children not in school, roughly 30 million are girls (Winthrop & Robinson, 2014). Another worry is that these figures also do not take into account children who may be registered as attending school, but are not going to class (UNDP, 2007), since as UNESCO (2008) explains, “[o]ne out of every three children [registered] never see the inside of a classroom.” This is important to note because it allows us to keep in mind that merely attending primary school in no way suggests that all of the necessary goals that come with schooling are reached; the ultimate objective is to have children complete their courses and learn the necessary material at each grade level, not merely to attend for the sake of attending class.

Within the UN World Millennium Goals, that of universal primary education for all (EFA) children in the world is one of the cornerstones of the program. However, the focus is not merely on a broad idea of the importance of “education for all,” but rather, specifically within that idea, that education is free for all children. One of the first times that the goal of free education was stated, was in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the site at which the initial “Education for All Initiative” began. Here, hundreds of state leaders and NGOs congregated to discuss the ways in which the world community could provide free EFA of its children. However, the meeting in Thailand

was just the beginning; the initiative has spawned various additional regional and international conferences at which such ideas have continued to be discussed.

While the 1990 meeting in Thailand was one of the first places at which international actors came together on the issue of universal education, it was the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, that really brought the issue of education to the forefront of international policy. Prior to this forum, six regional conferences were held throughout the 1990s in South Africa, Brazil, Thailand, Egypt, Poland, and the Dominican Republic, so that NGOs and states could examine the specific state of education in different parts of the world (UNESCO, 2000a). The World Education Forum itself stated a number of direct objectives in relation to universal primary education. Among its goals were to help provide educational opportunities for children and adults, ensure “basic learning needs” for all kids by the year 2015, and identify strategies for reaching such goals (UNESCO, 2000a). More specifically, the meeting produced a document called the “Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.” The Dakar Framework document listed in detail the different approaches that the world community actors would take toward reaching their goal of having all kids enrolled in primary school. Along with affirming the initial points from the Thailand meeting the decade prior, as well as iterating the right to education, those who helped craft the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000a) also called for

- (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

- (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The different representatives also discussed ways to reach these points, which included top-down government policies within a country and the importance of building relationships with civil society, as well as the role of foreign states. They also stressed the need for different types of financial support (which included international aid and debt relief) (UNESCO, 2000a).

Global Education First Initiative

Related to the Millennium Development goal of universal education, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in 2012 launched the UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI, 2014). This initiative is a five-year plan to help work toward a set of educational goals that, as mentioned, include universal education and improvements in existing educational programs, as well as the fostering of global citizenship (GEFI, 2014). These are the three primary objectives regarding universal education. The GEFI Initiative works with partnered organizations, as well as different countries to realize these stated points. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has continued to be active in promising child education. For example, the UN marked July 12, 2013 as "Malala Day" after Malala Yousafzai's visit to the UN to discuss the importance of free education. In an op-ed piece in the *Huffington Post*, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stressed the importance of education, and directly spoke about female education, when he said that "[w]hen women and girls are educated, they accelerate development in their families and communities. For every extra year of schooling, a girl increases her future earnings by up to 20 percent" (Ban Ki Moon, *Huffington Post*, 2013).

More recently, the UN General Assembly also initiated an "Open Working Group" (OWG) with plans to implement "Sustainable

Development Goals” following the Millennium Development Goals of 2015. One of the primary goals within the OWG is an emphasis on education, as it stresses the need for education if we are to see successful development for societies. The OWG has also identified a few related themes within the overall umbrella of education that it believes are fundamental to helping reach its stated development objectives. For example, one of the points it stresses is educational equity. The OWG states that “[t]he new development framework must focus on reducing the learning gap between different groups, such as the poorest and richest children and between girls and boys. This should include a pledge that no target will be considered met unless it is met for all. An explicit focus on equity will mean that the poorest children currently out of primary school will be in school and learning well” (2014). In the next chapter, I shall discuss how economically poor families have a much harder time accessing school compared to families and children from financially wealthier conditions.

Along with equity, the OWG has also been highlighting the importance of learning outcomes. As we discussed, millions do not have basic skills that one expects them to learn while in primary school. Thus, the attention will be on what is being learned instead of the percent enrollment in schools (UNGA, 2014; Anderson & Crone, 2014). Furthermore, they also are stressing the importance of postprimary education for development (UNGA, 2014; Anderson & Crone, 2014). They point out that development does not end with primary schooling, but rather, that educational opportunities continue to help individuals and societies well after children’s early years of schooling (UNGA, 2014; Anderson & Crone, 2014). Numerous NGOs have supported the OWG Brief and its themes, and also have continued to work on how to better improve educational initiatives throughout the world (UNGA, 2014).

Education and the World Bank

In addition to the role of IOs such as the UN in guaranteeing primary EFA children, the World Bank has also attempted to take a leading role in ensuring primary EFA children (Tilak, 1998). The aid from IOs such as the World Bank goes into various (educational) development projects through domestic and external avenues (Tilak, 1998). The importance of IOs, and particularly the World Bank

and its role and impact on primary education rates, continues to be examined, particularly since scholars suggest that “[i]nternational donor agencies are said to account for some 10% of public expenditures in education in the Third World and 5% in Latin America and the Caribbean” (Bujazan, Hare, La Belle, & Stafford, 1987; Arnové, 1982), and are one of the strongest lenders for aid (Tibbetts, 1995).

The World Bank was first originally created in 1944 in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, as “an institution that would rebuild war-ravaged Europe, reduce poverty, and help further peace” (Tibbetts, 1995: 446). But shortly after devoting its attention to Europe, the World Bank quickly turned to aiding developing nations (Tibbetts, 1995; Rueger, 2003) to help with “human-resource development and social development” directing its attention to issues such as poverty reduction (Rueger, 2003). Since the inception of the organization, it has given over 300 billion dollars in aid for over 6,000 total development projects, not including a 23 billion dollar loan amount since 1993 (Tibbetts, 1995), while more recent figures place the total figure at roughly 500 billion dollars (Rueger, 2003).

The World Bank itself is made up of 184 states, with all of the states considered “shareholders” (Pease, 2012: 192). Top officials (the Board of Governors) of the organization meet yearly to discuss issues related to the World Bank, while Executive Directors run the organization’s activities (Pease, 2012; Hurd, 2014). There are 25 seats of Executive Directors, and the top financial contributors (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and Germany) have set slots, whereas the rest of the seats are distributed throughout different regions (Hurd, 2014: 82). Members of the World Bank have voting power, although the “[d]ecisions are based on a weighted voting system where the weight is roughly proportional to the member’s share of Bank contributions (which is based on its share of capital and trade)” (Pease, 2012: 192). Within the World Bank are two specific funding institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), as well as the International Development Association (IDA) (Pease, 2012: 190). The IDA coordinates the lending of the UN, whereas the IBRD serves primarily as a loan provider and is focused mostly on loans to states. While the IBRD has focused on loans, its role has shifted to more emphasis on development initiatives (Pease, 2012). The IDA came about in 1960, with the purpose of helping Global South states

through loans, although qualifying for such loans has been quite difficult for states (Pease, 2012) (as we shall discuss later). The loans that the IDA offers are frequently referred to as “soft” loans. These are often long-term loans, with low interest, if any at all. In order to receive these loans, states generally have to meet certain criteria set forth by the World Bank (Pease, 2012). Along with the IBRD and the IDA, there are also other related organizations that work on providing aid and loans. For example, there is the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which focuses on private investment in Global South states, the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which focuses on investment disputes (Pease, 2012), as well as the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), which insures investment from things such as political fighting in a country or the outbreak of conflict (Pease, 2012: 191).

But despite these moves toward poverty reduction and development, when one looks at the level of support by IOs for education in the years immediately after World War II, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) committed almost nothing to spending on primary education, believing not only that education was an issue for the developing states to handle themselves but also that if aid was to be distributed to these nations, it should be “of high-level manpower” (Tilak, 1988: 320). The World Bank itself paid very little attention to primary educational aid in the early 1960s and 1970s. And even with a new focus on tackling poverty, education has still been at lower levels than some suggest is necessary (Tilak, 1988). A further problem with the early World Bank as it relates to education was that the little money spent on education was mostly dedicated for the construction of facilities and for building materials, and not the actual schooling programs themselves (Tilak, 1988).⁵ Fortunately, we have recently seen a shift back toward emphasizing primary education from the World Bank.

The World Bank began to give aid to education in 1962, and since that time, has also spent a large amount of time and resources publishing numerous policy reports “outlining its views on educational development” (Jones, 1997b).⁶ Jones explains of the value of these reports, saying that

[o]n each occasion, these much anticipated and much discussed statements have had a dual purpose. First, they have provided the bank

with an opportunity to outline its views on education and development. The bank's hope here is that governments, other multilateral and bilateral aid agencies and the education and academic community will be persuaded of its views and will adopt them. Second, the statements provide the bank with opportunities to publicise its own priorities for lending. Thus, they indicate not only the Bank's preferred view of educational futures, but also how it might back those views with finance. (117)

In the early stages of the World Bank's involvement with education, the organization was focused more on "technical" and "secondary" education, while devoting little time to primary education. It was only after Robert McNamara's tenure as the president of the World Bank in 1968 that we saw an initial report that indicated the expansion of an educational focus by the World Bank, which included, but was not limited to, primary education (Jones, 1997b). The second report, written in 1971 outlined the Bank's position that it would serve in providing loans for various levels of education, including primary, secondary, postsecondary, and university education.

In 1974, a third report was published that offered more details regarding the educational goals of the World Bank. Jones (1997b) explains that this report differed from the 1971 report in that it "was more speculative about potential bank lending and invited discourse on the global future of education. . . . It made much of mass education, and . . . opened up prospects for more focus on rural populations and the education of women and girls" (120). Thus, this report emphasized planning techniques for education, along with ideas for "skill development" (120). From this, the World Bank focused less on loans for buildings and more on teaching and the lessons taught in classrooms (Jones, 1997b). And in 1980, the *Education Sector Policy Paper* focused on education in relation to development, and not so much criteria for how the World Bank would judge loan requests. The 1980 paper continued with its message of education for everyone in the society "as soon as the available resources and conditions permit" (Jones, 1997b, 121). This paper was viewed by some as an evolution in World Bank policy due to its language, which emphasized the "absolute priority of primary education" (Jones, 1997b: 122), as it highlighted the potential high returns of investment in primary education (Jones, 1997b). Other calls for unified curriculum were

also emphasized during this time. Nevertheless, the World Bank said little in terms of criteria or plans for how they would fund educational programs (Jones, 1997b).

In 1990, the World Bank launched an education program called “Education for All (EFA).” The aim of this project has been to ensure that by the year 2015, every child in the world will have access to primary education (World Bank, 2008a EFA). This program was re-emphasized in 2000 in Senegal as various nations met to discuss the Millennium Goals. The EFA Program itself has six main goals: to “expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”; to “ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality”; to “ensure that the learning of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs”; to “achieve a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015”; to “eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015”; and lastly, to “improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (World Bank, 2008).

In 2002, the World Bank, along with many other IGOs and NGOs, came together to form the Global Partnership for Education with the idea of working toward the realization of the UN Millennium Development Goals, as well as the EFA objectives (World Bank, 2013). The World Bank and other actors within this partnership focused on school quality and access to schooling, as well as school systems within each of the states (World Bank, 2013).⁷ It was in 2002 that international actors came together to form the EFA Fast Track Initiative, a program designed to bring actors together to work on ways of reaching the Educational For All objectives, as well as a mechanism that can aid in coordinating donations toward education initiatives (Malouf, 2010). With the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) program, Global North states help create educational policies, which are then backed by host governments that implement such plans. Then, those countries begin implementing the policies. And while they are

expected to devote resources to these programs, whatever the host countries cannot pay for from their own budgets is supported by donor countries through their own aid policies, or through directly paying into a common Catalytic Fund (CF) that can be used for educational programs (Malouf, 2010: 9).⁸ The FTI has continued to emphasize education on the international stage, all the while offering a place in which aid can be collected and then distributed to host countries, and fostering continued cooperation between various actors regarding said educational policies (Malouf, 2010: 10–11).

Yet despite the advancements and goals of the FTI program, however, the program has not been without some deficiencies.⁹ One of the major issues has been the level of donations (or the lack thereof) from countries. For example, the Mid-term Evaluation (2010) report states that

Aid commitments to education generally and to basic education in particular increased significantly between 1999 and 2004, but there has been little growth in either since then. By 2007, aid commitments to basic education were 25% lower than at their peak in 2004. The global evidence therefore does not indicate that the FTI has had the large positive effect on the level of external financing for education or basic education that was envisaged at its inception. (6)

Other issues include criticisms about the lack of monitoring compared to the initial planning of educational programs, which has inhibited the possibility of the initiative's being fully effective. Furthermore, it has been argued that there exists a heavy reliance on the World Bank to fulfill the goals of the project (Cambridge Education & MOKORO, 2010). For example, point S61 of the Mid-term Evaluation of the FTI (Cambridge Education & MOKORO, 2010) states that

In its implementation the FTI has been too dependent on the World Bank. The Bank continues to play several roles within the partnership. It hosts the Secretariat of the FTI, and the Head of the Secretariat is answerable to both the FTI Steering Committee (Board) and to WB line management. The WB has also acted as a trustee for the three trust funds (the CF, the EPDF and also the Trust Fund, which funds the Secretariat itself). It manages the EPDF and acts as the default “supervising entity” for the CF. The WB is obliged to exercise

its functions in accordance with its own rules and regulations; in this context, much criticism of the WB has been unfair. The WB remains vitally important to the FTI. Nevertheless, concerns around these multiple roles—with the lack of a clear demarcation between the FTI and the WB leading to ambiguity and potential conflicts of interest—are still evident. Efforts to make the partnership more balanced—including the recent reforms in governance—have not adequately addressed these points. (xxi)

This image that the World Bank functions as the primary actor for the FTI Program has potentially made it more difficult to attract other actors to help (Malouf, 2010). Furthermore, FTI positions in the Secretariat have not helped perception matters: “[s]ince its staff is hosted at the Bank’s headquarters and on its payroll with the contractual duty to serve Bank interests, there is good reason for this impression” (14). In addition, having the World Bank Board of Directors dictate conditions for approving grants, as well as conditions for sending the money has been a point of concern (Malouf, 2010). Moreover, many have criticized the World Bank for its strictness regarding conditions for certain aid, leaders have expressed worry about the likelihood of future funds being available (and how to go about putting in for them), and many have also been upset as well as delays in disbursing grant payments (Malouf, 2010).¹⁰

But despite any advancement in primary education through previous World Bank programs, it was not until 2005 when, along with UNICEF, the World Bank began the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) (UNICEF, 2009). The idea behind SFAI is to find ways to help countries that have taken the important step of eliminating all primary school fees, or that have found ways to help economically poor families with these fees. Through the initiative, they have set up multiple meetings with various state and nonstate actors in which they work on education issues. For example, in 2006, shortly after the introduction of the initiative, the two organizations set up a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, entitled “Building on What We Know and Defining Sustained Support,” in which they encouraged discussion on ways to end school fees, along with how to build networks and ties among the participants (UNICEF, 2009: 8).¹¹ Overall, the World Bank and UNICEF, through the SFAI, have three primary goals that they hope to reach. First, they aim to “[b]uild a knowledge base and network on school fee abolition within which lessons

learned can be exchanged and sound strategies and interventions supported” (7). Second, their goal is to “[u]se this knowledge and experience to facilitate and provide guidance and support to countries in planning and implementing policies of school fee abolition” (7). Third, they are working to “[f]acilitate, promote, and advance the global policy dialogue on the financial barriers to educational access and acceptable learning outcomes and build partnerships that ensure an environment for success” (7).

The World Bank: Effectiveness and Criticisms

While many scholars have argued that measuring the effectiveness of World Bank loans on development is “inherently difficult” (Krueger, 1998: 1990), the World Bank has received a large amount of both praise and criticism for its work on development and the role it has played in international education initiatives in recent decades. It is therefore important to examine some of these successes, as well as critiques of World Bank policies. According to some, on account of the World Bank, a number of countries “have successfully developed to the point where national governments are fully capable of . . . carrying out project design . . .” (Krueger, 1998: 1984). Other scholars point out that the World Bank has had many success stories in terms of its projects.¹² When looking at universal primary education, the World Bank argues that we have seen some positive developments in terms of reaching the Millennium Goals, although much work still needs to be done. When speaking on this issue in 2008 (when roughly 77 million children were receiving primary education), the World Bank (2008) argued that we are seeing an “upward trend” in terms of enrollment. The World Bank explains that 47 countries out of 163 have attained universal primary EFA of their children, with another 20 being “on track” in terms of reaching that goal by the 2015 date. However, the World Bank notes that 44 countries, 23 of them in Sub-Saharan Africa, have much to do in order to achieve these education goals by 2015 (World Bank, 2008). Thus, in order to help countries reach these goals, the World Bank explains that it offers help through policy guidance, along with financial loans and other aid that is needed (World Bank, 2008). Its total education programs cover over 90 countries (World Bank, 2008).

Nevertheless, criticism of foreign aid programs, of education reforms, and of the World Bank and its outlook on approaches to development exist, which has led scholars to debate the role of the World Bank in giving aid to developing countries on account of the less-than-spectacular outcomes of its aid projects (Gutner, 2005). For example, in terms of foreign aid, Remmer (2004) finds “a positive relationship between aid and state spending,” in which governments will use the aid to further increase their political support, at the expense of “creat[ing] weak incentives for policy change” (88) (citing Van de Walle, 2001), and that aid leads to further reliance on aid. In terms of education reforms, Psacharopoulos (1989) says that reform suggestions have not been successful because of an unrealistic design of carrying out the plan, a lack of a concretely stated end goal, and a failure to put in place policy based on strong “research-proven cause effect relationships—[and] not on goodwill or intuition” (193). In terms of the World Bank specifically, Krueger (1998), in citing Bandow and Vasquez’s (1994) criticisms of the World Bank, explains that “The World Bank alone has lent developing countries nearly 300 billion [dollars]. . . . Yet after providing advice, loans, and grants to the governments of the world’s poorest countries for four decades, the multilaterals can point to few, if any cases in which their efforts have led to improved living standards and sustained economic prosperity” (2000–2001). While standards of living have improved, scholars question whether the World Bank is the cause of this success (Krueger, 1998). Furthermore, scholars suggest that loans from IOs such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have actually aided authoritarian regimes in retaining power (Krueger, 1998).

The World Bank has also been criticized for its specific approach to child education issues. For example, some have argued that policies such as those of the World Bank are often not tailored to each specific state, but rather, are a “one-size-fits all” approach (Tomasevski, 2006: xxii), and thus, are not fully in line with what each state needs. There have also been voices raised regarding the history of the World Bank’s position on free education. For example, Katarina Tomasevski, writing in 2006, said,

That education should be free and compulsory is absent from the World Bank’s educational vocabulary. This would integrate human

rights law, which obliges governments to provide education or ensure that it is provided, and this necessitates adequate and sustained public funding. Instead, education is analysed in terms of supply and demand. In the year 2000 Donald Winkler (of the World Bank) described needed improvements “to imply strengthening performance and efficiency among existing consumers of education.” His description of broadening access to education was “delivering this service to those not currently consuming.” (xxii)

She went on to say that

To describe school children as consuming some efficiently delivered service goes against the very notion of what education is. (xxiv)

Tomasevski was quite critical of the World Bank’s ideas regarding “handouts” (xxiii) as they relate to education. Furthermore, she also argued that the World Bank did not use the term “right” in the discussion of education, and therefore did not recognize the responsibilities a state has regarding a human right (xxiii). Moreover, the historical attention paid to the privatization of schools by the World Bank and affiliate organizations may shift the idea that the state has a role in providing such rights to its citizens (Tomasevski, 2006: xxiv). Tomasevski (2006) argued that the World Bank’s policies reflect this attention that is paid to an emphasis on fees and the minimization of the role of government in terms of paying for such programs.

Speaking about the policies of the organization in the mid-1980s, she stated that “[i]n 1983, direct charges in public education were imposed in Malawi, following the World Bank’s advice. Its lending for education mandated cost-sharing and the financial responsibility for education was transferred from governments to families and communities. The World Bank’s rationale was that ‘judicious use of modest fees’ would make public schools accountable to taxpayers and, more importantly, to the school children’s parents” (2). However, according to Tomasevski (2006), the World Bank did little to emphasize to governments the role that they had in providing free education. And even in 2001, when the World Bank issued a statement saying that it “opposes user fees for primary education,” she argues that they took issue with government implemented fees, and not fees administered by schools or local governments (2).

She has also suggested that states were unable to provide free education at the expense of repaying loans through structural adjustment programs assigned by IOs, even though they know the benefits that education provides to economic development for families and for a state (Tomasevski, 2006). Speaking about the relationship between state goals and those of international actors in relation to free education, Tomasevski explains that

Making education free and compulsory requires public funding, but governmental and intergovernmental policies for financing education do not follow what the law mandates. This is the case in international development finance as well as in national budgetary allocations. The constitution may mandate primary education to be free but the government may levy or tolerate charges and education is effectively for-fee. Many governments have declined their own responsibility for violations of constitutional guarantees of free education and point their finger to Washington D.C., the headquarters of the World Bank and the IMF. Most have cited structural adjustment programmes as the trigger for impoverishment of public education. International human rights law and their constitutions would have required high budgetary allocations to make or keep education free, while cost-sharing policies favoured by the World Bank and the IMF made it for-fee. (6)

Just one example of the impact of structural adjustment programs on child education was in Kenya, where, in 1989, the government set up a “cost-sharing” program, which called for local fundraising campaigns. In addition, schools started charging fees for teacher pay, for buildings, and for student textbooks, as well as for admission (Kabugu et al., 2009: 128). Thus, after implementation, the cost-sharing program was said to have “hindered many children, especially those from economically marginalized groups, from accessing primary education” (Kabugu et al., 2009: 127), as they were often unable to pay the different school fees charged to them and their families.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the World Bank has also been criticized for its heavy role in the FTI, despite some of the positive results that came from the program (Malouf, 2010). It will be interesting to see the extent to which World Bank and other IOs provide support for free universal primary education for states that

hope either to implement such policies or that have already done so, and look for financial support from international groups in their efforts to ensure all children are in school. It seems that the organization has shifted more toward fee abolishment, but the World Bank is not without continued criticism, and it will be important to follow developments regarding the World Bank's position toward education, as well as the manifestation of its role in the FTI moving forward.

Thus, despite the fact that the UN World Millennium Development Goals have neared their end, the international community is far from completing its human rights work on primary and secondary education. Through the UN Secretary-General's General Education First Initiative, the recent UN OWG meetings with state representatives, and nonstate actors, IOs such as the UN continue to remain committed to advancing progress on the human right of primary education. Yet, despite their activities, we as a world community are still very far away from establishing all of the human rights of education stated in international law, such as the right for all children to attend school without charge. In the next chapter, I shall discuss the many reasons why children are still unable to attend school.

CHAPTER 4

What Are the Reasons Why Children Are Not Attending Primary School?

While international law and multinational organizations have laid out the responsibilities related to the protection and development of the child—particularly in terms of education—through international documents and subsequent initiatives, as mentioned in the introduction of this book, we are still a long way off from reaching this goal of universal education for all children. As referenced previously, 57 million children are still without access to primary schooling. This begs the question: what are the reasons why all children in the world are not enrolled in primary schooling? I believe that the answer to this question can be found in the micro- and macro level policies implemented by governments, in the micro-level decisions made by families, and in the actions of other civil society actors, all within the context of various social, economic, and political conditions. As we shall see, the reasons why so many children are not in school are rather varied in nature, and often overlap and interact with many other factors. I shall now discuss some of the most common reasons why a child might not have access to education.

Poverty

Poverty tends to be one of the greatest factors in children's not attending primary school. When families have little food or have an unstable income, this often affects children when it comes to school enrollment. There are a number of ways in which this manifests

itself in terms of a lack of education. One is the fact that when a family has little economic wealth, the children are often expected to take a working role to help provide additional income for the family. This is, unfortunately, quite common. For example, the ILO has said that over 218 million children work (HRW, 2006). Unfortunately, the ILO also reports that some of the greatest human rights abuses against children include “all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour . . .” (ILO, 1999). And while Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2006) explains that some of the work is beneficial to the family, organizations such as the ILO and HRW work toward addressing situations in which “the worst forms of child labor” (ILO, 1999) occur, in which children’s rights to safety, education, and freedom are taken away from them. And often enough, working does come at the price of education.

According to the United Nations Development Program (2007), “[t]he children most likely to drop out of school or to not attend at all are those from poorer households or living in rural areas.”¹ When examining factors related to lack of school attendance in Zambia, for example, some researchers have found that parents often make a cost/benefit calculation as to whether sending a child to school is worth the long-term benefit at the expense of keeping the child home to work (Jenson & Nielson, 1997). Often, familial financial needs prevent children from attending school because parents need the children to work (Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 1995; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). Parents particularly have trouble sending their children to school when the family income might be affected; therefore, one of the places where they look to cut expenses is in school costs, often resulting in taking their children out of school. Citing 1998/1999 data from Kenya, Ogola (2010) explains that “of those parents interviewed [for the study], about 30.1 per cent of parents released their children to work in order to help family business while 27.5 per cent indicated that earnings from their children’s work augmented household income. Only 0.3 per cent of parents reported that they released their children for work because they thought their education or training environment was not suitable” (10). Therefore, we know that parents want to send their children to school, but oftentimes, they just cannot afford to do so.

