Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Conflict and Education: The Case of Rwanda

Jessica Walker-Keleher

In the context of conflict, agencies (international, governmental, and non-governmental) have generally conceived of education as either inherently benevolent, "a force for good," or as another victim to suffer in war. This paper considers a third relationship between education and conflict and explores formal education as a potential trigger for tensions and contributing factor to conflict.

A Force for Good

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All stressed education as a means of preventing conflict.

> Education is increasingly seen as one means to reduce and overcome the effect of violence. It can prevent emergencies from occurring and can bring a sense of normalcy and stability into an otherwise chaotic situation.[1]

A Victim of War

Another prevalent view of education is as the victim. This is certainly an important relationship to consider given that 82% of the 113 million children around the world reported to be out of school live in countries in crisis or emerging from crisis.[2] Teachers are targeted, school buildings are looted, landmines are lain in school yards; all preventing children from attending classes and deeply impacting both a society's and an individual's future. But concern has recently been raised as to the completeness of this picture.[3]

A Negative Face of Education4

Although formal education systems have the potential to contribute to peacebuilding initiatives in a society, this paper argues, they also have the capacity to foster conditions for violence. In the case of Rwanda, the formal school system has likely contributed to the conflict in the past and, despite several major and positive changes, may well continue to engender ethnic tensions today.

Before schools can play a significant role in promoting peace within Rwanda, the potential "negative face" of education needs to be acknowledged and better understood.

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After a brief overview of Rwanda's geography, its contested history, and the development of the education system there, this paper will look at how the formal education curriculum, system-wide practices, and classroom practices may have increased divisions among Rwandans in the past and will highlight factors