In recent studies that examine coping strategies of poor communities in Nairobi, Kenya, families employ a number of methods to cope with any “shocks” to their income, such as eating less food or withdrawing their children from school (Amendah, Buigut, & Mohamed, 2014). In fact, “About one household out of five (19%) report[ed] removing children from school to manage spending shortfalls” (Amendah et al., 2014). Furthermore, a family’s having children under the age of 15 leads to a greater chance of their taking them out of school, and even more so if a family has more than one child under the age of 15. Specifically, “the odds that a household with more than two children from school is 2.12 times as high as the odds in a family with no children under the age of 15. . . . The similar odds are 1.3 and not statistically significant for families with one or two children under the age of 15.” What is more, in Ghana, when families are unable to afford the direct or indirect costs of school, parents are more likely to quit attempting to enroll their children, and instead tell them to start looking for work in the job market. Specifically, “[t]he high cost of schooling pushes children into the labor market to enable them to afford school or pulls them away from school as they can not afford it” (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997: 28). Parents make this choice because they factor in the price of school fees in deciding whether it is in the best interest of the family to send a child to school, knowing that they will have to pay school fees, or whether it is better to use that money for other purposes. In this analysis, they also have to consider the loss of the income of the child upon her/his entering school (Jenson & Nelson, 1997).

Unfortunately, even if this is beneficial to the family in the short run, keeping the child from attending school can be harmful and ineffective for the economic prospects of the family in the long term, since children, by not attending school, are missing opportunities because they are kept at home to work (Wahba, 2000). Yet, what has been found in studies is that parents, seeing the high cost of schooling, and often at the expense of the income they are losing by not having their kids work, are less likely to call for education for them. The more expensive that education becomes for them, the less likely they are to send their children to school. This can be especially troubling for girls, particularly if there is a familial or societal preference for boys to attend school (Herz & Sperling, 2004). When looking at

drop-out rates, while one finds that both boys and girls are clearly affected, the trends seems to be particularly troubling for girls, who seem to be more likely to leave school than boys. Much of this has to do with co-related factors that hinder access to education, such as cost of fees and family poverty. As the Global Education Fund (in Okoti, 2014) explains, “children are often forced to leave school due to the need to provide family income. Girls are often forced into early marriage, early motherhood or to stay at home and help take care of younger siblings as their parents go out to earn a living.” Again, this decision seems to be more directly due to the cost/benefit analysis of education to lost and also projected income.

And even if families send their children to school, it does not mean that that child has the necessary tools or conditions at home to make it easier to excel.

There can often be conditions in the home that may pose challenges to effective learning. For example, some factors related to the home may be the following:

When families lack electricity at home, particularly in rural areas, children have fewer hours available to study and learn. When their homes lack books and other reading material, they practice less and forget more during school breaks. And when parents themselves lack literacy and numeracy skills, they are less able to reinforce what children are learning in school. Other factors, such as a stressful or violent home environment, can also highly impede a child’s learning. (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012: 19)²

In other cases, problems such as hunger can have an impact on a child’s ability to concentrate on her/his studies. What is further troubling about the relationship between hunger and schooling is that, according to some researchers, “[t]he impact of hunger on education systems is gravely underreported” (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012: 19). In fact, “Evidence from Latin America finds that being stunted at age 6 was equivalent to losing four grades of schooling. Far too many children are reaching school damaged by malnutrition. Around 171 million children in developing countries are stunted by hunger by the time they reach age 5. When children are hungry during lessons, they have trouble concentrating. Thus, innovative approaches such as providing school meals and social protection programs focusing on

the needs of children can insure that no child is hungry at school” (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012: 19). John Mutenyu (2010), writing in an opinion piece for the Brookings Institute in an article on school feeding makes a similar argument regarding the use of food programs for helping children in terms of nourishment, as well as stresses the benefits that food can have on school enrollment. He argues that “[s]chool feeding programs can address undernourishment of children across the board, while encouraging attendance in school and reducing strain at home (less food that families need to provide.” He lists and explains five particular benefits of providing food for children related to school, which I have quoted below:

- 1) A source of additional resources to households for consumption and investment (some form of safety net). Money saved from school feeding could lead to added household incomes (higher savings) that may then be invested in productive assets leading to higher returns. . . .
- 2) An increase in time spent in school through increased enrollment, attendance and decreased dropout rates. A study by the World Food Program in Laos showed through school feeding programs, attendance increased by 5.5 percent per year, enrollment by 16 percent and dropout fell by 9 percent.
- 3) An increase in cognition and improved learning. According to the World Food Program, school feeding leads to an increase in cognition through test scores and an increase in wages over productive life (Kristjansson et al., 2007).
- 4) Improved micronutrient status and health; decreased prevalence of intestinal parasites. If children are better nourished they are accordingly less sick, which leads to better quality of life and fewer days of school missed due to illness. . . .
- 5) Multiplicative effects on future productivity and income. . . well-fed children of primary school age are healthier and more productive during their future working years. School feeding also provides multiplicative effects for the community in the form of increased future employment rates (direct and indirect), ready markets for rural farmers to supply food for school meals, and increased food production and household savings.

School Fees

Along with overall issues of family poverty, one of the other major factors in parents' decision to keep their children from attending schooling is the direct cost of school itself (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; Jenson & Nielson, 1997; Tomasevski, 2006b).

Due to fees often levied on children in order to enroll, families often have to remove their kids from school because they are unable to afford these costs, or, if they can pay them, they have less to spend on basic necessities. Part of the parental thinking process discussed earlier involves considering the cost of schooling, or the quality of the education the child is receiving as compared to the overall value of child labor (413). Jenson and Nielson (1997) explain that "The reason why children do not attend school is that the household cannot afford it. It cannot afford to send the children to school if the price of schooling is too high or the household income is too low. The price of schooling is high if either the direct or the indirect costs of schooling are large" (413). Some of these costs that are factored into the total cost include books, transportation distance/cost, and school attendance fees (Jenson & Nielson, 1997). This is an important point, since fees are much more than school tuition. For example, in interviews conducted with families in Sierra Leone, Betancourt et al. (2008) found that many mentioned the difficulty they had in paying the various fees for school, even with the help of NGOs, which provided part of the fees or gave them nontuition education-related supplies such as books or uniforms. Even with the aid of NGOs, families are often concerned that the aid will not last forever, and that the children will not be able to continue attending school (9–10). In addition,

Studies focusing on education in Kenya found that about half the children in the slums of Korogocho and Viwandani do not benefit from the free primary education implemented in Kenya since 2003 as the "poorest of the poor" actually attend "private schools for the poor" in the absence of government schools in the slums. In addition, even when primary school is accessible and "free," other school-related costs such as textbooks, lunches, and uniforms represent a significant cost for the low income households. Private schools in the slum are fee-based and when parents owe tuition or other fees, children are sent home till the bill is cleared. So the "removing children from

school” strategy may be temporary. But still, regular absenteeism is not conducive to good learning. Conventional wisdom indicates that income is positively related to level of education even in these slums. Hence efforts to ensure children from slum families’ access education may generate long term benefits and break the cycle of poverty. Thus, provision of free primary education for the slum families is an issue that needs serious consideration. (Amendah et al., 2014)

As UNICEF (2009) explains, when we are speaking about free schooling, programs that work to eliminate fees “must take into consideration the wide range of household costs of schooling, including the costs of textbooks and supplies, uniforms, and parent-teacher association (PTA) contributions; costs related to sports and other school activities and those related to transportation; and contributions to teachers’ salaries” (11–12). Parents, and particularly those in poverty, just cannot afford to pay. As the United Nations Global Education First Initiative (2012) explains,

[p]overty is the greatest barrier to high-quality education. Even when primary education is technically free, additional costs for uniforms, textbooks, teacher salaries and school maintenance create financial barriers for many families. In surveys from countries with “free education,” parents consistently say these indirect costs keep them from sending their children to school. While some governments have withdrawn formal fees for basic education, few have dropped fees for secondary education. In sub-Saharan Africa, children from the richest 20% of households reach ninth grade at 11 times the rate of those from the poorest households. (14)

Furthermore, as UNICEF (2009) explains, “[t]he tremendous surge in enrollment after abolishing fees—particularly among poor, previously excluded, and vulnerable children (girls, children living in remote rural populations, child laborers, children with disabilities, and children affected by HIV/AIDS and social conflict)—reveals that the private costs of education to families are particularly burdensome to these groups” (4). They go on to point out that “[e]nrollment of children from such groups is very sensitive to fees, even small fees” (4).

Historically, one of the earliest examples of school fees or “user” fees came in the 1980s due to “structural adjustment programs” at

the time, in which states were trying to increase funds for programs such as education. However, what happened was that many at the time were not taking into account what the fees would do to family income and livelihood, which included not only financial considerations but also the ability for children to access primary education. However, it was not long before the world knew how devastating user fees were to families and to overall primary school enrollment rates (Horn, Wright, & Prouty, 2009). Yet even though we may recognize the negative consequences of school fees (they are arguably the primary hindrances to educational access), they are still quite common throughout the world.

Katarina Tomasevski (2006), in one of the most important studies related to the issue of enrollment rates and government guarantees of free education, has long argued that correlations exist between free child education and enrollment rates.³ In my own study, I conducted a cross-national quantitative analysis to see whether having free schooling affects enrollment percentages, controlling for all other possible factors such as gross domestic product (GDP), democracy, military spending, and so forth.⁴ Given the findings in the literature I just discussed, one would expect to see that countries that have free schooling would have a much higher percentage of their children in school compared to states in which free schooling does not exist. However, this does not necessarily have to be across the board; states with lower GDPs may be affected differently since that is where school fees would make a substantial difference in whether a family could afford to send their child/children to school. Thus, when I ran the statistical test looking at school fees and enrollment percentages, I found that not only did the GDP affect education (a one unit increase in the log GDP led to a 5.62% increase in the percentage of children enrolled in school), but separately, I also found that even controlling for GDP, states that had free schooling had on average a 27.3 percent higher enrollment compared to states that did not guarantee free schooling (table 4.1).

Although this finding was significant at the 0.10 level, it still suggests what we would expect to see: free schooling matters. However, what I also found was that states with lower GDPs benefited more from free primary education in terms of overall enrollment rates compared to states with free education but with higher GDP levels. Therefore, we find that the lower the GDP per capita, interacted

Table 4.1 Child primary education enrollment rates OLS regression model with GDP*free education interaction

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Coefficient estimates</i>
Ln (GDP per capita)	5.62*** (0.969)
Free universal education	27.3** (10.8)
GDP*free education	-3.31** (1.33)
Democracy	0.637 (0.656)
Military expenditures	-1.02* (0.531)
Lag education spending	-0.066 (0.590)
Islam	-0.682 (2.37)
Constant	48.0*** (7.93)

<i>N</i>	171
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	0.325
<i>F-stat for overall model</i>	12.70***

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All tests of significance are two-tailed. * <0.10 ** <0.05 *** <0.01 .

with free education, the more such a policy will help enrollment rates. This finding strongly supports the argument that poorer families, whose income is much lower than that of other states' families, will be much more likely to send their children to school when education is free. This finding decreases, however, as GDP per capita rises. This suggests that the economically poorest states are the most impacted by a free schooling policy, whereas as GDP per capita rises, the effect on child enrollment rates drops.

I ran an additional test to determine the effect (if any) of free schooling policies toward specific genders. I wanted to examine whether free schooling helped increase the rates for girls more than boys, or whether there was any difference at all. The separate model for girls' enrollment rates will allow us to see whether the same variables that were significant as related to overall education rates apply to female enrollment rates. Furthermore, this additional model will allow us to analyze the level of impact that free education policy has on female enrollment rates (table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Female child primary education enrollment rates OLS regression

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Coefficient estimates</i>
Ln (GDP per capita)	8.25*** (1.19)
Free universal education	45.7*** (12.32)
GDP*free education	-5.65*** (1.52)
Democracy	-0.217 (0.835)
Military expenditures	-0.580 (0.565)
Lag education spending	-0.620 (0.619)
Islam	-6.96** (2.77)
Constant	28.7*** (9.37)

<i>N</i>	132
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	0.425
<i>F-stat for overall model</i>	14.81***

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. All tests of significance are two-tailed. * < 0.10 ** < 0.05 *** < 0.01.

In terms of the model, we see that the overall R-square is 0.425, which suggests that 42.5 percent of the model is explained by the variables included in the analysis. Looking at the GDP variable, we find that the coefficient is 8.25, and is significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, we find that GDP per capita is strongly associated with higher levels of female enrollment rates. This suggests that families with additional income, when they have the resources, are more likely to send their daughters to school. Looking at the free education variable and the impact on female primary enrollment rates, we find that states with free education policies increase enrollment rates by 45.7. This finding is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. In terms of the interaction term, it is -5.65, and is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Thus, we see that when GDP is controlled for, countries that guarantee free child education have a much higher enrollment rate for girls compared to a state without such a policy. Therefore, similar to the previous finding, free child primary education policy significantly increases the enrollment of girls in primary education. However, in Muslim majority states, female education percentages

were 6.96 percent lower than non-Muslim majority societies, which suggests that political powers may be interpreting Islam in a way that suggests a gender bias against girls, which could manifest itself in terms of education. Again, this differs from other tests in which Islam, for example, does not have any effect. And of course this has nothing to do with Islam itself, but rather, interpretations of the faith by those who not only have political power but also, in exercising that power, choose to limit female access to rights such as education.

Now there are states that are trying to implement policies that can help offset the burden that fees place on children and their families. They do this through programs aimed either at helping families pay for school fees or waiving the fee if they do not make enough money. In the case of Singapore, for example, while there is an emphasis on the importance of child primary education, there are still school fees for non-Singapore citizens, as well as miscellaneous fees that families are expected to pay. According to a publication from the office of the Singapore Minister of Education (2013), as of 2013, the monthly school fee for a non-Singapore resident was \$90.00. In addition, there is a “miscellaneous fee” that both citizens and noncitizens have to pay, which, depending on the school, can go up to \$6.50 a month.⁵ Singaporeans also receive \$200 dollars in an Edusave account that they can use for fees (Singapore Minister of Education, 2013). The government does also have what is called a Financial Assistance Scheme that “provides needy pupils with free textbooks, school attire, free breakfast and waiver of school fees and standard miscellaneous fees” if the family does not make more than \$2,500 a month, or the per capita income is not over \$625 dollars a month (13–14). Thus, some governments do have fees in place, but also have aid programs available to help offset costs. Yet, as mentioned, while the idea seems well intentioned, there are still fees in place, and thus, we should keep in mind the social, economic, psychological and emotional effects of these fee structures on children and their families, even if assistance is available.

This leads to a related point that, despite the fact that free schooling clearly allows millions of children to have an opportunity that would not exist were it not for such policies, if the state is not effectively monitoring individual schools to ensure that free education is taking place, then it will be quite difficult for children to

attend school (Bellettini & Ceroni, 2004) since local administrators may (and often do) charge their own fees, outside of the purview of the national government. In fact, any progress initiated by the free school policy may be lost due to lack of monitoring to ensure the program is fully adhered to. There must be some level of enforceability because “most developing [states] do not have the administrative capacity to fully enact child labor and compulsory schooling laws” (Bellettini & Ceroni, 2004: 9). Bellettini and Ceroni find that if these policies exist, and there is enforcement of these laws, then this leads to higher school attendance (2004). For example, in Al-Samarrai and Zaman’s (2007) study on the elimination of school fees in Zambia, they found that such elimination of fees was highly successful in bringing children to attend school after a democratically elected government came into power. Other African countries such as Lesotho and Kenya have also eliminated schooling fees, even though many more countries still have school charges (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007; Tomasevski, 2006: 23). For those countries that have done away with school fees, such as Malawi for example, this strategy has been beneficial to the poor population in relation to primary education (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007: 370). And in Zambia—where free education has been implemented—we have seen that eliminating school fees does in fact have a highly positive impact on children’s attending school (Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007). We will speak about some of the challenges that result in the abolishing of school fees in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that there are overall positive outcomes when a state provides free schooling.

Again, however, the laws need to be upheld. If they are not, then this will most likely lead children further away from schooling. A result of a legal guarantee of free education without enforceability is that families get excited to hear the government making promises that school fees will be eliminated, only to have many who run the schools pay little attention to such calls and continuing to charge fees. In other cases, a state may still provide free schooling, all the while increasing taxes, and thus in a way still requiring families to pay more for school (Sifuna, 1990; Ogola, 2010: 11). The concern of enforceability leaves parents highly skeptical of the state’s attempt to do away with charges for school (Buchmann, 1999: 112).

School Fees, Education, and Conflict Areas

Related to this, we have also seen efforts to eliminate school fees in postconflict areas such as Sierra Leone, where the government implemented policies to guarantee free primary education for all children. Once this plan was implemented, the number of children who began to attend school rose significantly. Whereas prior-war figures suggested that 660,000 children were attending school, the figures rose to 1.3 million in 2004 during the year of the Education Act of 2004 (Betancourt et al., 2008: 4). But while this was the case, hundreds of thousands of children were still unable to go to school on account of their families having to pay for other school-related costs, including uniforms and books, among other items. Regarding the difficult situation families in Sierra Leone face in terms of the cost of sending their children to school—even when official school fees are not imposed—Betancourt et al. (2008) explain that “[n]ationwide, in 2004 just over 50 percent of the costs of primary education were borne by a heavy burden in a country where the 2004 gross national income per capita was just \$210. For many families, there is also the opportunity cost of schooling—the wages or labor the child can contribute to the family if she or she is not in school” (4).

The importance of education as it relates to poverty and school fees can also have an effect on those issues such as the rise of child soldiers in other conflict areas as well. Similarly to the situation in Sierra Leone, for example, the high level of school fees has been one of the major factors in children’s signing up to fight during the civil conflict in Liberia (HRW, 2004). In a report by Human Rights Watch following the end of the most recent civil conflict in Liberia, a number of former child soldiers were interviewed who were a part of the early rehabilitation program offered in Liberia after the first civil war. What makes Liberia interesting is that two civil wars existed in a short time frame from one another. Thus, we are able to see what factors (if any) children said caused them to fight in the second civil war. In this case, children often complained that the lack of opportunities was a major reason for their fighting again (HRW, 2004). One of the boys interviewed explained his situation regarding the lack of ability to study after the first war ended by saying,

I went through the program in 1997 and received some assistance but it soon ran out. For a while, I did some small jobs . . . but there was

not much to do and I couldn't afford to go back to school. So two years ago, I decided to join the LURD. I figured it was better to fight and try to get something, than hang around town and doing nothing. (HRW, 2004)

Human Rights Watch (2004) explains regarding this child's situation that, although the child "returned to primary school and resumed second grade . . . the lack of money and his parents' own worsening financial situation caused him to leave school after less than one year." Human Rights Watch (2004) found repeatedly that children have a strong drive to attend school. However, the many different school fees imposed do not allow children in Liberia to be able to go to school (HRW, 2004).

Urban/Rural

A noted discrepancy regarding access to education can also be found when comparatively examining enrollment data from rural areas versus urban areas. For example, in a study on Niger, children in the rural areas were much less likely to be primary school (12%), in relation to girls living in Niamey (where 83% were enrolled in school) (World Bank, 1996b; in Herz and Sperling, 2004). Thus, children living in rural areas often do not have immediate access to schools in the vicinity. There are different reasons for this. In many cases, governments focus on the constituents much closer to their power base, and parents in urban areas have less influence, and because of this, there are fewer schools, and thus, parents at times have tried to set up their own schools, but have to pay themselves (Fredriksen, 2009).⁶ In addition, it may be harder to recruit educators to the urban areas compared to cities, not only due to location preferences but also because the pay is usually substantially lower in the rural areas. And because of this, the teachers who do come there may not be as qualified (Fredriksen, 2009).

The lack of schools, of course, makes the attainment of universal primary enrollment much more difficult in areas in which schools are not close enough for children to walk to (Fredriksen, 2009). But along with the lack of schools near many children in rural areas, families living in those areas also face other hardships, which might not be the case for families in cities. For example, when looking at opportunity costs, parents often rely on children to work at home, and thus, when they are in school, they lose this additional help. This is often

not the case in urban areas (Fredriksen, 2009). Therefore, they may keep their children at home on account of needing them, compared to sending them to school. Or in some cases, they may enroll only one of their children because of the cost/benefit they have calculated regarding what they believe is best for their family. Unfortunately, what ends up happening is that as children in urban areas miss class due to an inability to get to school or due to work that needs to be done at home, it can be harder for them to continue to have access to school or to excel in the classroom (Fredriksen, 2009).

Private Schools

However, as I alluded to above, many parents decided to send their children to private schools, partially because of the opportunities available to their children compared to what is offered in the free public schools. In the case of Kenya, one of the policy issues related to private schools is that, while they are viewed as solid alternatives (if not outright preferred schools) to the public schools in or near the community, they often charge entrance fees. Thus, parents at times may prefer a private school, despite the costs, because of the perceived quality compared to the public school, although this is not always the case. However, the presence of private schools also affects enrollment at the public schools. For example, with the introduction of free education, some parents have transferred their children to these schools. And in other cases, because of overcrowding and the poor quality of the free schools, there has been movement toward the private schools (UNESCO, 2009). Organizations such as UNICEF (2009) argue that one possibility could be “for the state to subsidize attendance (pay fees) at private schools where no public school is available but not to cover fees at schools voluntarily selected by families as alternatives to public schools” (43). While an interesting idea, we also have to consider the effects that this still could have on local educational conditions, particularly if parents had little choice but to “voluntarily” send their children there if the public schools were not up to their quality standards.

Lack of Schools

Another reason why children do not attend primary school has to do with the lack of schools—particularly government-sponsored schools—that are available in or near their communities. As the

United Nations Global Education First Initiative (2012) explains, “[t]he poorest countries need almost 4 million new classrooms by 2015, largely in rural and marginalized areas, to accommodate those who are not in school. More classrooms will alleviate overcrowding, cut class sizes and reduce the long travel distances. Children in rural areas sometimes walk two or three hours to attend school. Dilapidated classrooms also need refurbishing or upgrading to acceptable minimum standards of learning” (14).

Studies have found is that children and families who are living in slum communities often have little access to schools, whereas this is not the case in economically wealthier districts. And thus, the only way for children to have a chance at receiving schooling is for their families to send them to private schools in these communities. These families therefore often have to decide whether they are willing and able to pay for private education. But, of course, private schools are not free, thus placing an extra economic burden on families who send their children to such schools. As mentioned earlier, families that have trouble with finances often take their children out of school (Amendah et al., 2014). For example, in Nairobi, the “[e]ducation cost (schooling of children) is . . . consuming 13% of total household income and accounting for 10% of the total household expenditure.”

Quality and Effectiveness of Schools

Along with a lack of schools for millions of children, another problem that has hindered the state’s ability to successfully provide effective education that will help reach set objectives is the actual type of education that is being offered. Oftentimes, due to political and economic factors, as well as other issues related to poor education, as we shall discuss, children do not receive adequate schooling. For example, “[e]ven after 4 years of primary schooling, as many as 250 million children cannot read and write, worldwide” (United Nations, 2013). It is clearly not enough merely to offer schooling. What is being taught also matters, since there is at least some evidence to suggest that quality not only matters, of course, but that it may actually have a much greater effect on Global South states (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007). Historically, there has not been as much attention paid to quality as compared to focusing on how

many students are attending primary schools (Fredriksen, 2009). However, it is very difficult to argue that a primary education initiative is successful by merely counting how many kids are in school. We must see also high percentages of children proceeding to higher grades, and high percentages of children graduating to secondary and also tertiary schools.

But this discussion begs the question how do we define “quality” in regard to educational assessment? As we can imagine, there is no clear consensus on what we mean exactly when we use the term “quality” in measuring educational attainment. Some suggest that one of the more agreed-upon measurements is “cognitive skills,” whereas a greater debate centers around standardized testing as a measure for the quality of education being provided (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007: 6). However, we do know that there are issues with the educational system when, for example, “[a]t least one in three girls completing primary school in Africa and South Asia cannot effectively read, write, or do simple arithmetic” (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 3). Or, “[i]n Egypt, reading and writing scores on national exams are about half of mastery level” (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 3). Or, as is the case in Pakistan, passing rates for exams are at very low levels, since anything higher would result in low passing rates for many of the children (Fredriksen, 2002, in Herz & Sperling, 2004).

So not only are there issues related to measured outcomes when we speak about school quality, but often, there is also a relationship between quality and attainment (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007). For example, some studies have found that lower quality may in turn lead to an increase in school dropout percentages (Hanushek, Lavy, & Hitomi, 2006), whereas another study showed that more cognitive skills at an earlier schooling level (namely the primary level) are related to a decrease in children’s having to stay in the same grade for another year (Harbison & Hanushek, 1992, in Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007). Thus, however one does so, there need to be some ways to examine how students are learning, and to be able to alter approaches that are not working (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012), all the while continuing the ones that are efficient. Such monitoring should be tailored carefully to specific schools, and should be mindful of making too many drastic decisions, such as shutting down schools based on testing, instead of using testing as “a means to identify ways to help students improve

their learning” (United Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012: 19).

Teachers

Some could argue that a related factor to the quality of schools is the effectiveness of teachers in those schools. According to the United Nations (Global Education First Initiative, 2012), two million more teachers are needed to help reach the goal of universal education for children (18). There are many factors that limit the availability of qualified teachers for these schools. In many cases, due to the lack of supply, some individuals are teaching who may not have the necessary skill set. In addition, those who do have the skills in many cases are teaching in overcrowded schools or in other challenging work conditions (such as environments that lack much-needed resources). In addition, teachers may be less likely to work in these schools when they are not paid on time or are underpaid. For example, in studying Kenya, Ogola (2010) found that teachers’ work was clearly affected by the introduction of so many students per class. Teachers were sometimes late in grading all of the homework assignments on account of the increased student numbers in classes. Furthermore, teachers could not provide the necessary attention to students compared to when class sizes were smaller. In fact, one teacher was quoted as saying that in the new situation in which there are additional students, “close interaction with teachers is not possible because they are busy all the time as they have too much work” (Ogola, 2010: 45). This seemed to have a particular effect in subjects in which consistent responses are necessary in order “to gauge the pupils’ progress” (Ogola, 2010: 45). Ogola (2010) explains the new classroom dynamics that have evolved on account of class size when he says that

Due to increased workload, teachers had resorted to fewer assignments to avoid a huge marking load. Some teachers were asking pupils to exchange books and mark for each other in class. This, it was reported, affects a teacher’s ability to identify pupils’ weaknesses and assist them. Some teachers admitted that they had reduced the number of assignments they gave to pupils because they could not cope with the increased workload. Pupils also concurred that teachers had reduced the number of questions in assignments as well as

the number of assignments given to them. Pupils further said that teachers gave assignments but did not mark them. They also said that teachers took too long to mark their work (45).

The teachers are well aware that such conditions are not conducive for learning, nor are they ideal for their own professional well-being. Many of them complained about the pay and the very long hours, as well as the inability to complete all the necessary tasks that the position requires (Ogola, 2010). And while these cases are anecdotal and not necessarily the overall trend for all teachers throughout all cases in which free primary education has been implemented, they nevertheless do shed some light on the fact that teachers are overworked, and this does indeed have direct consequences for the effectiveness of the lessons that are taught.

However, such cases are not limited to Kenya. In 2011, Somaliland also implemented free child primary education (IRIN, 2011).⁷ And while numerous benefits have arisen from this program—having children now in school who had little access to school prior to the legislation that was put in force, has certainly been welcomed—there have been similar challenges to what we have seen in Kenya. For example, in Somaliland teacher-to-student ratios are said to be 1:70 (Omar, 2014), much higher than the 1:40 ratio, or even the 1:30 ratio that some call for (Omar, 2014). Such discrepancies between expected teacher-to-student ratios as compared to actual figures have also made it difficult for students to learn effectively. Teachers have also been grossly overworked, and thus, have not been able to provide the needed individualized attention to every student. And also similar to Kenya, there is a feeling of “demoralization” on behalf of teachers who are not paid adequate wages for their work. Furthermore, because of these combined conditions, some educators supplement this income with other employment in the private sector (Omar, 2014).

Moreover, it must also be noted that even when the teachers are qualified and paid according to their skill set, when there are limited resources, teachers may prioritize certain educational objectives over more preferred goals. For example, some teachers may provide more attention to students in the higher grades, leaving less time for children in primary school, which can in turn have negative long-term effects on children as they progress in their studies (United

Nations Global Education First Initiative, 2012). These current educational conditions are highly ineffective for developing fully rounded students, and oftentimes, the focus in these settings—given the conditions—tends to be schooling primarily for the sake of taking and passing exams. According to some, when a teacher is overworked and underpaid in this educational environment, “[o]ne of the worst [things] for our teacher is that instead of imparting knowledge and skills in students, they drill them to pass examinations and get recognitions; we end up not producing intellectuals but puppets . . .” (Somaliland Sun, 2014). As we see, “[o]ver-enrollment influences the quality of education. It triggers a chain reaction touching on teacher and facility adequacy, teaching method, sitting arrangement, working space, examination and assessment, sanitation, among other things” (Ogola, 2010: 20). Thus, the international community must be mindful of these issues when introducing the “big-bang” approach to free education (in which free schooling for all children is immediately opened up, leading a large increase in students) (UNICEF, 2009). Because when free schooling is offered, and there is little in terms of support for the influx of students, the level of education will not be sufficient. In fact, many problems will most likely arise. This was the case in Malawi, where, following the government’s introduction of free education for all children in 1994, we saw “The gross enrollment ratio increased that year from 89 to 133 percent. However, the enrollment surge was not accompanied by a commensurate rise in the number of classrooms, teachers, or materials. A study conducted in 2004 found average ratios of 119 pupils per classroom, 62 pupils per teacher (100 in first grade), 38 pupils per desk, and 24 pupils per book. As a result of the perceived decline in quality, enrollment ratios subsequently declined” (World Bank IEG, 2004; Bentaouet-Kattan, 2006, in UNICEF, 2009: 43). What happened was that, at least in some cases, the parents, who initially were excited about the free schooling, were disappointed with the new conditions given how crowded the classrooms were, as well as how few materials were available for learning. And because of this, they began taking their children out of the classes (UNICEF, 2009: 65). But Malawi was not the only case in which overcrowded classrooms as a result of new free primary education policies had an impact on learning. In 1997, Ugandan officials implemented a similar policy. Here, following the announcement of free primary

education, “Enrollment rose from about 3 million in the early 1990s to 5.3 million in 1997 and 7.3 million in 2002. In 2000 the average number of pupils per classroom was 106, and the average number of pupils per textbook was 7. Test results in 1999 showed significant declines in the proportion of students meeting minimum standards” (World Bank IEG, 2004; Bentaouet-Kattan, 2006, in UNICEF, 2009: 43).

International Actors

As mentioned earlier, the international community has put together a number of initiatives to help reach the goal of universal education for all children. And yet while these programs are indeed commendable, some argue that international actors could be doing much more to help ensure that these goals are reached. For example, we have discussed the policies of IOs such as the World Bank in an earlier chapter, and examined criticisms that scholars and NGOs have directed toward the policies of the World Bank. But along with these points, there are also issues with state actors and their level of response regarding free primary education. For example, in the late 1990s, as well as in 2005, a number of countries in the Group of Eight (G8) set up debt relief agreements, which in turn allowed the borrowers to focus their resources on domestic programs such as education. As a result, we saw an increase in domestic attention (and resources) toward education initiatives. Katie Malouf, of the organization Oxfam (2010), explains that we started to see great results in primary education enrollment in terms of overall enrollment, great reductions in the number of children not attending school, and a significant narrowing of gender discrepancies throughout many of the countries in the world. Unfortunately, the trend has not necessarily continued in a positive direction. For example, “[g]lobal aid commitments for basic education began to stagnate in 2005, well before the financial crisis. The most recent data show an alarming 22 per cent decline in commitments between 2006 and 2007” (Malouf, 2010: 5). Furthermore, we have seen other issues related to the aid. For example, many of the donations came from a few countries. Not all countries are as active as the development community would like to see. Moreover, it has been argued that the aid that has been provided “has not always gone where it is needed most” (Malouf, 2010: 5).

Lastly, it has been asserted that the yearly number needed for educational aid stands at 16 billion dollars. However, global aid has been a percentage of that price in the past years (Malouf, 2010). This has obviously hindered the ability to improve upon any shortcomings in domestic educational programs.

The global crisis in 2008 only made the situation worse (Malouf, 2010), as it damaged domestic economies, and national governments may have fewer resources to provide toward education. Moreover, international actors may be less likely to donate aid to international states. Furthermore, there is a concern that families, affected by the new economic realities, will be less able to send their children to school. Since many parents still have to pay fees in order for their children to attend school, having fewer resources to do so will be detrimental for the educational future of many children, and in particular, girls (ILO, 2009), since it is believed that parents are often more likely to take girls out of school than boys.

The Failure of State Action

When examining the lack of human rights for individuals, serious consideration must be given to the role of the individual state in activities related to domestic policy decisions that often have direct effects on its citizens, and, in this case, on the ability for all children within the state to attend school. When looking at human rights as a whole, it is often understood through documentation that governments speak highly about protecting children's rights, although "most fail to live up to their words" (Amnesty International Canada, 2008) (this, in fact, is not isolated only toward children's rights but to a host of other rights as well). Now the challenge in assessing factors that lead to children's not attending school is parsing out government inefficiencies and abuses such as corruption or political authoritarianism that might bleed into education policy, and genuine attempts at positive change, but with limited resources or programs that are not working as well as initially expected. The United Nations Global Education First Initiative, for example, stresses the importance of the state in providing and enhancing education programs. In fact, and rightly so, they seem to place the state at the center of universal education objectives. They go so far as to say that "[t]here is no substitute for national political leadership, policy and

resources. Governments must remove the barriers that keep disadvantaged children out of school or prevent them from learning well when in school” (26). They go on to state that “[a]ll nations should accelerate the rate of progress towards universal basic education and identify ways for the international community to support them. Countries should train, support, and keep their teachers motivated. They should also establish targets for reaching marginalized children and closing all equity gaps” (26).

Conflict

Along with the various issues mentioned, I wanted to discuss another reason why some children are unable to attend school. Children living in areas of conflict are often faced with additional challenges to schooling. One of these has to do with becoming child soldiers. The presence of child soldiers in both domestic and interstate conflict has been a major issue in the international community. Child soldiers are said to be involved in many of the world’s conflicts throughout the globe (Singer, 2005), and make up thousands of the total number of soldiers (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCH), 2009). In terms of figures, while the number of child soldiers is difficult to pinpoint, Achvarina and Reich (2006) suggest that the 300,000 number given by the UN in 2002 is “outdated and potentially underestimates the gravity of the problem” (128). In fact, some scholars suggest that the number of child soldiers is as high as 500,000 persons (Druba, 2002: 271). While academic and policy literatures have addressed a variety of factors that affect child soldier rates, little work has solely addressed the impact that free primary education has in not only preventing children from becoming soldiers but also in terms of rehabilitation efforts for former child soldiers.

Scholars have argued that children fight as soldiers for a number of reasons. Children are forced to serve as soldiers because they are often seen as easier to recruit. Thompson (1999) argues that children are often targeted for their heightened levels of energy (193). Children are also “easier to condition” (Breen, 2007: 73) and indoctrinate with a group’s ideology (Thompson, 1999). In addition, children are more likely to listen. Because they have not yet established a strong set of morals, they are less likely to question the orders given

(Thompson, 1999). In addition, former child soldiers have indicated that the use of drugs strongly impacted their actions during conflict (Beah, 2007). Other factors include their lack of familiarity with their surroundings, making them less likely to leave the fighting (Thompson, 1999). A final reason that children are taken as soldiers is because “they don’t demand pay” (Thompson, 1999: 193).

Brett and Specht (2004) argue that a number of other specific factors can serve as “triggers” for children to join in fighting. Within such factors, one main reason for an increase in child soldiers is the desire to avenge the death of a family member (Zack-Williams, 2001). Many children explained that they wanted to get back at those who killed their family, as well as those who ruined their community (Zack-Williams, 2001: 78). In addition, children also join the military because the fighting organization serves as a “new” family for the child, who may have lost her/his family due to conflict (Zack-Williams, 2001). This notion of finding a “family” to replace those killed by military forces is a common reason for children’s becoming soldiers. Children, who often lose family members, begin to take orders and ultimately become “dependent” on military leaders who take advantage of the children for their own benefit (Murphy, 2003). These “surrogate” families provide the children with not only a family structure but also “means of empowerment” by giving the children guns (Zack-Williams, 2001: 79). Thus, while children who enter the armed forces usually join because they are forced to join or because of their own choosing, the majority of children are not abducted, but rather “decide” for themselves to become soldiers (Singer, 2005). In fact, in a number of different regions throughout the world, over half to roughly two-thirds of the children become soldiers because of a personal reason that does not involve outside force (Singer, 2005).

Arguably the major factor affecting children’s serving as soldiers that is suggested in the literature is the impact of poverty. Children in areas in which civil or international conflict is occurring often feel they have little choice but to fight in order to have food. In such cases, children—who are often orphaned from the conflict—may decide that their best option for food, shelter, and survival is to fight (Singer, 2005). Singer (2005) explains the situation of boys in Afghanistan, where, because the boys dropped out of school at a young age, they had little choice but to join other soldiers if they wanted to survive. Not having any better options, they often resort

to fighting in a conflict. Furthermore, not only are children able to get food and clothing from fighting but also many times they are promised additional wealth and luxuries, which makes the recruiting process more enticing to them (Singer, 2005).

Even in cases in which children are not orphaned, they may often join rebel or government forces in order to have a way to provide food for their families (Brett & Specht, 2004). Zack-Williams (2001) explains that wealthier families often have the luxury of removing their children from areas of violence, something poorer families are unable to do. In fact, cases have been documented showing that parents received the small salary of their child. Other cases suggest that parents send their female children to be soldiers when they are not likely to marry (Singer, 2005: 63). Families often volunteer to send their children as soldiers because they know that they will be provided with food and shelter, something they themselves may have difficulty providing (Hick, 2001). What is more, the literature related to children's ("step/no) joining terror organizations suggests that they were often promised that their families would be given food and financial compensation if they were to die (Singer, 2005: 121). In fact, Achvarina, Nordas, Ostby, and Rustad (2008) empirically examined child soldier levels based upon local administrative level data in Africa between the years 1990 and 2004, and found that poorer areas are more likely to have higher levels of children who go to fight as soldiers.

Some have suggested that another factor contributing to the increase in the number of child soldiers is the ability to acquire small, hand-held weapons (Singer, 2005). We tend to see the importance of small arms in relation to civil conflicts, in which they are heavily used (De Berry, 2001: 93). Because of a number of factors—including but not limited to the end of the Cold War—we have seen a large increase in the number of weapons available. In terms of the sheer number of weapons, a weapon exists for "every twelve persons on the planet" (Singer, 2005: 47). This increased ability for children to obtain weapons (often inexpensively)—if they even have to pay for the cost of the weapon at all—has given them the ability to fight in wars just as effectively as adults. Singer (2005) argues that this was not the case many years ago, when children—who were often very small—would not have been as effective on the battlefield as adults. But with the introduction of personal weapons, children have

the ability to be equally useful as a soldier as an adult in terms of causing damage to the person whom they are fighting (Singer, 2005: 46). Hick (2001) explains that some specific weapons such as “the Soviet-made AK-47 or the American M-16 are light and simple to use” (114). In addition to the ease of use of these weapons, reports suggest that weapons such as the AK-47 can be bought for as little as six dollars (Hick, 2001: 114; Thompson, 1999: 191), thus allowing many children to have access to them. Overall, this “effectiveness” stems not only from a person’s ability to use weapons regardless of size and personal strength but also from the increased levels of casualties possible with more modern weapons, the ease of use, and the quickness with which rounds can be fired, along with other features. Singer (2005) goes on to explain that just a very few children have the means “to kill or wound hundreds of people in a matter of minutes [,]” thus increasing their need as soldiers (47). And while weapons themselves are not a reason for people to fight, they are seen as “enablers” for those looking to enter into conflict (Singer, 2005: 48).

But while many studies point to small arms as impacting child soldier levels (Hick, 2001; Singer, 2005), later work by Achvarina and Reich (2006) challenges Singer’s argument by suggesting that arms are not a major factor for four main reasons. First, the authors argue that criminal violence, seen as one piece of the overall factors related to child soldiers, according to Singer (2005), is actually an outcome of the increase in technology and the increase in arms, and not a separate factor. Second, they argue that it may not always be correct to assume that children can handle weapons as easily and effectively as adults. A great deal of evidence shows that children have often have issues with managing particular guns. Third, they question Singer’s position that child soldiers both have a large impact and are used in minor conflict roles. They explain that often child soldiers are “sent into battle unarmed as a diversionary tactic” (137), and are thus used differently than other soldiers in battle. In fact, children are often employed to carry out nonfighting assignments. Some of these nonfighting orders that are often given to children by superiors are “scouting, spying, training, drill and other preparations; acting as decoys, couriers, guards, porters, sexual slaves; as well as carrying out various domestic tasks and forced labour” (Alferdson, 2002). Fourth, they argue that quantitatively measuring the impact of small

arms on child soldier levels is complex because of the various avenues of acquiring arms that are not captured by data.

In one of the few quantitative works on factors related to child soldier ratios, Achvarina and Reich (2006) examine and test various arguments set forth in the qualitative literature regarding the increase in child soldier ratios. They empirically examine child soldier ratios in 19 African civil conflicts from 1972 to 2002. Testing the main arguments in the literature by operationalizing poverty rates and orphan rates, as well as their main variable, namely the level of protection of refugee camps, to explain child soldier ratios, they find that the level of protection of refugee camps has a strong impact on child soldier ratios. Specifically, the less secure refugee camps are, the greater the likelihood of children's being taken from the camps to serve as child soldiers. The reason for this stems from the lack of protection of the camp premises, as well as the weak state children are in at refugee camps, often unable to physically protect themselves from outside forces looking to bring new recruits to the battlefield. Because children make up the majority of the overall refugee camp population, they argue that soldiers have a much easier time going after children in refugee camps than from other communities (140).

But while this is the case, they admit that their work needs further support since few cases were used to test their argument. In addition to quantitative analysis, they also illustrate the effects of weakly protected refugee and internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Liberia, where refugees and IDPs were often left vulnerable to outside intrusion from rebel forces. This risk intensified when IDPs and IDP children, having to move from different locations, would become much more at risk of being taken to fight as soldiers by both the government and rebel groups (Achvarina & Reich, 2006: 161).

Education and Child Soldiers

Along with arguments asserting that poverty, the availability of small arms, and the loose protection of refugee camps all have a significant impact on children's becoming child soldiers, what must also be addressed is the role of education and the impact that not having access to school has on children's leaving their cities, towns, and villages to become soldiers. Because very little quantitative evidence to

empirically test the role of education and child soldier ratios exists—often due to a lack of data—scholars and activists have through interviews found that children without access to education are more often willing to go fight as child soldiers. While child education is seen as a fundamental human rights protection in international law—being addressed both in the UDHR and the CRC, Faulkner (2001) argues that, when we consider the various factors that lead to an increase in child soldiers, one of the main “defining commonalities that occur repeatedly according to particular circumstances . . . include . . . children with little or no education” (495–496). Often governments do not guarantee free education, or do not effectively monitor local administrators to ensure that fees are not being implemented. Furthermore, fees may also be put in place to help increase the pay of teachers, which is often low or delayed (Clemesac, 2007). And because of the fees, a major issue is that children without access to schooling join fighting because they “lack . . . anything better to do” (Faulkner, 2001: 497). The lack of availability of education therefore may have detrimental consequences for children in a particular society. Because children (and parents of children) are unable to afford school, and because children are often in situations in which their family members were murdered, this further pushes children to become soldiers. Different NGOs have found similar stories related to education and child soldiers. The organization Child Soldiers Reintegration Fund (2008) found that one of the major reasons why children leave their homes to fight is because as the fighting engulfs their society, often “leaving children without access to school,” they decide that fighting will give them the strongest possibility for living. For example, one Pakistani child interviewed explains his decision to join in fighting by saying that he did not have opportunities and free education:

So, in an area where economic opportunities are scarce, education is not free, where no law can be extended, [and] the border area has been at war for at least 24 years: could one expect some positive changes other than fighting . . . ? (Reflection of a Pakistani interviewer, Brett & Specht, 2004: 126)

Children in such situations feel that the best chance for improving their life is to fight (Faulkner, 2001). In an interview of a 14-year-old boy conducted by Child-Soldiers.org (2007), one of the specific

reasons for the boy's joining others to fight was his family's financial poverty, and yet his main desire was to study in school. Brett and Specht (2004) explain that “[y]oung people who are excluded from education—whether because of poverty, closure of schools, or bad behavior—have to find something else to do. Those without adequate and appropriate schooling are limited in their employment choices” (126). They add that children look at the military, see that it does not require an education, and decide that fighting is the best career option for them at the time (Brett & Specht, 2004: 126), even though many former fighters have admitted that this decision was “one of [their] greatest regrets . . .” (Clemesac, 2007: 9).

Specht and Attree (2006) explain that, in fact, because of the lack of employment, along with no access to schooling, children “are vulnerable to, and often volunteer for, recruitment” (220). In interviews conducted by the Quaker United Nations Office with former girl child soldiers from the Philippines, they found that income and the cost of education were significant factors in girls’ not attending school. The Quaker United Nations report stated that

The educational process presented them with several problems that prevented their continuation in school. Some villages did not have schools or only a few grades. In some cases the girls’ families did not have enough money to pay their tuition or purchase the necessary school supplies and clothing to attend school. In other situations if the family bought supplies and clothing they did not have enough money for lunch or for the girl to take food from home. Sometimes there was not a village school and the girl had to walk long distances because there was not money for transportation even when transport was available. (Keairns, 2002: 4–5)

Such stories of children leaving because they are unable to afford school costs are common in interviews conducted with former child soldiers. For example, Special Representative Radhika Coomaraswamy of the Security-General for Children and Armed Conflict related in an interview a story about a young girl who had to drop out of school because it caused a financial burden for the family, saying,

In North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I met with a 12-year-old girl who had joined the Mai Mai militia because her parents could not pay for school. (UNESCO, 2009)

In an interview with a child soldier from Colombia, Brett and Specht (2004) find that poverty and education combined were one of the combined factors for a child becoming a soldier. In the interview, the child explained,

My family is very poor, you see, actually, because, they haven't—sometimes she [mother] doesn't have enough money to pay for schooling, going shopping, paying the rent. (14)

Former child soldiers in Burma have told similar stories. Human Rights Watch (2003) explains that

[m]any former child soldiers...reported that they had left school before being recruited into the army because they could not afford the school fees. Fees for each student ranged from 15,000 to 20,000 kyat per year, an amount that represents anywhere from two to six months' income for an average person. One child reported leaving school at age six and going to sell ice cream because "my parents couldn't pay for me to go to school." Another child reported that he worked in the early mornings and evening after school to meet the 20,000 kyat fee for school, but then was forced to drop out at age nine, in order to care for his parents. (2)

And even when families could send a child to school, they often did not have the means to send more than one of their children (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

Other cases further highlight that children may work while in school in order to pay for tuition, thus making it more difficult to focus their complete attention on school (Brett & Specht, 2004: 96). Some children either work multiple jobs (War Child International, 2007) or aim to work at night so that they can go to school during the day (Verhey, 2001: 19). Unfortunately, many were unable to attend school or to continue going for long periods of time (War Child International, 2007) because they needed to work (Verhey, 2001; International Institute for Educational Planning, 2006). Thus, while many of these former child soldiers wanted to leave fighting to return to school, a concern existed that they would not have the finances available to cover all the costs of living while they were taking classes (International Institute of Educational Planning, 2006: 3). Even in the case in which access to free education specifically did

not impact the decisions of girls to join fighting, for example, the reason they fought was because “for many of them, lack of access to education is the norm rather than the exception” (Brett & Specht, 2004: 96). For example, in the case of girl soldiers in the Philippines, many of them did not have the option to attend school because they were required to stay home and care for grandparents or for younger siblings (Keairns, 2002: 5).

Children who are not educated are also often the easiest targets for terrorist organizations that attempt to teach children their own particular political and religious ideology (Singer, 2005). A common example are terrorist groups operating under the banner of Islam that use the Islamic concept of jihad, and the particular political implications that arise from it to convince children that committing an act of suicide bombing is legitimized by the faith. This concept of jihad, in Islamic theology, first and foremost means an “inner struggle” that the individual faces on a personal level, often dealing with issues of morality. Only secondly does the concept refer to an outward physical struggle. And even in this case, Islam prohibits an individual from taking her/his own life, but rather only justifies fighting for self-defense. Nevertheless, children who do not receive the proper education on the correct interpretation of jihad are often influenced and convinced by particular clerics who argue that giving one’s life as a suicide bomber is a great deed in Islam. And while the majority of Muslims completely disagree with such an interpretation, Singer (2005) explains that “such beliefs often go unchallenged and popular support for the practice is especially high among Muslim populations that see no other options available to them” (126–127). In fact, education not only provides children with skills applicable to future economic opportunities but “also has the potential to bring about changes in values and attitudes. The scope of possibility that schools offer may be cherished in societies that are open to outside influences. . . . Schools that offer a modern education . . . may be seen as liberating or dangerous, depending on the point of view” (15). Furthermore, many have found from interviews of military officials who have recruited children that they admit that children who have attended school “are more difficult to recruit and are generally more questioning of authority” (Human Rights Watch, 2004). However, for children who do not have such concrete community safeguards, they often feel that they have no

choice but to serve as a soldier. Without solid educational structures to guard children from becoming soldiers, and without the opportunity for work, children often resort to leaving their communities to join rebel or government military groups (Alferdson, 2002). In the case of Liberia, kids admitted that children without the ability to go to school would use their time fighting, often because they possessed little ability to advance themselves in their current situation (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

For this reason, many scholars call for states to adhere to a child's right to have free primary education. By guaranteeing free primary education (which includes tuition as well as not charging any sorts of fees, such as books or uniform fees), parents of children will be much more able to afford school, which in turn can be a strong preventive measure for keeping children in the classroom and away from fighting on behalf of military forces. When education is not provided by the state, we often see children going to religious schools (such as in Pakistan and Bangladesh) where tuition is free. In fact, such schools are often completely funded, and thus highly attractive to children and their families. In fact, Ahmad (2004) explains that the main reasons why parents send their children to various madrassa schools are "because, first, in most cases modern schools do not exist at an accessible distance, and second, the schools are either too expensive or too crowded" (108). And while most madrassas or Islamic religious schools are not breeding grounds for terrorism, many of the schools are funded privately, and thus are able to preach their particular interpretation of religion without government influence in the curriculum (Ahmad, 2004).⁸ Nevertheless, it is evident that in fact some madrassas, even if they represent only a small minority, in fact "do function as 'camouflage' for underground armed groups in the country—" (Ellis, 2007: 4). Thus, some observers, such as Irine Bokova, UNESCO head in Paris, argue that education can help children move away from extremism (Coughlan, 2013).

Free Child Education and Postconflict Rehabilitation

In addition to children's often joining conflicts due to a lack of access to primary education, free education programs also have been highly successful in postconflict rehabilitation and reintegration programs

for former child soldiers. Insuring free primary education, both in terms of establishing state policies on free tuition as well as ensuring families do not have to pay indirect fees such as uniforms and books is essential in helping children remain in school. Betancourt et al. (2008) argue that former child soldiers significantly benefit from education. For example, citing Fauth and Daniels (2001), they explain that education helps improve the “conflict management skills” of the former soldiers (568). Betancourt et al. (2008) cite a number of studies that have found that education also helps children adjust to entering back into their community (Sommers, 2003; Betancourt, 2005) and also in dealing “with trauma and stress” (Hundt et al., 2004: 570). In Sierra Leone, education is also important to former child soldiers because they see school as key to getting a job (Williamson, 2005: 18). Another benefit of education is the actual physical protection that schools offer. The Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (2006) explains that students who go to school are “less likely to be approached by a recruiter during the day if s/he is in school.” In terms of the overall value of education, in interviews conducted by Betancourt et al. (2008), “[s]eventy-five percent of the caregivers interviewed said that if they were designing a reintegration program for former child soldiers, they would make education a focal point” (575). The American Institutes for Research sum up the positive effects of education for former child soldiers by saying that

[e]ducation and the associated learning process give children an alternative lifestyle. It provides a daily routine that prevents them from slipping back into being a child soldier or other socially harmful activity. It also enables them to discover their own strengths—redefining themselves and their social relationships. This is a critical contribution toward the reintegration process. (5–6)

Thus, while education is found to be a key factor in helping former child soldiers rehabilitate and reintegrate, and while most have a great desire to return to school (Cahn, 2006; Verhey, 2001), many of these former soldiers who have stopped fighting and returned to their respective communities are unable to attend school because they are unable to afford the direct school fees (Cahn, 2006; Corbin, 2008; Duthie, 2005; McKay, S., 2004), to pay for the indirect costs

of books and supplies, (Verhey, 2001) or to pay the bribes for teachers that are often necessary in order to enter school (Miller-Grandvaux, 2009) (which also causes potential problems for children, especially girls, who “may face pressure from teachers or cope with the pressure to pay secondary school fees by exchanging sex for money”) (Williamson, 2005: 19). In interviews with former child soldiers in Sierra Leone, Betancourt et al. (2008) found that over half (55%) of those interviewed said that school fees were a factor in their not going back to school. And while the government of Sierra Leone has officially implemented a free child education policy and thus done away with any national fees for education, local fees have continued, thereby preventing children from going back to school. Such fees often “include costs for uniforms, exercise books, and other supplies . . .” (Williamson, 2005: 5).

Moreover, because of the important role that free education plays in the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers, effective reintegration programs for them have aimed at ensuring that the children are given tuition and supplies to be able to attend school. Programs such as The Community Education Investment Program in Sierra Leone specifically provided children with “A uniform and a book bag, which were seen as necessary to place them on equal footing with other students” (Williamson, 2006: 197). Other programs in that country gave different amounts of school aid depending on when a child “demobilized” (Peters, 2007: 41). Unfortunately, funding programs for improving education are not enough to successfully help all children attend school or other employment training (Williamson, 2005). While organizations such as UNICEF “offered school fee waivers, uniforms, books, and supplies” (Betancourt et al., 2008: 569, in Alexander, 2006), because the aid from NGOs is often not sufficient to cover all fees (Betancourt et al., 2008), children still must pay some fees, which keeps them from being able to continue going to school (577). Regarding the impact and challenges of these fees, Betancourt et al. (2008) explain that

[t]his aid likely kept many of the former child soldiers . . . in school. However, respondents . . . reported that NGO aid was sometimes ineffectively dispersed, becoming a source of stress for children, who were sent home by teachers when their fees were not paid on time. (569)

In Uchendu's (2007) study of former child soldiers in Nigeria, he finds that, while they wanted to attend school after returning from fighting, they were often unable to afford do so. Many former child soldiers had a hard time attending and staying in school. Uchendu (2007) explains that "[s]ome could not continue disrupted education because of abject poverty. . . . [Others] . . . had to 'fend for themselves and their families as most bread winners were dead'" (414). Furthermore, one boy who was interviewed explained that

the schools, when they resumed, were populated mostly by girls, since the boys had to stay out and earn money. (414)

In addition, in certain cases the stipends caused jealousy among community members, who were upset because only families of former child soldiers who went through the reintegration program were given aid. In Boothby, Crawford, and Halperin's (2006) work, which is related to the reintegration of former child soldiers in Mozambique, he explains the challenges that arose with the stipends by saying

Education stipends (for fees, books, and clothes) were offered to the families of the Lhanguene boys specifically for the former child soldiers. The stipends were not deemed to be as helpful as we expected. They tended to cause tensions in several families because they singled out the Lhanguene children for support over the family's other children. (99)

The CSUCH, in a report on the reintegration of former child soldiers in Eastern Uganda (2008), explains that sometimes these children "who had their school fees paid by one particular reception centre resulted in some facing continuous taunting and bullying" (16). The Redress Trust Organization, citing Castelli, Locatelli, and Canavera (2005), find that the feelings of individuals within the community have also suffered, but that these individuals were not given similar aid compared to the former child soldiers. The Redress Trust Organization, citing arguments by Castelli, Locatelli, and Canavera related to the animosity others in the community feel toward child soldiers who are given free schooling, thus suggest that

Particular groups of children should not be singled out for interventions. . . . Such singling out can contribute to the stigmatization of

those children and create jealousy among other vulnerable community who are not receiving assistance. The child who has lost both parents in war might rightly wonder, “Why has the former child soldier received school fees when I haven’t?” ([33], in Castelli et al., 2005)

Shepler (2005) also found that community members were not only worried about having former child soldiers in their neighborhoods but “[t]hey are also annoyed that the ‘rebel children’ are provided with international aid that supplies them with food and school fees when many of the community members are struggling to get by without such help . . .” (201).

Lastly, providing education for former child soldiers also can be crucial in helping these children feel as if they are members of the community again. For example, Williamson (2006) explains the importance of school for former child soldiers and their involvement in their community by saying that

Both school and skills training were seen as important by former child soldiers participants, in part because they were seen as enhancing their future employment prospects, but equally important was their visible participation in structured learning helped alter the way they were regarded by community members. Studying to prepare for the future enhanced their acceptance because community members could see that they made a transition from being a child soldier and were working actively toward becoming a productive member of the community. Participation in education or training appeared to be an important aspect of the process of identity transformation begun during disarmament and demobilization. (198)

Schooling thus allows children to “feel a sense of self worth” as they reintegrate into society (Betancourt et al., 2008: 570). Other related ways of helping former child soldiers better integrate into their communities include paying for all children in the community to go to school for free. Such a program was highly effective in Liberia, where by paying for the fees of all the children in the community—and not just the former child soldiers—rehabilitation and reintegration programs were able effectively to decrease the stigmatization associated with being a child soldier in Liberian communities (Galvanek, 2009: 23). This is important because, as mentioned, evidence suggests that

other members of the community may be upset that certain children are going to school for free.

Thus, free child primary education reduces the opportunity for children to become child soldiers. When children are in school, and are able to afford school, this helps reduce the opportunities for a child to fight as a soldier. In addition, free education is an effective tool to help former child soldiers reintegrate into society. Access to school will help those who may have returned to fighting if such resources were not available. Williamson (2005) argues for the overall significance of education by saying that “The success of child soldiers often depends on their ability to have “access to education, skills training, and employment . . .” (vii). Kristin Barstad (2009) of the International Committee of the Red Cross explains the multifaceted impact of a lack of access to education related to child soldiers by saying that

Access to education may play a role. The “education factor” has many elements to it. The lack of access to education leads many young people to see military training as their only opportunity to learn. If you have no job and no school to go to, the military option may appear quite attractive. The quality of the education the child was receiving in the civilian context also plays a role. If a child is in a school where education is of poor quality and teachers fail to respect the rights and dignity of children, they may leave out of frustration. Additionally, schools may become recruiting grounds: brainwashing of students by influential groups is something we have seen all too often. In extreme cases, armed groups or even armed forces may recruit children forcibly, directly from schools. (143)

Therefore, the international community must pay significant attention to establishing and promoting free education. This should not only continue to be a part of the rehabilitation and reintegration process but should also be advocated prior to a child’s becoming a soldier. This involves focusing on making education free not only in conflict areas but in current nonconflict areas as well. With the guarantee of free child primary education, families of children will be able to send their children to school, which will not only help prevent children from becoming child soldiers but will also aid in keeping former child soldiers in the reintegration process.

In conclusion, when looking at the history of the human rights corpus, we find that the various treaties and conventions for human

rights are primary targeted toward states. One of the most consistent excuses that states offer when a policy (and in this case an education policy) is not as effective as some wished, is that the inability to make the necessary improvements is due to a lack of funds. It is therefore important to examine just how committed states are in their efforts to provide the right to an education, as well as other socio, economic, and cultural rights, since states often argue that they would like to provide such rights, but that they are unable to do so without resources. What is beneficial in the case of education is the level of international commitment to such objectives such as universal education. The UN, as well as other IOs and NGOs, has stepped up to provide large sums of money to help states in their educational initiatives. In addition, other private funding has also been contributed (Craig, 1990).

This chapter shows the various reasons why children are not attending school. Factors such as living in poverty, living in rural areas, and working have all led to difficulties related to either attending or staying in school. And as we saw, one of the other primary factors is the difficulty in paying school fees. Yet, when a state guarantees free education, parents are much more likely to send their children to study. This finding supplements qualitative studies that have argued for the positive effects of state-funded primary education on the ability for children (and especially females) to attend primary education. Furthermore, it supports arguments in the literature that suggest that the major roadblock for education is that fees that are often either implemented by the government or allowed by the government to exist (Tomasevski, 2006). This is a very strong finding for advocates who believe that states that guarantee universal education, and ensure that no fees are in place, are much more likely to have families enroll their children in school and keep them in school. Tomasevski (2006) explains that many approaches to guaranteeing child education do not have strict enforceable requirements that are placed on governments to ensure free primary education. But from this finding, it is evident that what will work to significantly increase child education enrollment rates is to literally invest in the education of children by eliminating the financial burdens on families related to education costs, whether it is the abolishment of direct or of indirect school fees. This study has also found that school fees, along with the GDP of a country, are the main factors related to

discrepancies in countries' primary school enrollment rates. Thus, this chapter offers further evidence that school fees are a major issue for children's attending school, and that the elimination of school fees will lead to a significant increase in primary education rates, which, as many scholars have suggested, will in one way or another have a positive impact on growth and development in the respective societies. These findings should suggest that policymakers in countries that require school fees should re-examine their policies that in some way or another allow fees to exist.

As discussed earlier in the book, one of the fundamental rights within the human rights corpus is the notion of free education, and that the state must bear the responsibility of providing this education (Tomasevski, 2006). Therefore, this chapter argues that a child's right to education therefore entails the responsibility of the state in ensuring that children are able to attend school for free, and that parents are not directly or indirectly forced to pay school fees (Tomasevski, 2006). As we have discussed, several states have ratified treaties such as the CRC in order to protect the rights of children, which include education (Arat, 2002). But while human rights documents such as the UDHR and the CRC state that education is supposed to be a right, the reality of the situation is that "Access to education [is] dependent on the ability to pay" (Tomasevski, 2006: 4). Thus, while many have suggested a more fixing school cost system in order to enroll more children in school (Canagarajah & Nielson, 1999), the human rights movement leaves no room for such an option, instead calling for complete free education for all children. Therefore, this chapter, along with the work of others (Tomasevski, 2006), argues that the goal should be to guarantee free primary education, and not to impose any fees whatsoever on primary school education, thus ensuring freedom from both direct fees for attending as well as freedom from various indirect fees that parents are often must pay if they want their children to continue in school. Further pressure should be placed on governments to adhere to international covenants that demand that children be able to have a primary education, even though it is expected that they will make the argument that they are doing what they can or that they do not have additional resources for this task. This pressure should come from other international states that have adhered to free education, along with domestic and international NGOs, which should

emphasize education by demanding that governments take responsibility for providing free education, as well as lobby other states to place pressure on the host government, a method found effective in other human rights causes (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

Through the elimination of school fees, both direct and indirect, it is expected that a large increase in primary education enrollment rates will take place. While analysts and policymakers discuss different methods for increasing primary education, including but not limited to advocating international aid for education, one of the best ways to increase child education rates is to work domestically to completely abolish school fees. While large efforts have been made to attempt to increase child education through the use of aid, the main focus of these efforts should be to ensure free education (Tomasevski, 2006). Once an international norm is set that guarantees free education for families and their children, we should see a significant increase in the enrollment of children in schools across the board. Along with this study, further quantitative research should expand this study to include multiple years, while researching and coding the presence of and change in school fees per country, specifically examining what impact they have on primary school enrollment rates. With a dedicated focus on free education, we can truly witness a significant increase in child primary education enrollment rates.

Another major conclusion of this chapter concerns the impact of free education not only in general but also specifically as it relates to female education enrollment rates. In examining female enrollment rates, we can see that the argument that free education will impact the lives of all children is supported. Female primary school enrollment increases significantly with the introduction of free primary education. Therefore, while states do need to have the ability to ensure free education (schools, adequate pay for teachers, etc. . . .), free education policy should still be advocated, since it will improve enrollment rates for both boys and girls in society. However, while we find that girls also benefit from free education policy, we also find that female enrollment does in fact decrease in Muslim societies. This finding, in line with literatures on Islamic societies and in particular women's rights suggests that possible religious or cultural practices (or interpretations) prevent females from specifically attending school. This finding is not present for

all children, and thus Islamic societies seem to be open to sending boys to school, but less so girls. This could be a particular religious interpretation, but because the Quran makes no mention of limiting education, a more plausible explanation is that particular perceptions related to gender roles that may be present in Muslim societies.

CHAPTER 5

State Challenges to Ensuring Free Primary Schooling: Case Studies

While scholars have argued for the importance of primary education for children and for societies as a whole, the problem we find is that a large number of children are not attending primary schooling. We know that there are several reasons for this. First, as mentioned in the previous chapter, children serving as child soldiers often do so at the expense of attending school, or often because of a lack of ability to attend school. Second, we also find that parents have to have their children work for additional family income (Jenson & Nielson, 1997) since the extra wages makes a big difference in overall family income, and thus is highly valued by families (Psacharopoulos, 1997; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). A third, yet related hurdle challenging the goals of returns on primary education is not so much just getting children through the schooling program, but rather finding ways to use the skills/knowledge they learn before they are forgotten, such as ensuring students move on to secondary education or aiming for students to use the knowledge they learned in the classroom in their daily lives (Jones, 1997a). A fourth factor is the cost of school itself. Yet, there are other concerns as well. For some, some see education initiatives in the historical context of Western imperialism. Namely, some observers have expressed concern that Western states, by funding education, are seen by the developing world as attempting to press toward their own understanding of education and culture, and thus are viewed as aiming for “cultural domination” at the expense of other cultures. Yet another

issue that Tilak (1988) (citing Weiler, 1984) points out is that educational programs are very difficult to monitor effectively, along with the fact that “education projects sponsored by aid tend to be particularly difficult to administer, implement, complete, and assess” (315). Moreover, further challenges with education programs include the difficulty in finding effective techniques for education growth given its relatively new introduction in the field of development. We do not see as effective programs in the field of development to support child education as we do for other areas of development. For example, organizations such as the World Bank were not established to produce educational loans, and thus have only been advocating such policy work since the early 1960s (Tilak, 1988). Thus the new emphasis on education should also make one aware that education cannot be treated by itself, as education policy is often tied to other issues and thus cannot be separated from other development programs (Tilak, 1988).

Countries in many parts of the developing world have tried to address primary child education policies with the goal of increasing school attendance rates. We have seen an attempt not only to increase the number of children attending school but also the quality of education that is being given (Psacharopoulos, 1989), often as a response to a lack of quality education. In many developing countries in Africa, for example, states have addressed the quality of primary education by focusing on “teacher training, the construction of schools and the student-teacher ratio” (Psacharopoulos, 1989: 182). But while such goals have been in place, little progress has been made, partly because in increasing the quality of education, maintaining an adequate number of teachers has been very difficult (Psacharopoulos, 1989: 183). Furthermore, Psacharopoulos (1989) argues that some of the main factors resulting in a lack of success in education policies in Africa are due to a lack of implementation of the policy, often seen as “lip service” statements such as the guarantee of free education. Another setback is due to partial implementation in which decision makers did not understand the level of costs to implement such a policy, as programs for effectively funding education were more costly than first anticipated. Lastly, Psacharopoulos (1989) argues that while states implemented new policies, such policies were seen as much more ineffective than expected.

This chapter will consider four cases of states attempting to implement universal primary education. By looking at the cases of Uganda, Kenya, Lesotho, and Namibia, we can see what happens when a state provides free schooling. As we shall observe, there are many benefits to this practice. Millions of children, who before had little chance of being in school, can now do so. However, there are some additional challenges that have arisen with these programs, namely when all necessary supports have not been put into place.

Uganda

Uganda has had free education for almost 20 years, as the government moved toward this initiative in 1996. The government, under then-President Museveni, enacted this policy after the country experienced low school enrollment rates, coupled with high costs of schooling for which families were paying. Thus, the new policy “remove[d] fees for up to four children per family (of which two should be girls)” (World Bank, 2002). However, the government then allowed anyone who wanted to go to school to attend, without restrictions on the number of individuals per family (partly because of the challenges of defining a “family” when limiting the free schooling to four children) (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006). This new educational policy won favor among many, since it not only relieved them of a high financial burden but also showed the leaderships’ commitment to schooling (World Bank, 2002). The Inter-Regional Inequality Facility (2006) summarized the goals of the program, which are to

- establish, provide and maintain quality education as the basis for promoting human resource development;
- provide the facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is complete;
- make basic education accessible to the learner and relevant to his or her needs, as well as meeting national goals;
- make education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- ensure that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans;
- meet the objective of poverty eradication by equipping every individual with basic skills and knowledge.

The government eliminated all fees as well as charges from the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) that were historically levied on families to help offset subpar teacher pay. They intended to pay for this by increasing the percentage of the national budget toward education, which they did. We saw that “[f]inancing of the education sector as a whole increased from 13.7% in 1990 to 24.7% in 1998. Uganda’s Education Sector Investment Plan also makes it mandatory that not less than 65% of the education budget must fund primary education” (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 2). The Minister of Education and Sports is responsible for overseeing the funding of the initiative. The Inter-Regional Inequality Facility (2006) explains how the universal primary education policy was funded, saying,

In terms of expenditure, the MoES provides two types of grants for UPE, namely capitation (fees) grants and school facilities grants. Capitation grants are paid on the basis of the number of students enrolled in a school and the level of education. The monthly grant per child was fixed at about US\$5 per pupil for classes P1–P3, and US\$8 per pupil for classes P4–P7, payable for a fixed period of 9 months per year. The MoES also provides guidelines for the spending of capitation grants in primary schools, which are as follows: 50% on instructional materials; 30% on co-curricular activities (sports, clubs, etc. . . .); 15% on school management (school maintenance, payment for utilities such as water and electricity); and 5% on school administration. (2)¹

In the years following the announcement that the government would be paying for primary education, it was said that over 2.3 million additional children were enrolling in school (1.1 million girls; 1.2 million boys). This total figure “was more than double the 1996 level” (World Bank, 2002: 2) (the enrollment in 1996 was at 3.1 million students) (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006). And in 2003, the total number of children in primary school was at 7.6 million. Furthermore, due to many older children coming back to primary school, overall gross primary enrollment was at 127 percent (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 2).

There were indeed a number of positive outcomes that resulted from this new education policy. To begin, the free education gave access to children from all economic backgrounds. As the World

Bank (2002) explains, “Uganda was...largely successful in narrowing primary enrollment gaps rates between rich and poor and between boys and girls. The wealth bias that had characterized access to primary education prior to the UPE was all but eliminated by 1999” (2). But along with minimizing this bias, the program also decreased the gender gap that existed in primary school enrollment, as the number of “girls in primary school was slightly over 49% of the total, compared to 45% in 1993” (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 3). Furthermore, it was evident that the reason children were not attending school was indeed financial. And thus, by committing itself to universal schooling, the government was able to change the fortunes of millions.

Furthermore, the announcement of this program arguably could not have been done without the will of political officials in different state departments; there was indeed “[s]trong political commitment” from many top officials (World Bank, 2002: 2). However, it was not only government leaders who were active in promoting this program but also NGOs, local leaders, and community groups, as well as other members of Ugandan civil society were included in the initiative. Uganda actually has a rather decentralized system in which there are local “School Management Committees” that include administrators and educators, as well as parents. Along with the school management committees (SMCs), the PTAs have also played a great role in helping the daily operations of the schools (de Grauwe & Lugaz, 2011: 24–25, in Vermeulen, 2013: 60).² In addition, the government and other groups in Uganda worked with outside actors in order to receive funding for part of this project, for which over 400 million dollars were granted to Uganda in those early years. Lastly, the government was able to improve upon the oversight of the new program (World Bank, 2002). Uganda also received debt relief because of specific economic policies “that were implemented in collaboration with the World Bank and the IMF” (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 4), something that, as mentioned earlier, has not gone without criticism.

But despite these successes, the program was not without some of the problems that we have discussed earlier in this book. For example, some of the drawbacks to “big-bang” approaches to free schooling are the economic and logistical challenges that immediately arise. Now this is not to suggest it is the innate flaw in the policy, but rather,

often miscalculations by officials implementing such programs. What we saw in Uganda is similar to the other cases we shall examine in that almost immediately after the implementation of the free schooling program, the large spike in student enrollment put a strain on financial resources, as well as on teachers and school administrators. Despite the government's building additional schools, teachers were clearly overburdened, leading to a much less than ideal learning environment given the high number of students in a classroom. For example, after the universal education program was put in place, "[p]upil-teacher ratios rose from 40, pre-UPE, to 60 in 1999, while pupil-classroom ratios jumped from 85–145 over the same period" (World Bank, 2002). This improved somewhat, going from roughly "65:1 in 2000 to 54:1 in 2003," as did the number of students in the classroom, which went from roughly "110 pupils per classroom in 2000 to 94 pupils per classroom in 2003" (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 3). However, again, these numbers are much higher than the recommended figures for student-to-teacher ratios as well as the ideal class size.

Yet another issue concerning Uganda's program was that it became evident that the schooling was not entirely "free." Families were still required to pay for writing utensils, workbooks, and uniforms, along with school construction materials such as the bricks used to build the schools. In addition, they were expected to help in the construction. The government has in turn offered additional funds for such projects, as well as more money for classroom materials (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 2). Nonetheless, there will always be issues in terms of enrollment anytime that a family is expected to contribute economically to the school or a school-related project.

In addition to these issues, there have also been questions about the quality of the education provided. One of the glaring points regarding the effectiveness of the universal education program was related to teacher quality, and particularly in the rural areas. It was said that "[i]n 2003, there were 145,703 primary schoolteachers, of whom 54,069 (37%) had no formal teacher training. An additional 7,960 had just a teaching certificate, obtained after training on completion of primary education" (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 3).³ In addition to the lack of qualifications for many teachers in the rural areas, the other factors addressed in the earlier

chapters are present in the case of Uganda. For example, teachers often cite low motivation. Much of this seems to stem from difficult work conditions, lack of support, and an absence of leadership management and monitoring, as well as inadequate room and board (Vermeulen, 2013: 74). Related to this point, schools do not always have the ability to set up housing for teachers near the school. In fact, “[t]he urban-rural difference is explained by [an official] who said] . . . [m]ainly, the teachers are living away from school. They come either riding a bicycle or walk long distances to get to work and back. They don’t have a classroom to teach from and don’t have teachers’ quarters where they can live. Those are important factors; they affect output . . .” (75).

Overall, the rural/urban divide as it relates to educational quality was quite clear. If one looks at the national test results, one can see that students from rural areas outperformed students from rural areas. Again, there is a great gap in the level of support provided to rural schools, where “[t]he differences rise partly from public expenditure per pupil, which is much higher in urban areas than in rural areas. For example, in 2000, expenditure per pupil in the capital city of Kampala was US\$63, compared to only US\$10 in the remote and poorest northern district of Kotido” (Inter-Regional Inequality Facility, 2006: 3). This is particularly problematic in Uganda because “over 85 per cent of Uganda’s population still lives rural” (Vermeulen, 2013: 42). Furthermore, more students in urban areas attend private schools (Vermeulen, 2013), which is often not as realistic an option for most students in the rural areas.

There was some testing done regarding overall proficiency rates in mathematics and English for Ugandan students, and the results suggest problems with the conditions of education. For example, “[i]n tests administered to national random samples of 3rd-grade pupils, the number of pupils who achieved a satisfactory score declined from 48 percent in 1996 to 31 percent in 1999 on the mathematics test, and from 92 percent to 56 percent on the English oral test” (World Bank, 2002: 2). Furthermore, survival rates—the rate of a child going on to middle school—were very low. According to data, “only 22% of the children that enrolled in primary one in 1997 managed to survive to primary seven in 2003” (Byamugisha, 2006, in Nishimura et al., 2009). Furthermore, many of the students ended

up repeating classes, or a smaller (yet still high) percentage (5%) dropped out completely (Nishimura et al., 2009).

In the case of Uganda, there are a number of reasons as why such high percentages of children were dropping out of school. Some have argued that in some cases, parental support is not at the level the administrators would prefer. One even argued,

Absenteeism of students is rampant and it is caused by a lack of appreciation by parents. Some parents not yet have appreciated education to the extent of sending their children to school every day. During the raining season, children stay at home to do cultivation; planting and so on. Market days, some children go to the market to sell some of the merchandise from the homes and also buy goods. And also during the harvest season, some children miss school, because they are busy harvesting and so on. (Vermeulen, 2013: 76)

Along with this, children may also have difficulty paying attention once they are in school. While there seems to be a host of reasons for this (such as being an advanced age for the course, not knowing basic reading and writing, not understanding the language that the teacher is speaking), in the case of Uganda, another reason could be that many children often go to school hungry. A disconnect exists between parents, who are often told that everything is covered (often for political support), and the reality, which is that food is often not available (Vermeulen, 2013: 76). Thus, there are still numerous challenges to implementing a fully effective free child primary education program in Uganda.

Kenya

Kenya has been one of the most out-front states in the world in the past ten years when it has come to working on universal education. While Kenya got rid of school fees in the 1970s (in 1974 and 1978) (Fredriksen, 2009), the government reversed this position. In fact, it was not until December 2002, when Kenyan leader Mwai Kibaki, after coming to power, implemented what was called the “re-introduction” of “Free Primary Education” (FPE) (Okoti, 2014) on January 4, 2003 (Kabugu et al., 2009). Kenya has worked on improving education enrollment in the past, but its prior programs, which were carried out in coordination with the World Bank

as well as the IMF, were structured on a “cost-sharing fees” based on Structural Adjustment Programs from the two IOs. This shift in policy resulted in a significant increase in the number of children enrolling in school that year (Okoti, 2014), as it moved away from fee-based education toward a free-education model.

In the case of Kenya, the adoption of free education immediately led to a high increase in children who received access to schooling. In late 2002, 5.9 million children were said to be in primary schools. This number rose to 6.9 when the program was launched in January of 2003. In 2006, there were 7.16 million children in primary schools and other educational institutions (Kabugu et al., 2009: 136), and 9.4 million (boys 4.8 million, girls 4.6 million) in 2010 (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012, in Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu, & Nthinguri, 2013: 8). Parents and children were thrilled at the ability for kids to attend school without having to pay the fees that existed in years past. Such policies clearly had a positive effect for the lives of many children who had little access to school before the implementation of the free education initiative by the national government. Having said that, a look at the program shows that, because of some ineffective policy management, there were also negative consequences to the free education set out by Kikabi, which made educating all children difficult to achieve. For example, one of the immediate effects of the free policy was that the state now had to adjust the school system to the high interest on the part of citizens. Unfortunately, the schools were not able to handle such demand. For example, “[i]n many schools, the headteachers found themselves with more children to enroll than their capacity could hold. Due to the limited space and facilities, the heads turned many children away. Of course, many parents were disappointed and they kept on moving from one school to another as they sought places for their children” (UNESCO, 2005a). This, of course, often contributed to additional students in the classroom. And while it has been pointed out that Kenya has met the 1:45 teacher-to-student ratio that is suggested, not all schools have reached this goal (Orodho et al., 2013: 9). For example, recent studies in Kenya have found that the ratio between teachers to students in some areas is 1:70, 1:80, and 1:100, well above the desired 1:40 (Okoti, 2014) or the 1:45 ratio mentioned earlier (Orodho et al., 2013). And while the government is quite aware of such discrepancies in ratios between

what is hoped for and the actual teacher-to-student ratios in some of the schools, it has been difficult for it to address these problems of too few teachers given hiring freezes, although there have been increases in temporary teachers—whose positions were then converted to permanent posts due to protests by the teachers unions (Orodho et al., 2013: 10).

As we can see in Kenya, early in the FTI (Fast Track Initiative) program, the imbalance in teacher-to-student ratios made effective learning difficult. In the UNESCO 2005 report, in examining the educational conditions of 162 schools, the agency found that the lowest teacher-to-student ratio was 1:29 in Embu, with the highest imbalance in Kajiado, where the teacher-to-student ratio was 1:58 (and others also were in the low 50s). In cases in which there are many students to teachers, this makes the job of the educator very challenging, as this can of course affect lesson plans. In the early reports on the FTI system in Kenya, it was said that “[t]eachers are overworked and are not able to effectively attend to all pupils. The influx of pupils has made it difficult for teachers to mark assignments and give individualized attention . . .” (UNESCO, 2005: 49).

What made the situation even worse was that “[s]ince the government had not given an age limit, even those who were ‘over-age’ were enrolled and this worsened the congestion in schools” (UNESCO, 2005: 11). In fact, a 2005 UNESCO study found that roughly one-fourth of students were not in the correct grade, and “44 per cent [were] over-age over grade by two or more years” (21). As we can imagine, such figures can pose real learning challenges for students and teachers in the classroom. In some research, what was found when students were over-age for the grade in which they were enrolled, was that many of them were not involved in class assignments, such as reading in front of others, because they worried about whether they would be able to do so effectively, or were concerned about risking public shame for not being able to read at the expected level (UNESCO, 2005). Furthermore, in other cases, the older students “bullied younger pupils, especially the bright ones who they considered a threat” (UNESCO, 2005: 21). The differences in student ages in one classroom has continued to make effective teaching more difficult, as “the attendant emotional, physical and intellectual variations . . . have thrown the teachers’ age-old teaching strategies into disarray” (Orodho et al., 2013: 11).

This has caused undue stress on teachers, who are already overworked and often do not receive adequate pay for their responsibilities. While the government understands that this is a major issue and has taken some steps to try to address such problems (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012), many teachers feel that the government is not offering compensation in line with the amount of work that the position requires (Orodho et al., 2013). In fact, according to some teachers who were surveyed,

it is now not uncommon for teachers to take advantage of the high enrolment as an excuse for not performing and engage in other income generating activities outside the school in order to compensate for their low pay. Teacher motivation and commitment to duty is believed to be at an all-time low by the respondents due to the current economic constraints. The added workload causes strain and stress among teachers, while lacks of incentives and poor remuneration have combined to affect the teachers' commitment to duty. (Orodho et al., 2013: 11)

Yet another challenge in the complete success of the FTI was the lack of sufficient preparation for the implementation of the program. This, along with inefficient coordination efforts between national governments and local leaders and school administrators made success even more difficult. In the case of Kenya, it has been said that “after the (political declaration) of the policy, school heads were expected to implement it without prior preparations. On the ground, school heads and education officers were caught [unaware][.]” and that even “The government was itself unprepared for the policy because it was started on a short notice” (UNESCO, 2005: 11–12). They did attempt to remedy this by meeting with top officials later that year in order to set guidelines for the new program. However, the program was implemented within a month of the National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government's coming to power (Kabugu et al., 2009). Furthermore, some argued that the government did not put in place an effective plan to carry out the promises of free education: “[s]ince the announcement for FPE was made in the middle of the financial year, there was no plan or budgetary allocation in place for its implementation. Hence, the planning process had to start forthwith” (Kabugu et al., 2009: 131).

Another key problem that limited the success of the program in Kenya was the lack of access to needed materials such as textbooks. The new program called for free textbooks (meaning students and families would not have to pay to use the books), and this of course was a welcomed policy. In fact, many parents commented positively on the fact that their children would not have to pay for school or books. However, what they found in this case was that, while the government would provide the resources, they often did not provide enough materials, or many times there were delays in accessing the resources. What UNESCO (2005) found was that “[g]enerally, the disbursement of government funds has been delayed and when these funds were made available they came in installments. This caused problems in purchasing learning materials. The delays affected teachers’ performance in terms of covering the syllabus and many parents were concerned by this” (50). UNESCO (2005) discussed this issue of the book resources, and in their study, found that

Most of the 162 sample schools visited had received FPE grants, ordered and received instructional materials as per the M.O.E.S.T. guidelines. Provision of instructional materials including textbooks was identified as one of the major achievements of the FPE programme, particularly through reducing the cost burden of education on parents and thus leading to an influx of pupils to school. However, it was noted that the FPE grants disbursements were not done on time as most schools started receiving the funds either in second or third term, implying most pupils had limited access to textbooks in first term, 2003. It was also noted that due to the recent curriculum review, schools had mainly procured the new textbooks for Classes 1 and 5 and Class 8 (which is an examination class). (23)

Now it must be noted that in the case of Kenya, many of the schools in the 2005 UNESCO study were said to have good student-to-textbook ratios, although again, this depended on the specific school, grade year, and subject (24–26). However, in cases in which enough books were not available, students often had to share, which “[made] it difficult for pupils to do assignments and homework” (UNESCO, 2005: 50). Thus, one recommendation has been to have “one textbook per child in the core subjects” (UNESCO, 2005: 25). Yet more recent studies are finding that the ratio of students to textbooks is

5:1, which can hinder students' ability to work effectively on assignments (Okoti, 2014).

Yet despite these challenges, the government has continued to work on improving the universal schooling program. The 2010 Constitution demands support for citizens for education, and in 2013 the national government passed the *Basic Education Act*, a law that iterates the calls to ensure that the government provides the necessary resources for citizens as they relate to the right to an education (Orodho et al., 2013). Teachers are continuing to work tirelessly on initiatives and lessons for their pupils. However, they also recognize that more needs to be done. Particularly, in a recent 2013 study on Kenya, teachers were asked what some of the challenges were to their work. According to the findings, “[t]he challenges which were mentioned by a majority of teachers were ineffective teaching methods mentioned by 25.37 percent followed by high teaching load cited by 23.41 percent and inadequate instructional materials mentioned by 22.44 percent” (Orodho et al., 2013: 9). It remains to be seen how the Kenyan government addresses these continuing challenges.

Lesotho

Another country that is included here as a case study is Lesotho. Like Kenya, officials in Lesotho also have committed to free universal primary education. However, what is different about Lesotho as opposed to some other countries—and particularly Kenya—is that they implemented free education as a “phased” approach, compared to what policymakers have called the “big-bang approach,” which is an immediate implementation of free education for all grades and all children.

Lesotho first began offering free child primary education in many of their schools in 2000 (Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2001, in Morojele, 2012), and it has continued to commit to various international documents on the right to education. In addition, understanding that education fees are not isolated, the government also meshed this program with a “feeding scheme” initiative to better help parents and children deal with issues of poverty (Morojele, 2012: 37). After the initiation of the program, as was the case in other countries, there was a large increase in the number of children who were now attending primary schooling.

The government saw an 80 percent increase in the first two years (Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2002, in Morojele, 2012).

But despite the commitment to free child primary education, the government saw a vast difference between the number of students who initially started out in the program and those who ended up completing examinations in grade seven (Chiombe, 2007, in Morojele, 2012). In a study in which teachers in four different schools in Lesotho were interviewed, Morojele (2012) found a number of factors that were inhibiting learning outcomes for and enrollment in child primary education. Similar to the case of Kenya, one of the reasons why teaching effectiveness suffered was due to the high number of new students in each classroom. It seems that the government, while committing some support, did not provide the necessary resources to address the challenges that the new enrollment figures placed on teachers and the learning environment in the classroom. For example, there were cases of children not having adequate access to learning materials. In one classroom, many of the children did not have new workbooks with which to work, and thus, they “were rubbing off the work they did earlier from their government donated exercise book so that they could do their daily class activities” (Morojele, 2012: 40). Morojele (2012) quotes one of the teachers who commented on the issue of resources, saying,

You see! Your father Mosisili [prime minister of Lesotho] told parents to bring children to school without paying, yeah! He only gives them two exercise books and two pencils for the whole year. The exercise books get finished in two months and parents refuse to buy them. Then how am I expected to teach? (40)

In this statement one can also see how indirect costs can still accrue for parents. For example, some of the students in the classroom did have new workbooks, yet these were not the workbooks provided by the state, but rather, books individually bought by their parents. So we have at least some cases of a form of “indirect” fee on the parents. While the families in no way have to buy the book, there are clear learning incentives for them to do so. Yet, it is another cost that many parents cannot afford to pay, and in some cases, even those who paid might have not been able to do so comfortably.

Along with the lack of educational resources, there were also other issues that put strains on teachers' ability to be effective. Again, with more students comes the issue of overcrowding in the physical classroom. The new increase in the number of students has resulted in many more in a classroom than what is ideal for an efficient learning environment. And in many instances, because of enrollment levels, classrooms had students of different ages, which has made it difficult for teachers to create effective lesson plans. Moreover, some of the children came from families in which someone had either HIV or AIDS, or had died from AIDS. Thus, Morojele (2012: 43) explains that "[s]ince many children were orphaned, allegedly due to HIV and AIDS, this meant that they had no one to look after them at home when they became sick causing teachers to take on the responsibility of caring for such children while in school. Lack of parental involvement also meant that teachers had to give care to children when they also needed care" (43). He goes on to say that "[i]n these schools there were no staff employed specifically to provide counseling and this compounded the challenge" (43).

Yet another issue with the learning environment was that none of the three schools that Morojele (2012) visited had electricity (41). Morojele (2012) quoted a teacher who commented on the issue by telling a story when he was there, explaining his experience in the school:

When I arrived I was met by the grade 7 teacher (72 years old Mrs Mantoa)—the oldest teacher in the school. She wanted clarity on the questionnaire. She asked me to explain what I meant by the "source of power in the school." As I explained she laughed at me and dramatically murmured, "Hey your question is difficult you know. We don't have any source of power in this school. When the weather is cloudy or the storm is coming, the classrooms get dark and we just sit down, fold our arms and ask children to tell fairy tales." (41)

In addition, ever since the state implemented its national policy, there seems to have been a disconnect between local actors and the national government. In the case of Lesotho, "[t]he schools were immediately placed at the mercy of the national department of education. . . . The effect was that of frustration mainly caused by the red-tape in the government bureaucracy that was claimed to have no regards to the urgency and expediency for schools to attain some

basic resources, around which the daily activities of teaching and learning pivoted” (42). Morojele (2012) goes on to argue that there exists a lack of full communication between the parents, the teachers, and the national government regarding the new policy. One of the teachers interviewed sums this up by saying that

Parents received contradicting messages about the role they should play concerning their children who are attending FPE. As teachers we demand that parents should buy uniforms and exercise books for their children. This was confusing because the Prime Minister [Mr. Mosisili] had spoken in the public gatherings and over the radio that under the policy of Free Primary Education parents do not have to pay anything and that they could send their children to school, even with traditional attire (tšea3) and rubber boots (likhohlopo). (42)

Thus, it seems that at least some of the teachers hoped—and even expected—that parents would still contribute to the purchase of some of the books or uniforms. This is interesting, since there are issues that may result from still having parents to pay fees, which in effect, could negate the positive intention and effects of the free school programs. Yet, when the government does not provide the necessary resources for this new, promised program, frustrations are sure to exist. Furthermore, when national leaders fail to understand the uniqueness of each of the schools or districts, there will be a separation between what the government thinks is needed and what each school actually requires (Morojele, 2012).

Namibia

Namibia has been one of the more recent states to offer free child primary education to its citizens, whereas previously, the government continued to allow school fees to be used to pay for education.⁴ The government only moved to provide and fund child primary education in 2013. David Namwandi, the minister of education, spoke about this, saying that “primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which primary education will be provided free of charge” (Kisting, 2013).⁵ This, of course, can be interpreted to include not only the lessons but also the textbooks, as well as any

other fees that have been associated with education in the country. And Namwandi stated as much, saying that “[t]his will include textbooks and other learning materials, stationary, payment of teacher salaries and the provision of additional classrooms and furniture” (Kisting, 2013). Overall, the government is said to have earmarked N\$50 million for the first stages of setting the initiative in place, along with “approximately N\$100 million during the 2013 academic year on textbooks, of which about 75 percent will go to primary education” (Brandt, 2013).⁶

But along with the announcement of FPE, the obligation that parents had in the past to give to the School Development Funds (SDFs) has also been lifted (although technically the option is still there for those who would like to contribute funds to the program) (Brandt, 2013). The removal of expectations to offer money for SDFs is a much-needed step, since Namwandi has argued that in the past, paying into SDFs has been an “inhibitive condition for admission into public schools by some of our school authorities” (Brandt, 2013).

As a result of this new policy, the government expected enrollment figures to increase by 3.5 percent. Many members of Namibian civil society, which included parents and local leaders, as well as the Namibia National Teachers’ Union (NANTU), were quite pleased with this news. Jonathan Tsuseb, the Erongo regional chairperson, spoke about the need for effective assessment of the program, as well as extensive oversight into how the program would be put into place (Education International, 2012). He also spoke about the funds the government was committing, and specifically stated that “[t]he government should also calculate how much money schools generate and what they are able to provide for themselves through the school development funds.” “The amount of N\$50 million dollars might sound a lot, but dividing it among all primary schools throughout the country might not be sufficient at all” (Education International, 2012; De Klerk, 2012). Furthermore, some teachers, while happy about the development, spoke about the new challenges that could arise, such as the increase in the number of children in each classroom, and what this could mean regarding the effective teaching of students (De Klerk, 2012).

Yet despite these issues that could arise, many have commended the government’s new policy (De Klerk, 2012). Yet while the government has taken the lead in implementing this national program,

education leaders such as Namwandi stated that “It should be borne in mind that parents play the most important role in the lives and education for their children. Schools remain part of the community in which parental involvement is paramount. Children in school will need love, support and care from parents and the assurance that each parent sends his/her child to school” (Kisting, 2013).

The government called on parents to insure that they registered their children, and Namwandi told farmers who had children working “to put an end to that practice.” He made related comments to children working in businesses in their communities, saying that “[m]any children under the age of 16 are employed in businesses including liquor stores, shebeens, cuca shops, selling goods and so forth. I call upon all business owners not to employ children under the age of 16. Let these children attend school” (Kisting, 2013). While such statements are both important and welcomed, it will be interesting to see whether the government implements any financial aid programs to help offset any income that children would be providing their households, since, as we have discussed, this is a primary reason why parents do not send their children to school. And along with stressing the role of parents, Namwandi also called upon NGOs such as religious and community groups to become involved in the process of ensuring children are going to school (Kisting, 2013).

However, while the program is in its infancy, it is not without some controversy. For example, in 2014 David Namwandi released Cornelius D’Alton of his duties. D’Alton was the board chairperson of the Suiderh of Primary School. Namwandi also fired Marianne Myburgh, who was the acting principle. According to reports, “the two ignored Namwandi’s instruction not to sell Government stationary to learners because it contravenes the free education policy” (Heita, 2014). It has been reported that the school leaders were upset with what they felt was inadequate government financing for school materials (Heita, 2014). There have been other complaints as well, from high enrollments in the classrooms, “delays in the disbursement of funds from the Ministry of Finance to the education ministry and the delay experienced in the disbursement of funds from Regional Councils to schools among others” (Heita, 2014). Many are criticizing not the program itself, but rather the way in which the government is going about installing the program (Heita, 2014). The education ministry in turn has argued that most schools are happy

with the effects of the program, and that those in the minority who are not, should find ways to better work with the resources given to them by the state, and even urged them to consider the possibility of local fundraising opportunities (Heita, 2014).

Looking at these different cases, it becomes quite clear that free education is an important condition for improving primary school enrollment rates. However, the policies must be far more thought out in order to have real tangible and long-term success. Political leaders must understand—in detail—the domino effects of free schooling. Again, this is a great policy, but the state, as well as local leaders must be committed to addressing all of the issues that arise when school is free. This includes teacher pay, additional classrooms, and effective monitoring of educational outcomes, along with further clarity on the roles and responsibilities of community members.

CHAPTER 6

Non-State Actors: The Role of NGOs in the Fight for Free Universal Education

NGOs and Human Rights

Having examined the role of IOs as well as national governments in working toward universal primary education, we must also spend time examining how NGOs have helped countries reach this goal. A large body of literature exists with regards to the role of NGOs in protecting human rights in the international system (Brett, 1995; Calnan, 2008; Chandler, 2001; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Korey, 2006; McKay, F., 2004; Nelson & Dorsey, 2003; Ron, Ramos, & Rogers, 2005; Smith, Pagnucco, & Lopez, 1998; Weiss & Gordenker, 1996; Welch, 1995, 2001a). Through various studies, it has been found that not only have NGOs had a significant impact in terms of protecting human rights through “affecting legislation and implementation” (Forsythe, 2006: 240) but they have also specifically helped in advancing a variety of issues throughout the world (Donnelly, 2007). In fact, “[h]uman rights non-governmental organizations are often among the first to reach the scene of massive violations of human rights and humanitarian law” (McKay, F., 2004: 1). We have even seen a large increase in the number of NGOs in relation to human rights issues “in the last quarter of the twentieth century” (Forsythe, 2006: 199). For example, Tarrow (2005), citing Bush (2004), explains that “the number of international NGOs working on women’s rights grew by over 300 percent between 1973 and

2000” (189), while Welch (2001) explains that in 1996, the number of NGOs, according to the Union of International Associations, was over 5,000. The Directory of Development (2007) listed over 57,000 development organizations in 2007. Thus, there has been a significant increase in NGOs in the past decade. This immense rise in the number of NGOs around the world has led some to suggest that we have witnessed an “NGO revolution” (Welch, 1995: 45).

NGOs operate with specific aims (Welch, 2001; Forsythe, 2006). First, they are known to work on “standard setting” (Welch, 2001: 3). NGOs “try to persuade public authorities to adopt new human rights standards or apply those already adopted” (Forsythe, 2006: 194). This is often accomplished by organizing a number of activities that range from letter writing, to meeting with government leaders in attempting to improve the rights of citizens, to writing articles and opinion pieces for various media outlets (Forsythe, 2006). There has been debate as to the effectiveness of NGOs because to some, their cause seems “utopian” and thus not realistic, while others argue that it is such idealistic positions that have led to the achievement of great success on certain issues in a relatively short amount of time (Forsythe, 2006: 195). For example, NGOs such as Amnesty International have been highly successful in advancing issues of torture (the Convention Against Torture was adopted in 1984), with Amnesty’s success with the UN’s adoption of “The Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment” (Welch, 2001: 3–4) in 1975 (UNHCHR, 2007). NGOs are able to function as leading researchers on such issues, often serving as a respected voice on an issue. Welch (2001) explains that NGOs have further gained effectiveness and have “become more political” (5) in standard setting, with an increased reputation domestically and internationally. Along with standard setting, another important—if not the most “crucial”—component of NGOs’ work is their objective of effectively gathering and sharing information (Welch, 2001: 5). In fact, scholars argue that it is a “duty” of NGOs to document human rights violations (Welch, 1995). Since NGOs often attempt to influence government policy related to human rights, scholars explain that NGOs and governments are not diametrically opposed, but rather should be viewed as “necessary partners” for the promotion of human rights (Welch, 1995: 52). Others continue this

discussion by explaining that NGO reports are important because states themselves do not issue reports based solely on objectivity, without a particular national interest (Forsythe, 2006). In fact, Forsythe (2006) argues that a state's ambassadors "are sent abroad to lie for their country" (193). NGOs, however, are established to report the truth based on events. Oftentimes, NGOs write what are called "shadow reports" (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2008), namely reports that "supplement" government reports. These reports often explain positive steps as well as the failures of governments to implement human rights (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2008). And even though many states may disagree with NGOs' interpretations of their actions, most take a reputable NGO's word on the reporting of information (Forsythe, 2006), which is why it is of the highest importance for NGOs to ensure that they are correctly reporting on events that took place somewhere (Welch, 1995). Overall, such NGO reports are significant because they are more expansive than government reports (Welch, 1995).

The types of reporting in which NGOs engage has even led scholars examine the specific "transnational activist agenda" of organizations such as Amnesty International, and analyze which factors are related to Amnesty International's choice of issues on which it should spend more time reporting (Ron et al., 2005). Many have suggested that organizations such as Amnesty International, in order "to be more effective, [engage] in . . . 'information politics,' report more heavily on human rights abuses in some countries than others" (575–576). While the level of abuse does have an effect on which violations receive more attention, other factors that have been found to matter in terms of which violations are emphasized also include the power of the state in which the human rights abuses occur (576). Thus, while focusing on informational politics may be effective in many ways, Ron et al. (2005) argue that organizations such as Amnesty International should report on poor as well as rich countries, something that may be more likely to happen with the organization's new emphasis on social and economic rights in its mission (576).

Another objective by human rights NGOs is to put out information not only with the goal of influencing policy immediately but also in the hopes of educating society on a particular issue. This is why many NGOs often publish material based on their positions as well as on their successes related to their specific human rights

issue. The idea is that such education will eventually lead to a new culture that has a different understanding of the functions of the state and civil society, which will entail an attempt to ensure that human rights are respected. It must be noted that the success of a human rights campaign may or may not be immediately detected, as a change in public perception of an issue may in fact be seen years after the start of the a particular movement (Welch, 1995). Along with this, Welch (1995) explains that education is a critical component of human rights activity, and has been an important part of various human rights campaigns, such as the campaign to abolish slavery, as well as campaigns for women's suffrage (51). Such goals of human rights education, which existed long before the formation of the UN, are a key component of the UN Charter, which contains a specific call for education, with the aim of "strengthen[ing] respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Welch, 1995: 51).

A further objective of NGOs is to "provide direct services to those victimized by human rights violations" (Forsythe, 2006: 199). Welch (2001) explains that NGO work to aid those who are suffering is essential, since "[p]ublicizing abuses of human rights does not go far enough" (6). NGO direct action can take many different forms. Some ways in which NGOs serve in the protection of human rights include, but are not limited to legal representation for victims, relief aid to victims, and development aid (Welch, 2001; Forsythe, 2006). Along with such objectives, NGOs set other goals in their attempt to normalize human rights. For example, they also employ empowerment (Welch, 1995). Empowerment is seen not merely as educating the public, but rather the idea is that empowerment attempts to actually bring about a change in the existing order by political means, through the mobilization of specific groups to achieve greater power. It is therefore this objective that is most threatening to the state (Welch, 1995). In fact, the relationship between NGOs and governments sometimes leads to state crackdowns on NGOs, since government leaders often see themselves as the voice of the people, whereas NGOs see themselves as the true voice of citizens (Welch, 1995: 54). In addition to empowerment, NGOs may also attempt to ensure that human rights laws are enforced within the judicial system of a particular state. This method, while it can be effective (if the said country respects the ruling), is conditioned upon various roadblocks (Welch, 1995). For example, Welch (1995) argues that for such a

method to be effective, various institutions such as “a framework of laws and constitutional norms [,] . . . a functioning court system, whose judges are not subject to strong pressure to skew their decisions [,] . . . and . . . a functioning system of legal assistance, giving the less affluent access to the legal system as a whole” are needed (56). Along with domestic roadblocks, in order to have international human rights law carried out, states must have signed and ratified various treaties, thus ensuring that the state cooperates with what is specified in the treaties, as well as deals with human rights violations within the state as reported by NGOs (Welch, 1995).

Lastly, NGOs have used other strategies in order to promote human rights, namely advancing notions of democratization and development. Welch (1995) explains that NGOs have looked at the effects of aid as it relates to the advancement of democracy within states (62). In addition to attempts at political institutional reform, NGOs have also paid a great deal of attention to development, particularly in helping “groups near the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy” (67). Thus, while NGOs have such a wide range of functions, they also work on a whole other host of goals such as “lobbying . . . , conscientization, and empowerment; delivery of services; and keeping open the political system” (69).

The Influence of NGOs

We have examined the various strategies that NGOs employ to promote and advance human rights. The question remains: How effective are NGOs in achieving their various goals? Related to this, how do NGOs specifically place pressure on governments to change? NGOs have used various methods to influence the policy of a government, whether it is through direct pressure or through the “boomerang” effect of influencing outside actors to place pressure on a government (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Risse & Sikkink, 1999). Forsythe (2006) explains that the question of what influence NGOs have on protecting human rights in their respective work is arguably “[t]he most important question,” since knowing the actual action taken is less difficult to document. While it is understood—and argued—that in a number of cases NGOs may have impacted government decisions, the level of impact remains unclear (Forsythe, 2006). Accurately gauging influence depends on what is deemed as

a “success,” since in some cases it is difficult to show whether the NGO actually had an impact on the end result of a law or an event (or keeping an event from taking place). Welch (2001) explains that “[s]uccess and ‘effectiveness’ mean, in the simplest terms, achieving the maximum results from the resources invested” (12). In terms of the success of actions, different strategies employed by NGOs can have different impacts depending on the expected advancement of a cause. For example, as Forsythe (2006) explains, NGO work on issues of gay rights in societies that have little tolerance for such issues can be deemed “successful” just by having the government even consider talking about such issues and the need to address them as rights (201). Similarly, Keck and Sikkink (1998) explain that NGOs will attempt to “frame” issues in a number of ways in order to gain attention on the issues. This may specifically involve “framing old problems in new ways” (17) or attempting to find specific “frames” to which to connect the issue to the society (27). In the case of female foot binding in China, Keck and Sikkink (1998) say that one effective technique used by NGOs was to “frame” foot binding within local culture. In this case, activists argued “that foot binding damaged the body—a gift from one’s parents—and that a natural footed woman could buy medicine for a sick parent in less time than it took a bound foot woman” (66). And because of the successful framing of the issue, activists were able to effectively alter people’s positions on foot binding (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 66).

Therefore, while it is difficult to determine whether an NGO has had an impact, or the level or amount of impact an NGO has had on an event, NGOs have been effective in various cases, and specifically in “help[ing] [to] create a climate of opinion in international relations generally sympathetic to human rights” (Forsythe, 2006: 205). For example, human rights NGOs, through a new approach to humanitarianism that includes working together with governments and IOs to build foreign policy based on “ethics” and “morals,” have been influential in changing how interventions for humanitarian reasons take place (Chandler, 2001).

In examining human rights effectiveness in Africa, NGOs often have difficulty in turning around government action related to various human rights issues (Welch, 1995). For example, NGOs often receive financial assistance, yet even when funds exist, it tends to come from Western sources, thus introducing a further relationship

between the NGO and the donor in order to coordinate on joint goals of action, which often may hurt their credibility (Welch, 1995). Furthermore, the membership of NGOs can sometimes vary depending on the type of issues that the NGO is intended to address. Oftentimes, civil and political issues attract more “educated” citizens as compared to social and economic NGOs that often have “less educated individuals” as members (Welch, 1995: 75). This difference can have implications in terms of an organization’s ability to be effective in changing government action (Welch, 1995). Another membership issue is related to the level of “ethnic animosities within societies [,]” and therefore societies with strong divisions based solely on ethnicity may hinder human rights efforts (Welch, 1995: 75). Lastly, Welch (1995) explains that, often without a change in political leadership—and thus the inability to highlight their positions through a countrywide spotlight—NGOs are constrained from taking particular avenues to advocate change.

Some scholars have examined the effectiveness of major NGOs in the area of human rights by specifically looking at the work of two of the largest human rights NGOs, namely Amnesty International (Buchmann, 2002; Clark, 2001; Claudius & Stepan, 1976; Hopgood, 2006; Larsen, 1978; Power, 1981; Scoble & Wiseberg, 1974; Thakur, 1994) and Human Rights Watch (Brown, 2001; Winston, 2001), and comparisons between them (Welch, 2001b). To some, Amnesty International is seen as “the world’s preeminent human rights advocacy organization” (Winston, 2001: 25). The organization grew from a letter written by Amnesty International founder Peter Benenson to the London *Observer* in 1961 in which he addressed the issue of “Forgotten Prisoners,” to a Nobel Prize in 1977 for addressing Argentina’s “dirty war,” to its current international status and work in documenting and advocating for various human rights issues (25). Yet another high-profile human rights NGO is Human Rights Watch, which started in 1978 and was originally named Helsinki Watch. Its objective was to monitor the human rights of states that signed on to the Helsinki Accords, and since then it has established numerous regional offices in which Human Rights Watch specifically works on a wide range of human rights issues (HRW, 2010). Both organizations have been found to have expanded their work and resources, and thus have been effective in reporting on and having an effect on protecting human rights (Welch, 2001b). And while both of these

organizations have done detailed work on human rights, as we shall see, there are many NGOs that are also advancing human rights issues, and in this case, in the context of child education.

NGOs and Child Education

NGOs throughout the world have spent considerable time and resources in attempts to specifically improve child education rates throughout the world. In fact, international and domestic organizations have taken various approaches in terms of helping children attend school. One of the primary activities that NGOs focus on with regard to education is influencing policy in terms of approaches to improving access to schooling. This may come in the form of having a presence at international meetings (where NGOs input ideas on new international policies), or through domestic work with local governments. As Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond, and Wolf (2002) explain,

Education policies supported by NGOs can be categorized in many ways. Some policies are set at a national level with highly significant implications for the overall education system, e.g., adopting a new curriculum, or changing the status of a certain type of school. Others are more modest, affecting educational practice in a particular region or locality, e.g., giving a specific community school a local license to operate, or allowing a local NGO to function in a particular jurisdiction. Furthermore, some policies change educational practice, such as curriculum change, whereas others aim to affect management, e.g., teacher deployment and recruitment. (24–25)

NGOs often work quite actively with the government, discussing various policy approaches to improving child education rates and overall programs. For example,

In Mali, NGOs engaged government authorities on a continuous basis in a wide range of policy issues and continue to do so. They have had regular meetings, both informal and formal, with government officials to defend and promote community schools. They have prepared and introduced information and arguments to officials to persuade them to change the rules on recognizing community schools. (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002: 34)

And in Guinea, NGOs such as Aide in Action “are actively seeking to take part in different government policy discussions. For example, they attend the regular meeting of donors held every month. They also have established contacts and relationships with national education authorities that they hope will enable them to advocate for their policy priorities more effectively” (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002: 34).

Jagannathan (2001) discusses other ways in which NGOs can work with governments to help improve the quality of education, as well as child education rates. For example, governments can use the training programs of NGOs to better educate teachers. In his study on the role of NGO activity related to primary education in India, he finds that NGOs are highly involved in the education process. NGOs often take a strong role in addressing issues related to school enrollment, particularly for minority and “underprivileged” children who have less access to school. In addition, NGOs have also worked to establish “alternative schools,” which children who are not enrolled in the main schools are able to attend, even though these organizations recognize that such “alternative schools” should not be permanent, since such schools may “undermine the formal school system and the long term dilution of the State’s financial responsibility for elementary education” (Jagannathan, 2001: 5). In fact, studies have examined the challenges students face in continuing their education after leaving such alternative schools (Rose, 2007). Nevertheless, by devoting specific attention to such groups, NGOs help increase opportunities for education in areas in which enrollment has not been as high. Jagannathan (2001) also notes that, in addition to getting students to attend school, NGOs also make it a goal to find programs that will help them stay in school. Some programs that NGOs undertake to attain this goal are “An expanded pre-school education, special attention for first-generation learners, especially in the first three grades, remedial classes to bridge courses for over-age entrants to schools are considered to be important by the NGOs to increase enrolments and retention in the primary grades” (5).

Along with NGOs’ playing a role in getting children to attend school, they also aim to improve the education that students receive in class. NGOs have been active in incorporating the community into the functioning of schools. They have worked to actively include

parents “in school management” since this helps “increase [the] accountability” of a school (Jagannathan, 2001: 5). NGOs often monitor and offer suggestions regarding the quality of education at schools. Furthermore, they can also offer assistance to teachers and school administrators (Jagannathan, 2001). One of the most successful and highly reputable education NGOs is the group Pratham that works in India. Pratham was initially set up both by UNICEF and the Indian government, but has evolved to focus on volunteer efforts in local schools (Schirvar, 2013). Pratham has worked “to help improve reading, writing and basic arithmetic skills of children between six and fourteen years old through their flagship program, Read India. This program alone has reached more than 2.4 million children and trained over 61,000 teachers. In most states where Pratham intervened, nearly 100 percent of children know at least the alphabet, and the proportion of children able to read simple sentences has increased by nearly 20 percent.” It has done this through heavy volunteering in many school districts in India. Other groups, such as Tostan (which operates in countries like Djibouti, Somalia, Mali, Mauritania, and the Gambia), focus on several educational subjects; the emphasis of the lessons is not only on math, science, language, and literature, but the group also educates students on human rights and, health, as well as “project management and income-generation” (Schirvar, 2013).

Along with these learning initiatives that are set up and often operated by NGOs, Jagannathan (2001) also explains that NGOs can serve a number of other functions in terms of supporting child primary education in nondirect ways, such as issues related to work:

[as] . . . as small resource groups to assist in the field level, to catalyse innovations in schools and clusters; they could collaborate with key educational institutions of the Government or curriculum reform, training or improvement of education management; they could be professional centres for research and evaluation of micro activities; and they could perform social audits of the true impact and influence of Government programs. A few NGOs such as the ones surveyed for this study can also play a strategic role of participating in policy formations. A climate of partnership based on principles of equality needs to be built up. (6)

Many NGOs have also worked to specifically protect the rights of the child in terms of education. For example, while Amnesty

International (2010) has a number of human rights issues that it works on, it also advocates that all children should be able to attend school for free. In addition, it has also advocated for the rights of Roma minority children in various states within the Balkans, calling for the end of educational policies that impact Roma school attendance rates. The NGO Save the Children (2010) has also been highly active in working to secure education for children in over 30 countries. It often focuses on “marginalized children—girls, ethnic minorities, and children affected by HIV/AIDS, wars, and other catastrophes—from early childhood through young adulthood.” Some of the education work that Save the Children has done includes providing technological support to teachers in Guatemala (Save the Children, 2008a), developing school clubs for children in Nepal (Save the Children, 2008b), and helping orphaned children whose parents died from HIV/AIDS to attend school in Mozambique by building schools and providing individuals to take care of the children, as well as helping teachers to acquire skills to better teach the children (Save the Children, 2008c). In a similar fashion, groups like CARE Education also “seek to help cushion education systems against the impact of HIV/AIDS—particularly through addressing the emotional needs of orphans and institutional needs of systems in areas with devastated adult populations” (Schirvar, 2013). In addition to these and other international NGOs, thousands of smaller education organizations have continued to do similar work related to child primary education.

And because NGOs are so effective at organizing, they can use their network to put pressure on governments’ policies as they relate to these different aspects of education policy (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). Thus, if we examine the different cases in which governments implemented a universal education policy, it becomes evident that any success achieved was not without the integral role of NGOs. Below are snapshots of NGO work in various educational settings, and how they were able to influence policy outcomes related to primary child education. For example, Miller-Grandvaux et al. (2002) explain how this was evident in the case of Mali, when they say that

Mali provides a prime example. The creation of the Groupe Pivot, an NGO consortium, was extremely important to push forward the

community school agenda, a strength that certainly came from numbers. The Groupe Pivot was initially established with support from the federation of NGOs in Mali as part of a more general effort to organize the NGO field. At first, the Groupe Pivot was essentially a “talk shop” where representatives from interested local and international NGOs would discuss a particular chosen theme. The Groupe Pivot obtained financing from Save the Children and USAID for operations and then took on the advocacy role for community schools. Mostly, the Groupe Pivot engaged in policy dialogue with national officials to influence changes in policy. It was also able to share information and coordinate efforts between NGOs to present a common front for government. Another consequence was that many member NGOs also increased their institutional capacity. (34)¹

All of this is important, again, because NGOs and civil society organizations play a fundamental role in our reaching our goals of universal education for all children. Leading figures of key IOs have said as much, stressing how essential nongovernmental activity can be in international development. Koïchiro Matsuura, who was the UNESCO Director General until 2009, spoke about the importance of NGOs in relation to educational goals in 2001, stating that

UNESCO believes that Education for all (EFA) will be achieved only if it is rooted in a broad-based societal movement and nourished by viable government/civil society partnerships. Our reasons are based on both principle and realism. The full achievement of the EFA goals requires that the marginalised and excluded are provided with Educational opportunities. Civil society organisations are more capable than other EFA partners of reaching the unreached and, especially in the area of non formal Education, they have devised methods and approaches which are more attuned to the needs and life-conditions of the poor. (Koïchiro Geneva, 2001, in Mugisha, 2011)

Information

As Ibembe (2007) explains, several NGOs undertake studies concerning the state of UPE in Uganda. Some of this information has been used to inform the policy making and implementation process. FENU, an education NGOs was active in 2003 in influencing the Education Sector Review (ESR) and processes that were fed into the Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP) II and the education elements within the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)—Uganda’s

Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan. Some of the issues FENU researched on were the disadvantaged children in nonformal education (NFE) and those in camps for the Internally Displaced. FENU document especially successes, best practice and challenges and the issues were raised to the respective parliamentary committees for consideration.

This information can then be used in advocacy on the issue of universal education. This can take the form of newspapers that discuss education policy in the country (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002), the organization of local meetings at which information is shared with local citizens, or through direct communications with other advocacy groups.

Resources/Quality of Schools

NGOs can be quite active in providing support for the development and improvement of schools through providing making resources available. And such work can often take many different forms. For example, NGOs provide funding and other material support in cases of disasters (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). NGOs also often supply learning materials such as books, workbooks, chalkboards, computers, or other educational materials. They also can pay teachers, or contribute to the longevity of a school by helping pay for repairs or items such as a new roof for a school building (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). For example, Barefoot College has built learning centers off of solar energy. In addition, they also have helped shift learning times to evenings, due to children helping their parents work in the daytimes (Schirvar, 2013). Other groups such as Plan Uganda have worked building new additions to schools and providing furniture, as well as aided in bathroom construction (Ibembe, 2007). Also in Uganda, NGOs such as the Child Care Foundation offer textbooks, as well as remedial teaching (Ibembe, 2007), and other organizations in the country, such as Plan Uganda (through Plan International), also provide textbook aid. Now, again, these approaches are not without criticism. One may wonder: do NGOs that offer tuition support or textbooks take the pressure off the state to provide these resources, and in cases in which direct or indirect fees are administered, does NGO action, namely working within those parameters, hurt the long-term objectives of the full removal of fee-based systems?

Community Involvement

NGOs have done a great job of working with other community members on educational issues. This can take many forms. For example, if the government introduces a free primary education policy, NGOs often play a great role in helping community members by answering questions that they may have about such a program. Furthermore, in cases in which families are less likely to send their daughters to school, NGOs can often speak with families about the importance of education for their daughters and for the families themselves, all the while helping to address any concerns that the families might have about sending their children to school. As I shall discuss later, this can be reflected in terms of financial concerns and safety issues, as well as cultural concerns regarding how the functioning of the school will align with parental beliefs on gender issues.

NGOs often try to involve local citizens in their approaches to education. While it is not always the case that all NGOs work with the community (thus frustrating local leaders who may have felt that their voices were limited), most are quite aware of the importance of collaborative efforts between themselves and individuals and groups within the community. In fact, “[t]he methodologies for working in a community have also begun to change, moving increasingly away from telling the members of the community what they should do, to involving them in decision-making activities. More participatory approaches, which include facilitating community discussions and negotiations to decide what their problems are, how they might be solved, and how to implement those solutions, are being used by NGOs, in part because they better support the double goal of most NGOs—improving education and strengthening civil society” (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002: 9).

Oversight

NGOs have also played a role in overseeing the different stages and aspects of education programs. They often attempt to monitor school conditions, as well as examine how other actors are (or are not) fulfilling their own commitments to these initiatives. More specifically, NGOs often attempt to monitor the aid for school programs. Some organizations help by either organizing groups to monitor or themselves overseeing how educational funds are being spent. In Uganda,

for example, “NGOs such as Uganda Debt Network (UDN) have assumed the mantle on this issue. UDN is presently leading a process to establish a Community Based Monitoring System and a National Network to monitor the utilization of the savings from debt relief in Uganda so that debt relief resources can benefit the poor people directly. The agency has spearheaded the Grassroots Anti-Corruption Campaign in Uganda to establish open and transparent systems for public accountability by Public Officers at local and national levels. Some of the funds utilised under the UPE programme include the Schools Facilities grants” (SFG) (Ibembe, 2007).

NGOs in Sudan: Actions toward Education

While I have addressed the different ways in which NGOs are active on the issue of child primary education, I wanted to give a glimpse into how some smaller NGOs go about working on child education issues. And while any organization can be chosen here, I decided to look at two organizations in the Sudan, namely the New Sudan Education Initiative (NESEI) and Project Education Sudan, and not only how they operated in the realm of primary education, but also, in effect, how primary education shifts to the need for quality secondary schools. In examining the role that NGOs play in child education, we find that one of the more recently created NGOs aimed at addressing child education (along with other issues) in the Sudan is the NESEI. The NESEI was first formed in 2006 following years of devastation related to the civil war in southern Sudan. Following the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement—“and the call by Sudanese and the Diaspora for constructive development in order to establish a lasting peace [,]”—NESEI Diaspora refugees, along with the United States and world partners, organized the NESEI. The NESEI began with the goal of increasing the number of children who attend and finish primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling in the Sudan, particularly since “Sudan has the lowest access to primary education in the world, with only 33% of children between the ages of 7–14 going to school” (NESEI, 2008). The main objective for the NESEI therefore is to “build secondary schools in Southern Sudan,” specifically tailoring the schools to young women, as well as refugees and orphans (NESEI, 2008). But while the main educational purpose of the school is secondary education, the school will also be used as a

“transition” primary school. This feature will allow girls who have not been previously been to school, or those who could not finish class on account of conflict, to be able to learn various subjects that they will need in order to be able to be successful upon entering the secondary school (NESEI, 2008). The NESEI explains that it “will provide transition schooling for up to 200 girls, per year, school, in grades 5–8.”

The NESEI also says that, while the school will serve an educational function for children, it will also encompass a wide range of other programs, including but not limited to “community health and girls’ education counseling centers, transition primary school for girls, income generating projects to create self-sustainability for NESEI students and NESEI school communities, and innovative curriculum development, which will include gender studies, peace studies, and vocational training” (NESEI, 2008). One of the NESEI’s main goals is for each individual school to have the ability to be “self-sustaining.” Thus, the NESEI explains that, in order for the schools to be able to eventually continue to operate without outside aid, they have incorporated a plan to include and develop a number of “income-generating projects,” such as farms on the school in order to produce food for the community, as well as bring in income. For example, the NESEI (2008) planned to establish “[a]n agricultural program” at the first school in 2009. In terms of long-term objectives, the NESEI ultimately plans to build 20 schools throughout Southern Sudan, in hopes of educating over 20,000 children (NESEI, 2008).

The Sudanese refugee diaspora, along with Americans who understood the impact that the war in Southern Sudan was having on educational programs, founded the NESEI. Therefore, many “insiders”² from Sudan belong to the organization, and this has highlighted the importance this has in terms of educational work in that country. The NESEI explains the importance of having Sudanese citizens within the organization by saying that

Diaspora groups act as natural bridges to Western economies and African development efforts. NESEI’s theory for social change developed from the Sudanese Diaspora’s history as refugees and their special knowledge and ability to navigate through the layers of challenges facing NGOs in Southern Sudan. . . . Unlike many US based development NGO’s that operate from a significant cultural distance,

NESEI is “owned” by refugees and members of the Diaspora. (NESEI, 2008)

Thus, the NESEI has ensured that Sudanese voices are a critical part of the project. Furthermore, the NESEI has made it a point to include the local community in all decisions related to the building and the functioning of the school. They explain that “each community’s needs will be assessed and addressed individually by NESEI and community partners, using a basic and highly successful model for development” (2008). In fact, the board of each school is made up of local leaders from the community (2008).

In terms of the impact the NESEI has made, the organization has, in a rather short amount of time since it was founded in January 2006, made a large impact on the lives of many children. For example, the NESEI (2008) opened its first secondary education school on May 19, 2008, next to Yei, which is located in Southern Sudan. The NESEI (2008) explains that this school currently only educates girls, but plans to expand its scope to include boys and girls after a year of operation. This is important, since scholars studying education in Kenya, for example, have found that families, when they have to choose whether to send their sons or daughters to school, are more likely to invest in boys’ schooling (Buchmann, 2000). Furthermore, this school, along with giving an opportunity to 75 girls to study, has brought together girls of different cultures from the various parts of Sudan, including regions such as Abyei that have recently seen increased fighting (NESEI, 2008). Thus, the NESEI (2008) explains that the school also serves as a safe location for children to be away from the conflict.

A second recently founded NGO that works on developing schools in Southern Sudan is the Project Education Sudan organization. Project Education Sudan, out of Colorado, began in 2006 as a result of the founder, Carol Francis-Rinehart, taking a trip to Kenya and then Southern Sudan, where, along with the others traveling with her, she kept hearing about “the need for schools, clean water and health-care” (PES, 2008). From this, Project Education Sudan developed as an organization to “build, staff, train and supply primary and secondary schools throughout Southern Sudan as funds are available” (PES, 2008). As of now, they have already built one “co-ed secondary school in the Maar area of Bor North [,] . . . and are working on a

[second] school—a primary all girls’ boarding school—in Konbeek Bor South . . .” (PES, 2008). Currently, Project Education Sudan is working on “four construction projects” for schools in “Bor County, Jonglei State.” These four projects include two secondary schools and two primary schools, one of which is a girl’s primary school (PES, 2010). The overall objective of the organization is to consistently “build one or two schools each year for the next five to ten years [and] [b]y the end of 2010 [they] anticipate . . . [they will] have built, staffed and supported ten to twelve primary and secondary schools” (PES, 2008).

Along with building schools, Project Education Sudan has started a number of other programs related to community building and education in Southern Sudan. One of the major programs implemented by this organization is teacher training that is conducted in Southern Sudan. According to Project Education Sudan (2008), “[t]rained professional educators from the United States . . . travel to several villages to conduct teacher-training workshops. . . . The strategies that can help Sudanese teachers to utilize their unique environments and everyday objects to make their classrooms interactive and challenging for their students.” Furthermore, it focuses on the best format for classes, as well as the importance of children’s participation in class. Such training methods were even collected in the form of “teaching kits” so that teachers could reference various types of information related to teaching. They explain that such programs have generated interest among those in the community and that, in fact, “Sudanese teachers traveled from villages near and far to attend these two-day workshops on how to become better educators” (PES, 2008).

Along with teacher training, Project Education Sudan has also begun working on adult literacy programs in Sudanese communities. This project specifically focuses on literacy education for women. The program teaches a number of skills, including but not limited to “how to write numbers, do addition and subtraction equations, use calculators, and perform basic accounting functions.” The main goal is to educate women “to create a small business out of the grinding mills Project Education Sudan donates to the village” (PES, 2008). Keeping in mind the concern about the availability of the program, PES has paid special attention to organizing the classes at times when the most women can attend, since women in the villages have many other responsibilities at home (PES, 2008). In fact, PES has made it

a point to also “[provide] the food and materials the women needed during the day . . . [along with] teachers also spen[ding] one-on-one time teaching local women in the evenings that could not attend the workshops due to their household duties.”

Project Education Sudan (2008) explains that one of the crucial objectives of the organization is to set up a system of “self-sufficiency” for each school that is built. Along with the importance of the school itself for the community, the goal is to include the community in all aspects of the development of the school. And for this reason, Project Education Sudan will pay local workers to construct the schools, as well as hire teachers who will live in the same villages in which the school is located. Furthermore, another project related to self-sufficiency is the PES program in which it gives “[e]ach village . . . cinder block making equipment which can be used to manufacture cinder block for sale to other villages or nearby communities upon completion of the school” (PES, 2008). Moreover, PES aims to further economic development in the community, and therefore, along with building a school, it “suppl[ies] each school with a grain grinding mill to emancipate the girls to go to school as well as creating economic opportunity for the women of the village.” The organization argues that these programs in combination have the joint effect of bringing further economic advancement to the community (PES, 2008). Along with creating business opportunities for local community revenue, one of the main goals of the organization is to maintain a stream of funding for new projects by “build[ing] long-term ties and commitments from corporations, churches, foundations, schools and individuals in the United States.” Furthermore, they explain that by having organizations donate, “this [m]odel allows donors to become stakeholders in a specific community and to participate in its success over the long run” (PES, 2008).

In terms of decision-making, PES (2008) explains that its decisions are made “in cooperation with village elders and village councils to determine whether the commitment necessary to build, staff and provide student populations exists.” Furthermore, Carol Francis-Rinehart, the head of the organization and the executive director, strictly accounts for all funding from the United States. PES (2008) explains on its website that “[F]unds made available to [PES] from US sources will require strict accountability and will be released as progress is made on specific projects. [They] will fund teacher

training and supplies for specific schools.” Furthermore, Project Education Sudan “will use the UNICEF model for accountability in funding projects, project inspection and verification of spending requests by indigenous non-governmental organizations.”

Continued Role of NGOs

Along with the building of schools, as mentioned, NGOs can also be involved in other activism related to universal primary education. For example, in Zimbabwe, the human rights group Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) has been very active in publicizing the importance of free primary education and in putting pressure on the government to provide this right for all children in the country. In February of 2014, members of the group publicly protested for universal primary education by the end of the year (Shereni, 2014). At this protest, 150 police were called in to halt the group’s actions (Shereni, 2014).

If universal child primary education is to be attained, NGOs will have to be at the forefront of this initiative. The UN Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) has specifically stated that NGOs play a key role in education. And in order for continued progress to be made toward the educational objectives discussed, the UN GEFI (2012) states that

Non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and community organizations must play an important role as advocates for education, including mounting media campaigns, mobilizing networks and members and engaging governments, donors and multilaterals. Where they are involved in service delivery, they should work, when feasible, in collaboration with local authorities and in support of local plans. They should also focus on taking successful innovations to national scale, monitoring progress and holding governments and education stakeholders to account. (28)

This statement about coordination between NGOs and local and national governments is important. Unfortunately, when the different actors have not communicated, there have been instances of frustration and ineffectiveness due to unintentionally divergent policies, or the lack of communication has led to unintended inefficiencies, whereas early and frequent interaction between the state and

NGOs could have resulted in more organized responses to the issue of universal primary education. For instance, in the case of Kenya's FTI program, according to many, the government introduced the program rather quickly, and did not communicate its efforts as efficiently as the local civil society would have preferred. And in many cases, because most of the policies were top-down, individuals in the local community at times felt that they did not have the ability to be influential with their approaches. Thus, this led to a certain amount of resentment toward the government because of its lack of communication with domestic civil society on goals that all citizens viewed as important. Fredrik Ogola (2010) gives a great description of how this played out when he says that

Notwithstanding the numerous benefits that have accrued due to FPE, it was noted that the programme had killed community initiatives in education funding and provision. Although the communities were keen to provide physical, material and financial support to schools, they have withdrawn from this in the recent past. They have been made to understand that the government has taken over the full responsibility of providing education. It is hoped that the findings of this study would assist the government in formulating FPE policy that would benefit all the stakeholders by enhancing team work and sustainability of FPE. (vi)

He goes on to say that “[t]eachers and parents noted that information was (and still is) vague on roles and responsibilities. FPE has been much open-ended leaving teachers, schools and parents to figure out the details and its workings” (41). Ogola (2010) also cites some interesting work by John Craig (1990), who, looking at issues of the implementation of educational policies in Sub-Saharan Africa, suggests that when programs are implemented from the national government down, there is often little that local activists can do since the program has been created and controlled by the government. And if there is ever any sort of local recommendation for an alteration of an aspect or parts of the program, national officials have at times become defensive, seeing any comments not necessarily as constructive, and at least in some cases, have viewed them as criticism of their policy (Ogola, 2010: 10).

And in some instances, the government may have its own interest in ensuring that its policies are not challenged. They may be more

concerned with how the program is perceived in terms of public opinion, rather than the overall effectiveness. And in other cases, if the government is in a “weak state,” in which power could be potentially challenged, it may ensure that any of its policies (including education policies) are not criticized. It is not necessarily the importance of the specific education policy that it has outlined, but rather, the concern that any form of challenge could pose to its overall ability to stay in power (Craig, 1990). Thus, sometimes, the government not only does not welcome criticism of its initiatives but also in terms of the programs themselves, it will often highlight the positives, all the while not emphasizing any setbacks due to its educational policy (Craig, 1990). Where this becomes an issue, of course, is when the government introduces such programs without a significant plan of efficiency in mind, but rather, because of “political expediency” (Morojele, 2012: 43), as was the case with Lesotho, for example.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion and Recommendations

As has been mentioned, there are still millions of children without access to primary education. Despite the optimism of programs such as the UN Millennium Development Goals and their objective of having all children attending school by 2015, some, such as Irina Bokova, who serves as the top representative of UNESCO in Paris, has said that this is “impossible” to achieve by the initial timeline that has been set (Coughlan, 2013). Other organizations, such as the Institute for Security Studies and the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, wrote as early as 2011 that “the very low starting point in enrolment levels for many African countries has made the goal of universal primary education by 2015 unreachable,” and thus, they have argued that by modeling successful programs, the hope is to reach universal primary education in Africa by 2030, and overall universal education five years later (Gehring et al., 2011). Nevertheless, Bokova did stress the great strides have been made to reduce the number of children without access to primary education. Furthermore, she pointed out that the world has done a better job of focusing not only on the number of children attending classes but also on the quality of schooling that they are receiving (Coughlan, 2013). Because of issues some related to the education that is being offered—which are believed to exist, given the high illiteracy rates among some children who are attending school—“UNESCO is planning to produce a new set of global metrics to measure what’s actually being learned in primary classrooms around the world” (Coughlan, 2013).

Organizations such as UNICEF (2009) and the World Bank have set out different steps that they believe can help states abolish fees, and in turn work toward the overall objective of universal education. In no particular order, they argue for

1. Defining a leadership and management mechanism that is mandated at the highest level, supported by national consensus, and backed by the best technical expertise available;
2. Creating a comprehensive situation analysis of school fees, related costs, school population and enrollment statistics, and existing resources;
3. Setting priorities on the types of fees to eliminate first; the sequencing of school fee abolition according to geographic area, grade, age, and/or socioeconomic characteristics; and prioritizing children needing more than school fee abolition;
4. Estimating costs related to the range of policy options and identifying sources of local, national, and international financing;
5. Maintaining the focus on quality issues;
6. Strengthening school governance and accountability.

Within this framework, they also outlined ways to increase the number of teacher positions, as well as improve upon existing positions (UNICEF, 2009: 67–70).¹

There are many actors that must continue to work on these issues in order for the global society to reach the ultimate goal of universal child education. One of the most important policies that must be adhered to is that of ensuring completely free schooling for all children. But along with the abolishing of fees, programs must also consider helping families who have difficulty sending their children to school, even when school is free. As mentioned, the reason why a family may decide against sending a child to school may be because they need that child to work; the opportunity costs for the family may still be too high to send their child to school. Or, even if the family does send their children to school, financial help may still be useful, particularly since students have additional challenges when attending school, such as being “ill-nourished, hav[ing] to work long hours at home, walk long distances to school, or live under conditions in which they cannot do their homework” (Fredriksen, 2009: 11). In turn, there are strategies that may help families. For

example, some options could be “targeted cash transfers to families, early childhood care and education, school feeding, and provision of water . . .” (Fredriksen, 2009: 11).

Related to this, some officials have allowed the possibility of “volunteer” funding as well as community fundraisers to increase the resources that a school has. In fact, we have seen many cases of governments allowing volunteer funds to come from parents. However, we must be careful with this option. While these approaches are not theoretically contrary to a free education policy (and in many cases such policy programs actually stipulate that not providing funds would not lead to a child’s being barred from school (Fredriksen, 2009)), we have to understand that such local initiatives could very quickly turn into a form of indirect “fee.” And even if there is not a direct demand that parents pay this fee (and the possibility that it might turn into a requirement is, unfortunately, quite possible), parents may feel a social pressure to contribute this “voluntary” gift to the schools, thus moving us back to the idea of a “fee-based” system. Furthermore, with the option for fundraising from parents and locals, there is a possibility that other children may place a social stigma on other children, depending on whose family contributed (and could afford to contribute) to these donation programs.

The Role of the State

Many observers have offered recommendations on how different actors—together—can help increase the total number of children attending primary school, all the while improving the school conditions,² as well as the overall quality of the education and the educational experience. One of the first actors that I have discussed that should continue its work on the issue of primary education is the national government of each respective state. Understandably, the ability of governments to dictate policies, along with exercising control over large percentages of the state’s total resources, suggests their ability to be able to implement policies that will help advance the goal of universal education. Numerous policy suggestions have been recommended to states to increase their role in supporting the right to child primary education. The following are just some of the recommendations set forth. Fredriksen (2009), in looking at the cases of Kenya, Mozambique, and Malawi, argues that in the cases

of educational success, what is found is that a strong national government leadership exists, with top officials taking an instrumental role in describing the programs to civil society, while offering additional support for educational initiatives. Furthermore, along with their backing of these programs, government officials such as the Education Ministry must continue to build relationships with other officials in the national government and elsewhere (22).

Governments should study the effects of their policies in detail, also making sure that all necessary support is provided, which includes releasing promised funds on time (Fredriksen, 2009). Related to this, Mohamoud Dahir Omar, an education analyst in Hargeisa, Somaliland, speaking about policies in Somaliland, argues that the government should also work on addressing the problem of overcrowded classes by hiring more educators to improve teacher-to-pupil classroom ratios. Furthermore, the government should ensure that those educators are certified. He calls upon the state to build additional classrooms. Interestingly, he also argues for free time, and highlights the importance of a place where the children can focus on other learning, instead of directing the majority of their attention only toward learning for the sake of passing examinations.

However, despite the fact that the state is the primary actor in many of education initiatives, state officials often argue that they are low on the necessary resources necessary to accomplish the objective of free universal schooling. Along with states' arguments that they do not have the funds available to address these issues at a sufficient level, the global economic crisis of recent years has not helped matters when it comes to international aid and primary education policy. Education leaders such as Bokova do admit that the economic crisis of the past years has had a detrimental effect on the UNMDG education objectives, as many countries that promised donations have not followed through, leaving "an 'alarming gap' in funding" (Coughlan, 2013). She does point out, however, that the way to get out of these economic difficulties is through education, that "education is becoming the key issue now in discussions about overcoming the economic crisis" (Coughlan, 2013).

And while it is true that the majority of funds for these programs do often come from states (UNICEF, 2009), it is difficult to believe that the economic crisis has left states with no ability to fund universal primary education programs. In fact, there are still plenty of ways

for states to help financially, and in reality, states themselves often do have the needed resources for these programs. The issue is that in a number of cases, the government just chooses to spend the money elsewhere.³ For example, many observers have criticized states' arguments that they are unable to provide the necessary funding for socioeconomic programs such as primary education for the children in their countries. Yet, Katarina Tomasevski (2006a) argued that there was a gross imbalance between education spending and military spending throughout much of the world in the 1990s and early 2000s, with education percentages being much lower than what was recommended (80). Therefore, she suggested that "[a]lthough lip service has often been paid to the opportunity cost of military expenditure, little has been done to curtail it" (9). In fact, she argued that, considering the education budgets of many countries, the low percentages would make free education untenable with the current figures at the time.

In fact, military spending has two primary effects on the ability of a government to provide economic and social rights to its citizens: a "guns versus butter" trade-off, and a "guns versus investment" trade-off. Bill Felice explains how both of these have an impact on human rights when he says:

The "guns versus butter" argument implies that high military spending is harmful when it is financed by either (a) reducing public expenditures on health, education, and so on, which deprives citizens of basic social welfare programs, or (b) taxing private incomes which leads to a reduction in private consumption and savings, which slows aggregate demand and thus lowers economic growth. The "guns versus investment" argument focuses on the negative consequences of financing military spending through either borrowing or printing new money. Military spending financed through an increase in the budget deficit (borrowing) can lead to an increase in interest rates, which discourages private investment. On the other hand, printing new money to finance military spending can create inflationary pressures in the economy which reduces the incentives to invest or save. (208)

Both of these are, of course, horrible outcomes of high military spending. In the "guns versus butter" argument, high military spending has led to a great decrease in opportunities to fund education,

health care, and other issues related to poverty (Felice, 2010). Thus, it is important for states, civil society, and the international community to ask questions about funding in relation to such human rights, particularly when looking at expansive military budgets. These social and economic problems such as poverty and education are critical to address, and military spending does little to help resolve these problems. In fact, some countries, such as Costa Rica, have committed themselves to reducing their military budget greatly (and in this case to 0%), and in turn have used those resources for social issues (Felice, 2010). When I ran my own quantitative analysis on the effects of military spending on the percentage of children enrolled in primary school, I found that a one-unit increase in military expenditures actually leads to a 0.897 percent decrease in the net enrollment rate. This finding was statistically significant at the .10 level, and thus overall supports theoretical arguments that suggest military expenditures are often made at the expense of funding of child primary education. All else equal, countries that have higher military spending have lower primary school enrollment rates compared to countries that spend less on their military.

Therefore, despite the understandable unwillingness of many leaders to reduce their military budgets, they must do so in order to provide social and economic rights to their citizens. It is imperative that states continue to find ways to ensure that free primary education is provided, and also critical that the society continues to demand these human rights. This means that parents should not pay any fees whatsoever, and that the state should ensure this right to free education, even if it means cutting military spending. In fact, that should be one of the first budgets that should be re-evaluated. But we have to note that military spending will not necessarily be the only budget that would need to take cuts, for as some have argued, to reach the highest levels of universal education and the benefits that this would provide to children, additional reductions may need to be taken in other areas of spending, such as administration and infrastructure projects (Gehring et al., 2011). The key will be to set up budgets that will be best able to provide the basic rights of as many people as possible. Of course, this will take extensive analysis and continued cooperation among and between levels of government, but if the most important objective is universal education, then this can be accomplished.

Thus the state, along with reallocating spending toward education, can and should consider ideas about how to help families with the opportunity costs (UNICEF, 2009) that are associated with sending their children to school, since even if school is free, parents will often lose the help that the child used to provide at home. This goes to the discussion that organizations such as UNICEF (2009) have had regarding the absolute base threshold that a state must set when it comes to universal primary education (40). For example, “[t]he Mexican PROGRESA Program helps those who enroll in primary school complete the cycle. The program gives poor families cash awards to cover the opportunity cost of sending kids to school, a feature that has especially helped girls. It has become a model for other such scholarship programs across Latin America” (Schultz, 2003, Morley & Coady, 2003, in Herz & Sperling, 2004: 9). Scholarship programs in Brazil have also been shown to be effective in reducing the number of children dropping out of school (Hertz & Sperling, 2004). And in some countries, governments have been effective in raising enrollment rates by not only lowering school fees but also cutting expenses such as transportation costs to school (Jenson & Nielson, 1997; Canagarajah & Nielson, 1999) or giving cash to families—as has proven effective in South Africa (Edmonds, 2006), which again would increase the likelihood of families sending their children to school. In fact, organizations such as the UN have spoken about the possibility of taking this into consideration when setting up an educational policy (UNICEF, 2009: 12). Furthermore, other cases exist in which families might send their boys to school but not their daughters, for reasons that could be mitigated if additional funding and/or support were provided. For example, while transportation costs, namely being able to physically get to school, exist for both boys and girls, parents may be more worried about finding safe transportation for girls (Herz & Sperling, 2004), something they might be less concerned with regarding their boys. Overall, lowering transportation costs is strongly related to (and would increase) school enrollment rates (Jenson & Nielson, 1997; Canagarajah & Nielson, 1999).

Also, some have found that issues such as whether sufficient privacy for girls exists in schools makes a great difference in terms of enrollment. This can manifest itself in terms of schools that are only for girls (World Bank, 2001, in Herz & Sperling, 2004), or in some

cases, whether a school has a private toilet or not can be enough to shape enrollment numbers. For example, this has been found to matter to parents, as some particularly raised the issue with regard to sending their daughters to school. For example, “[a] Pakistan study finds that parents require toilet facilities for girls” (World Bank, 1996a, in Herz & Sperling, 2004), whereas if there are no private facilities for girls, some may miss class when they are menstruating (Forum for African Women Educationalists, 2001).

Thus, governments will need to find ways to ensure free education, while working to find the most efficient and effective ways to do so, particularly if they have limited resources. Furthermore, they should also work toward the most efficient ways to do this, since we know that once fees are abolished, other challenges quickly arise. Therefore, some even suggest possibilities such as the phased implementation of programs (UNICEF, 2009: 42–43),⁴ although this is not without its own risks,⁵ since it could lead to stalling by states, or it could fall from being a priority after the initial announcement, particularly if there are political benefits that may arise from the mere introduction of such a program, without the necessary follow-through.

Related to the importance of a state’s providing education, there must also be adequate monitoring of funding usages. For example, the World Bank has stated that at a minimum, 20 percent of the overall budget (yearly) should be earmarked for primary education (Bruns, Mingat, & Rakotomalala, 2003, in Herz & Sperling, 2004). But more than just spending thresholds, there must be adequate monitoring of those funds to ensure proper spending. These monitoring mechanisms must be able to effectively trace donated resources, and must also be able to effectively stop corruption (Herz & Sperling, 2014). Furthermore, when speaking about the education itself that is provided, the state should continue to emphasize not only enrollment but also, as others have suggested, have mechanisms of policy assessment. Policy analysts have offered different recommendations for how to improve the quality of education. For example, a state could reduce some level of control by decentralizing to local and regional governments, which might improve efficiency (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 78).

And in fact, many states have done so, albeit not solely out of altruistic intentions, but rather, for personal interests as well. For

example, in cases in which the government is actually unable to implement an education policy by itself, it will look to NGOs for additional support. Moreover, the state will often be careful to have NGOs take a pronounced role (and lead) since it could hurt the reputation of the state. And thus, governments often allow NGOs to work on education in their countries, but in a manner or location dictated by the government. This way, the government can continue to show the public that they are continuously engaged and committed to the policy, while at the same time providing the needed support for these educational initiatives (Miller-Grandvaux, Weldman, & Wolf, 2002).

NGOs

As mentioned, NGOs have a multitude of ways in which they can work on issues of universal primary education. They can work with international organizations on universal education programs; they can write reports documenting rights abuses and rights improvements; they can work with state leaders to draft and help implement educational policy; or they can work locally with community members and schools. They can help shape the discourse regarding advocacy for free schooling, and they can even help with teaching pedagogy and classroom logistics. In addition, they may be able to help identify families of children who need additional assistance, or work with governments to provide any needed resources for children who are already in school, or those who would be able to attend school if they and their families had additional funds. They can even help build schools, or organize discussions with families, teachers, and members of the civil society. For example, what we have started to see is the organization of “social funds” by NGOs as well as other community members, in which these groups collect money for an educational project such as the building of schools (UNICEF, 2009). For example, well-esteemed education NGOs such as Room to Read are involved in various activities that include “programs to support girls both financially and emotionally, both in school and after graduation; building new schools and providing training or supplementary materials to teachers; establishing and stocking libraries; and publishing books in the local language” (Schirvar, 2013).

Along with these approaches, NGOs also have the ability to be quite effective in altering national and local policies related to education. With the continuation of NGO work in the capacities discussed earlier, there is no doubt that educational enrollment numbers will continue to improve, and that one day we, as an international community, will not only attain universal schooling but also be able to offer top-quality schooling so that all children can study in the most conducive of class environments, which of course means a good teacher-to-student ratio, as well as access to the necessary learning materials such as books, pencils, and computers. In addition, these conditions would also include parents' being able to send their children to school without worrying about the costs.

Yet another way in which NGOs can play a prominent role in helping children with access to education is through the discussion and re-evaluation of local norms and customs. For example, some parents have been opposed to educating their daughters because “[i]n some cultures, just an appearance of impropriety can affect girls’ marriage prospects and leave parents concerned about supporting unmarried daughters” (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 43). Related to this, if a society does not have a precedent of sending girls school, parents may be unlikely to do so because they may be concerned that community members will criticize and ostracize them for their decision to educate their daughter(s) (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 43). But what NGOs can do is to help alter such perceptions. In Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink’s seminal work, *Activists Beyond Borders*, they cite multiple cases in which NGOs were able to work within and with communities and local leaders to help shape perceptions of what were once social norms in a way that changed the behavior of individuals. NGOs were instrumental in changing perceptions on issues such as foot binding in China, as well as women’s suffrage throughout the world. Thus, NGOs can speak to communities, highlighting the benefits of education to the daughters as well as the health benefits that arise from having a daughter who goes to school, and, for those who decide to have children later on, the benefits of having a mother who is educated. In fact, having girls in school will begin to change gender norms. As Rebecca Winthrop and Jenny Perlman Robinson (2014) explain,

Education can—and should—play an important role in empowering girls and young women. It has the ability to transform gender norms

and help build and shape more just and equitable societies. If girls are harassed and abused, our young people will not learn the value of gender equality. If girls are tasked with sweeping the school's floors and the boys are not, this is no way to show the value of gender equality. If female teachers are sidelined and marginalized in schools, this sends the wrong signals to boys and girls about the value of gender equality.

There are many NGOs that do primarily focus on approaches to improving access to female education. Groups such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), while interested in overall educational approaches, do focus many of their resources on the improvement of female education. For example, “[t]hey have a number of initiatives, including Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP), which was introduced in 2005 to train teachers in strategies of promoting female retention and success in education. Another youth empowerment program helped reduce sexual harassment and gender discrimination by both teachers and male students, reaching 80,000 students (both male and female)” (Schirvar, 2013). The GRP helps teachers deal with issues of gender equality in classroom lessons, in classroom interactions, in the materials used to teach, amongst other things (FAWE, 2014).⁶ But along with this, the organization has also conducted research on ways to improve educational retention rates for girls (FAWE, 2014).

And while this book focuses mostly on primary education, an emphasis on secondary education is also important when discussing ways to work toward gender equality (as secondary education will aid in preparing women for careers as well as additional opportunities as leaders) (Winthrop & Perlman Robins, 2014), in addition to the economic advancement of women and individuals overall. Along with norm shaping in society, NGOs and nonstate actors can also focus on curriculum issues, and particularly pay attention to addressing the gender stereotypes that are taught to students.⁷ As I shall discuss shortly, there are many opportunities for NGOs to cooperate with national government officials and international state leaders, as well as with outside NGOs.

International Organizations

International organizations (IOs) need to continue working on primary education policies, and must do so by placing the issue at the forefront of international political issues. Thankfully, many IOs

have been doing just that. For example, along with continuous advocacy and evaluation of primary education programs, organizations such as the UN have organized meetings for countries that have low primary education enrollment numbers. In fact, in April of 2013, the UN set up a meeting with “Bangladesh, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen—which between them have about half the children in the world who are missing out on school” in order to attempt to address the continued challenges in relation to universal primary education (Coughlan, 2013). State representatives discussed factors that were hindering better primary education enrollment rates. This is important as it allows state and nonstate actors to share and exchange ideas about how to improve education overall in their respective countries.

If universal primary education is to become a reality, more meetings between IOs and states will be needed. Furthermore, IOs will need to continue to provide a platform for—and to work with—nongovernmental actors to meet and discuss policy strategies in relation to universal education. We are continuing to see these sorts of initiatives implemented. For example, the UN General Assembly has a UNGA Open Working Group on issues of child education (in Anderson & Crone, 2014). Here, state and nonstate actors are working on Sustainable Development Goals, which include equal and quality education, as well as continued education (Open Working Group, 2014; Anderson & Crone, 2014).

And one of the more recent interesting meetings on the international stage involves 1,500 children, who in May 2014, met in Sri Lanka for the World Conference on Youth. Those in attendance, including many youth activists, congregated to “share ideas, experiences and innovative approaches for effectively contributing to the next global development agenda” (Anderson & Crone, 2014). It is important to continue to move the discourse toward more than just attendance in primary education, but also to bring up additional themes discussed in this book, such as the quality of education as well equity on all fronts (Anderson & Crone, 2014).

Along with global conferences, IOs will continue to play a key role in terms of funding education initiatives. However, we must keep in mind that “[d]evelopment agencies contribute only a small proportion of the financing needed for school fee abolition. But as government educational funding has increased in recent years, so has

external financing, which can lighten cost burdens . . .” (UNICEF, 2009: 61). Nevertheless, organizations such as the World Bank and the UN, as well as regional organization have provided aid for education programs (UNICEF, 2009). In their work, they will need to continue to find additional ways in which education can not only be provided but also be of the highest quality.

However, one of the main ways in which IOs can help is through funding commitments for these educational initiatives. As mentioned, it would take billions of dollars a year for education goals to be reached. Yet, it is not often that domestic and international states commit those sorts of funds. For example, Herz and Sperling, writing in 2004, looked at the EFA Fast Track Initiative at the time and explained that the aid had resulted in less than 300 million a year for the initial ten states that applied and were promised aid, which was not nearly enough for the education programs needed in these host countries (89). Now, states can help in this manner as well. By increased transparency concerning where funds are going, and by showing that the funds are used for programs that are working, international states may feel comfortable and provide the needed support (Sperling, 2005). But the relationship needs to work both ways. Gene B. Sperling, writing on this issue in 2005, argued that

The key to such a compact is certainty. Donors must feel certain that there is a commitment to good governance, careful monitoring, and national ownership of any plan to expand basic education. Leaders of developing countries, on the other hand, must have the certainty that, if they are willing to take on the enormous task of mobilizing political will and resources to seek universal basic education, then donors will live up to their part of the compact by providing the substantial funds needed to fill their financing gap.

He went on to say that

Instilling confidence that donors will live up to their pledge is particularly important in light of the multiple crises facing most poor countries and the reality that many of the economic benefits of achieving universal basic education will not be realized until after current leaders have left office. When the leaders of a poor nation consider taking on such a challenge even though the political payoff

may flow to their successors, it is essential that the global community at least make it dear that those leaders will not be left without the resources to succeed. (Sperling, 2005)

This is important, since it can be difficult to convince a leader to take on initiatives that may not directly result in her/his own immediate benefit, either through public or electoral support. This is often one of the reasons why long-term projects are often not implemented, despite the knowledge of how positive its effects will be for a society. If a leader does not see the immediate payoff, s/he may be much less likely to spend valuable resources on an issue, particularly if the problem at hand does not affect her/his re-election chances. However, by leaders building trust with one another, and working within settings such as the UN, states can continue to work hand in hand on these issues. Hopefully, by considering the recommendations offered here, both donor states and host states will be able to further educational objectives, as the benefits are plenty, both domestically and internationally, as they relates to human rights as well as economic development.

Role of Parents

Along with the role played by states, NGOs, and IOs, parents also have a critical role in helping to ensure that programs that abolish school fees are implemented in their communities. In addition, they are also expected to provide support in other aspects of the education of their children. There are many ways in which parents can be involved in this multitiered process. For example, when the government is either discussing the possibility of new education initiatives or working on implementing improvements upon any existing programs, the parents, along with other members of the community, should be very active in discussing these plans. This cannot be understated, since parental involvement (and particularly from the onset of the discussions) will help “ensure their sense of ownership and full participation throughout the process” (UNICEF, 2009: 22). Furthermore, joint actions between parents, other members of civil society, and the state can help move toward the goals of consensus building (UNICEF, 2009: 22). The government should ensure that parents are involved, and in turn, parents should offer their insight

and input into how they would like to see primary education policies developed.

But along with their role as political advocates on the issue of primary education, parents should also work on providing an ideal learning environment at home; parents can and should offer support for their children. For example, the Minister of Education of Singapore has put out a booklet about the education program in the country, one section of which discusses the role of parents in a child's education. They are viewed as "partners" in educational efforts (14). The pamphlet states that parents can help by speaking with their children about school, taking them to the school building, and getting them acquainted with school resources that are available. Furthermore, they say that parents should support their children and encourage their efforts, as well as know what their children are excelling in, and what subjects or areas their kids might need additional help with. They also note the need to "create a conducive learning environment that suits your child's learning style or habits" (15). The Singaporean government has also set up a Parental Support Group (PSG), in which parents who join can work with schoolteachers on activities that will help foster the learning of the kids (19). These sorts of efforts will help ensure that parents are active in supporting educational initiatives, and should also aid the students as they continue their studies.

Cooperation

As discussed earlier in the book, one of the other much-needed ways of achieving better results regarding primary education is to build coordination efforts between the state government and local and international actors. It is difficult to speak of these groups merely as separate actors, when in reality, the reason that we as an international community have come so far on this issue of education has been specifically because of effective cooperation between the different international and domestic actors. This last point is important because effective child education policy cannot be implemented single-handedly. While there has been a great deal of attention on universal education at the international level—upon which much of the attention has centered (which international organizations such as the UN serving as a central focal point for such a human rights

issue)—in order to engage in a fully effective effort to improve universal education, there needs to be strong communication between the state and NGOs, teachers, administrators, and parents, with a direct and real role for local actors, and not just actions from the state nor just cheap talk suggesting cooperation when in reality there is a monopoly by the state on the decision-making process.

As we saw in countries such as Kenya, there needs to be ownership by local citizens, in combination, of course, with national government leaders. Furthermore, activists and community members must also be a part of the process of working toward universal education. In fact, organizations such as UNICEF (2009) stress the need for governments to work with NGOs and other states who can help their programs. Since a recently introduced no-fee program can be costly, outside actors can help provide funds for such initiatives (5).⁸

There must be overall cooperation between all actors; governments, local groups, NGOs, academics, policymakers, and IOs must work in tandem on these issues (UNICEF, 2009). This is crucial in order to fully understand the problems that still exist as well as to develop effective and lasting solutions that will ensure that children not only have access to free education, that they are able to stay in educational programs, and that they receive top-quality instruction from well-paid teachers who have the necessary time and resources to help the child advance in her/his learning. In fact, many observers warn against approaches in which the government is isolated, thus leaving out other critical actors, and caution that “[a]bolishing school fees must thus not reduce community support to schools. On the contrary, school fee abolition should expand and strengthen community engagement” (UNICEF, 2009: 12).

Governments should actually make it a priority to establish conditions that encourage NGO activity toward universal education (Brinkerhoff, 2004, in Ibembe, 2007), instead of continuing to view many NGOs with suspicion, which has at times been the case. Unfortunately, in some governments have publicly criticized NGOs and the motivations behind their activities (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). What this does is that it puts a government spotlight on NGOs so that the state can monitor how they are behaving, often with the belief that such organizations are a challenge to the state. This, of course, reduces the trust between different actors, and in many cases, actually leads to government constraints on NGOs,

which in turn makes their work to advance universal education even more difficult.

Unfortunately, it is quite frequent that a state has issues with the NGOs operating within its borders, and vice versa, and thus working toward the goal of universal education is a challenge. Again, some of this can be explained by governments' attitudes toward their role in providing education, as well how they perceive the role of NGOs in this matter. It has sometimes been the case that governments will assume that the responsibility of providing education falls solely on them, and thus, they can at times be unwilling to allow other nongovernmental actors to have a role in education initiatives, or at least one that is independent of government oversight. As Miller-Grandvaux et al. (2002) explain, "[a]lthough government personnel often talk about partnerships with NGOs, they believe the relationship should be government regulating NGOs[,] (6) instead of communication, which would suggest a genuine cooperative approach.

Furthermore, there are a number of instances in which NGOs themselves are in fact skeptical that the government can provide the necessary education for children. And thus, because they believe that the state is unable to set up an educational system, they often do so themselves in the form of their own policies or schools constructed and/or overseen by NGOs. Often, such groups do not receive initial government approval for activities, but rather, "the NGO starts its program and then tries to work out whatever issues emerge with the government" (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002: 12). And thus, despite the attention that is being paid to education, the government is often upset at the NGOs' actions, as they are outside of the state's idea of the role of NGOs. It seems that they would rather prefer that NGOs engage in other supportive activities, rather than directly providing education (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002).

Moreover, because of the stress between NGOs and state leaders, there are many ways in which the government can control the activities of NGO groups, thus making it more challenging for these organizations to work on universal child education policy. For example, a state can place licensing regulations on NGOs, which makes it difficult for the nongovernmental groups to become recognized by the government. Miller-Grandvaux et al. (2002) found that in their research on government/NGO relations in Mali, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Guinea, NGOs are supposed to register in the host country.⁹

However, NGOs often complained that it was not clear or easy to register with the state, and this process itself can also be economically costly.

In addition, a government may also pass legislation to complicate the ability of NGOs to operate so as to ensure a feeling of control and oversight of their educational programs. In a study on Malawi, following a new government in 1994, a state official stated, “now there is a need to control them . . . closer consultation is needed so that the ministry is fully aware of what is happening on the ground” (7). Following the implementation of new legislation, such laws often require NGOs to keep the government abreast of the various activities that the organizations carried out during the preceding year. Moreover, a government can restrict the funding of NGO groups. While states often provide some sort of resources to a group, this is not always the case. Furthermore, there have been instances in which, if the NGO could raise its own funds, state leaders would provide less to the organization because of those additional funds that it collected (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002).

Thus, if the state fails to cooperate with NGOs, then one can be sure that problems between the different actors will arise. Many cases of this have occurred. For example, in Lesotho, local actors either felt disconnected or thought they did not have to do much, given the government’s statements about their extensive role in the new free primary education program. In turn, teachers became frustrated because the government was not actually coming through with much-needed resources. Thus, when there is not clear communication and identification of roles, this will surely hinder any long-term chances of success for these programs. But by identifying clear objectives and defining actions for each group (parents, teachers, NGOs, etc.), not only can one build better communication but also the clear understanding of responsibility will help whenever challenges arise and will be instrumental in moving such programs forward. As Morojele (2012) explains, “[t]he challenges for Free Primary Education implementers is to devise strategies on how to consider the views and values of the local stakeholders to form part of the processes of putting this educational reform into practice” (43).

Instead, what should happen is that NGOs should feel completely free to work on the issue of child primary education themselves as they best see fit, outside of government control. This, of course, may

include offering their own resources and policy recommendations, as long as their actions do not run counter to the foundation and essence of free education initiatives (UNICEF, 2009). As we can imagine, coordination would best serve the interests of the children receiving access to school. As discussed earlier, by working together, leaders will, hopefully, not feel threatened by other nonstate actors, and will instead embrace the willingness of civil society to respond to the challenges that lie ahead when working toward universal schooling.¹⁰ In fact, there have been examples of governments moving toward a more inclusive position in relation to NGOs, which in turn has led to great cooperation efforts and successful education policies. For example, in Pakistan, the government in the mid-2000s “Deepened its commitment to partnerships with civil society organizations by placing an emphasis on working with a wider spectrum of civil society organizations including International and National Development NGOs through global partnerships to help deliver basic social services. Civil society organizations have become critical allies in designing innovative operations, implementing solution and monitoring results” (Arbab, 2006). With this partnership, NGOs have been able to work on educational policy, recruitment, and school construction, as well as the quality of education through the improvement of teacher skills, all with government support. Regarding how these groups see their position in relation to the actions of the government as they concern education, Arbab (2006) explains that “NGOs are very clear about the fact that their role is not to replace the government but to ensure that the government effectively covers educational needs, with respect to quality, accessibility, affordability and equity in mind. NGOs assume several important roles such as advocacy, service delivery, capacity building, grass root community mobilization, innovation, social experimentation and research.” In the case of Uganda’s program on universal primary education, “NGOs such as Plan international-Uganda are offering technical services to districts in the area of funding and implementation of school construction. These, they hand over back to districts after they are commissioned” (Ibembe, 2007). Such work requires dedicated commitments by both the state and NGOs, and a willingness by both to work together for said objectives. Also, in Uganda, other NGOs such as CCF have cooperated with government leaders to enhance the quality of education in the country (Ibembe, 2007).

And, of course, it can sometimes take time to develop this cooperation, particularly if there has been a negative history between the state and the NGO community, and more specifically, if the government has viewed the NGOs as challenging or speaking out against their decision-making (Ibembe, 2007), a theme I addressed earlier in the context of state power. Nevertheless, if the different actors cooperate, there will be great possibilities as far as continuing the improvement of education. Along with the examples noted above, there are ways in which this can be accomplished. For example, as some analysts argue, the state can provide the funding and the different educational resources for efficient learning; books, materials, and so forth can be provided by the national government. However, it will not operate alone, as local officials can help its initiatives. Furthermore, parents and NGOs can work together on local educational issues (Herz & Sperling, 2004). For example,

Communities and parents offering significant input and support, often facilitated by a local NGO that helps mobilize support for a decision to educate girls as well as boys, and design and run local school-system functions. Typically in these arrangements, parents select or help select the teachers, enforce teachers' attendance, help maintain the school buildings, and in some cases even provide a place for a school, all in close partnership with government. (Herz & Sperling, 2004: 79)

Again, we have to keep in mind that, in order to reach policy objectives such as education, there needs to be a cooperative effort. The state, often despite its attempts to argue that it is in control of these educational programs (along with other social policy plans), is often unable to effectively carry out such plans without help from NGOs and other actors. Many cases have shown this to be true: governments themselves need help. Interestingly, many NGO leaders have said that governments often allow them to operate because their work is critical if the policy goals are to be met (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002).

Overall, we have to keep in mind that education is much more than merely earning a greater income, despite the importance of economic stability and the role that education does provide in addressing this need. Education is about becoming a globalized citizen, about fostering individuals who can make informed decisions that will help

their families and communities. Education is about expanding the mind, and about being an active and involved citizen. Fortunately, the discussion about education is not only about numbers of enrollment nor about more quantitative measures of value in education. But rather, as Anderson and Crone (2014) explain,

Initiatives and researchers are placing greater emphasis on the notion that education isn't just about building a skilled workforce, but also about cultivating active and responsible citizens; that teaching isn't just a matter of presenting facts but instilling skills, attitudes and awareness in students that facilitate peace and tolerance and enable the international collaboration needed to solve global challenges.

These are objectives that we, as a world community, must continue to value. We must stress the fullness of life and the role that a broad education serves in fulfilling such rights for all individuals. The emphasis on global citizenship is what the ultimate objective should be (Global Education First Initiative, in Anderson & Crone, 2014). And again, as a world community, we need to continue to evaluate and re-evaluate our goals and the capacities in which we are achieving them, and if not, the ways in which we can do so. There are discussion on approaches toward education following the 2015 with the end of the Millennium Development Goals statements (Anderson & Crone, 2014), and such work should continue, as a sustained international cooperative effort will be the only way in which we can advance toward universal primary education, universal secondary education, and other educational goals such as global citizenship (Anderson & Crone, 2014).

Notes

2 The Importance of Education: What Are the Benefits of Providing Free Child Primary Schooling?

1. In their study, Boehmer and Williamson (1996) find additive effects regarding “absolute educational status” and interaction effects with development measurements (350).
2. There is a methodological point to note here, however. The authors state that “the coefficients on these variables are sensitive to the reduction in sample size. . . . The coefficient for mothers with only incomplete primary education declines especially sharply and is no longer statistically significant” (13).
3. For example, the level of education of the head of the household overall is related to whether children of the family attend school or not (Tzannatos, 2003: 528; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997). From this, some have prescribed various policy recommendations such as improving adult literacy, which in turn could aid in improving child education rates (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997).
4. The OECD (2013) does raise the point, however, that there is not universal agreement of causality related to these points, that the key explanatory variable, namely, child health, could be extended into adulthood, thus driving the relationship.

3 Child Education in International Human Rights Law

1. Weiner (1991), in Fyfe (2005) found that one of the primary factors for the rise in the percentage of children attending primary education in Global North states in the 1800s was due to national laws limiting child workers.
2. Many entities at that time were still under some form of colonization, and thus did not have UN representation. And while there is some hypocrisy involved in the process (with states that were at the very same time supporting both the document and continuing to engage in

- human rights abuses as colonialist powers), the document is an early recognition of a range of rights that all human beings should have.
3. Unlike the ICESCR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, put into force the same year as the ICESCR, says very little regarding education. The reference to schooling in the document is Article 18, point 4, which states that “The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”
 4. As a declaration and not a formal treaty or convention, the UDHR is not legally binding on states, although it has increased its role in terms of international law by moving toward customary law.
 5. A major problem with schooling in economically developing states is that school fees are also charged because government funding is not enough to cover the cost of maintenance (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008).
 6. The amount of aid given to each country as of 2005 can be found at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/table6_11.pdf.
 7. More recent goals of the Global Partnership for Education (2013) can be found in its 2012–15 Strategic Plan. Some of the objective partnership goals include “Support to fragile and conflict affected states,” “Girls’ education,” “Quality of learning,” “Teacher effectiveness,” and “Expanding support to the education sector” (World Bank, 2013; Global Partnership for Education, 2013).
 8. Countries have received millions of dollars through the Catalytic Fund (CF). For example, Rwanda was promised 105 million dollars for 2007–09, and Kenya received 121 million dollars from 2005 to 2009 for its educational initiatives (Cambridge Education et al., 2009, in Malouf, 2010: 10).
 9. For a detailed discussion regarding the contributions and limitations of the EFA Fast Track Initiative, see the Mid-term Evaluation of the Fast Track Initiative (Cambridge Education & MOKORO, 2010; in Malouf, 2010).
 10. Malouf (2010) cites the case of Yemen, to which \$20 million dollars were granted in 2006, and as of 2010, were still not received by the state (15). However, this is not the only case in which e delayed payments have occurred.
 11. For a detailed account about what was discussed at the UNICEF and World Bank SFAI 2006 workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, the “Building on What We Know and Defining Sustained Support” report (UNICEF & the World Bank, 2006).

12. For example, Tibbetts (1995) points out that the Bank has helped in regard to poverty issues for many countries facing political and economic hardship and has been an advocate of agriculture programs in India that have resulted in India's "becom[ing] agriculturally self-sufficient" (446), along with setting agricultural programs in other parts of the world. The World Bank itself claims to have aided former Soviet countries in terms of establishing democracies (Tibbetts, 1995: 446) that have been highly effective. In terms of education, the World Bank explains that it has been highly successful in its education programs, reducing the number of children not attending primary school by easing access to education (2008), while also addressing poverty issues that in turn help children who are facing hunger, an important goal related to development. Moreover, some suggest that the World Bank has been effective in data collection and information sharing, and the *World Development Indicators* have been a valuable resource for those studying development (Krueger, 1998).

4 What Are the Reasons Why Children Are Not Attending Primary School?

1. The UN (2013) explains that "[a]mong the 137 million children who entered first grade in 2011, 34 million are likely to leave before reaching the last grade of primary school. This translates into an early school leaving rate of 25 per cent—the same level as in 2000."
2. In fact, those who are less likely to attend are usually from "poorer households and have mothers with no formal education" (UNDP, 2007: 11).
3. Tomasevski (2006) includes tables in her study comparing enrollment rates to whether a state guarantees free primary education, although no statistical analysis is conducted. This study attempts to do just that, employing an OLS regression, while controlling for other factors that may impact child primary education enrollment rates.
4. For the full research design, see the Appendix section.
5. The government does have what is called an Edusave account that students can use for fees, as well as to pay for additional school activities. There are also Edusave awards that are available to Singapore citizens. These awards come with a financial award amount, which varies depending on the award. Many of these awards are merit and/or grade based. For example, the Edusave Character Award is awarded to "[o]utstanding pupils from each school who demonstrate exemplary character and personal qualities through their behaviour and actions (2% of Singaporean pupils from each school" (Singapore Minister of Education, 2013: 12).

The scholarship amount for this award is \$200 for grades 1–3, and \$350 dollars for grades 4–6. There are other purely merit based awards, as well as merit and need combination awards (such as the Edusave Merit Bursary, which is for the “[t]op 25% of pupils in each level from each school based on academic performance and with gross household income not exceeding \$5000 per month, or per capita income not exceeding \$1200 per month” (Singapore Minister of Education, 2013).

6. For more on parents in urban areas paying for teacher salaries in primary schools, see Mingat (2004) in Fredriksen (2009).
7. Somaliland did implement free primary education once before 2011. But it ended this policy in 1994, due to civil conflict (IRIN, 2011).
8. It must be noted that here Ellis (2007) argues that this perception that all schools preach radical Islam is incorrect.

5 State Challenges to Ensuring Free Primary Schooling: Case Studies

1. Some point out, however, that because parental fees are no longer allowed, some schools in countries like Uganda and elsewhere, despite the money from the government, actually bring in less than before the UPE program was initiated (Nishimura et al., 2009).
2. However, decentralization has also led to some issues with cooperation between agencies (see Vermeulen, 2013: 61).
3. Uganda has attempted to address issues of teacher qualification on-site as well as distance training programs (Aguti, 2002).
4. For a discussion on the history of school fees in Namibia, see Mendelsohn (1999).
5. And in 2014, the government announced that by 2016, secondary education would also be free (Beukes, 2014).
6. In the 2013/2014 fiscal year, the government was projected to spend N\$9.9 billion on education, a slight increase from the N\$9.4 billion in 2012/2013 fiscal year, and N\$8.6 billion figure in 2011/2012 (De Klerk, 2012). The most recent figure for 2013/2104 is a sizable amount, namely “23,6 percent of total government expenditure” (De Klerk, 2012).

6 Non-State Actors: The Role of NGOs in the Fight for Free Universal Education

1. They also point out some of the challenges of working with coalitions. For this discussion, see Miller-Grandvaux et al. (2002: 34).
2. Makau Mutua (2000) has used this term “insider” in the discussion of human rights and Africa.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Some of these recommendations include additional training of teachers, expanding school hours, “[a]dopting multigrade teaching,” minimizing “multishift teaching,” reducing the number of students per class, “reducing the repetition rates,” aiming to prevent teachers from redeployment due to various drawbacks, attempting to recruit and identify graduate students who are without employment as potential teachers (70), providing monetary and other incentives to teachers, recruiting internationally, using teaching assistants as well as previously retired teachers, and also considering “distance education” (73). They also advocate “contract teachers,” although this approach is not without potential controversy from teacher unions, as we have seen before (UNICEF, 2009).
2. The issue of the condition of the schools currently in operation poses additional challenge to learning. Many studies have investigated the conditions of many classrooms as well as the school buildings. Therefore, policies should also include financing for new schools and the improvement of schools that are in bad shape. This, of course, will not come cheap. For example, “[i]n Nigeria, under the country’s Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (2001), construction time for a typical school with six classrooms averaged 15 months and cost \$28,000; in many locations, time and costs are even higher. The costs of renovating and maintaining existing schools and replacing those beyond repair and the impact of new construction on the environment are rarely addressed” (UNICEF, 2009: 53).
3. Many states have, in fact, increased their spending on education as a percent of their overall GDP (UNICEF, 2009).
4. For example, in Lesotho, the government “Phased in the abolition of school fees by grade. In 2000 it introduced free primary education starting with grade 1. The following year it abolished fees in grade 2. By 2006 fees had been abolished in grades 1–6” (Bentaouet-Kattan, 2006, in UNICEF, 2009: 44). For a discussion on the phasing in of such educational initiatives, see pages 44–46 of the 2009 UNESCO “Six Steps to Abolishing Primary School Fees: Operational Guide.” Other countries have come up with unique approaches to providing alternative support for children and their families. For example, in the Gansu Basic Education Project that is located in China, scholarships are provided based on level of need. Here, a point system based on family income, along with other factors, has been created to gauge level of need (Bray, Ding, & Huang 2004, in UNICEF, 2009: 46).
5. Fredriksen (2009) argues that “The big bang approach avoids difficult choices such as who should benefit now and who should benefit

later, which implies that some may not benefit at all because they have become overage by the time it is their turn,” although obvious challenges such as an influx of students (and thus the issue of ensuring enough classrooms and teachers to teach in them) will arise with immediate implementation (24).

6. Since 2005, over 6,600 teachers have been introduced to FAWE’s gender equality program (FAWE, 2014).
7. There have been findings showing that education material itself can perpetuate stereotypes between men and women (see Gachukia, Kabira, & Masinjila 1992; Obura, 1985; Biraimah, 1980; Ethiopian Ministry of Education, 1980; in Herz & Sperling, 2004).
8. But more than just aid from outside of the said government, the state should also build better relationships between departments, since education enrollment is not really limited to education; health, social welfare, and other related ministers should work together to best improve education rates (UNICEF, 2009: 5).
9. Not registering not only brings the attention of the state but also makes it much more difficult to receive government resources (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002).
10. One other consideration is that government officials should also make it a point to work with opposition parties as well as those within the government who may take issue with these initiatives (Fredriksen, 2009).

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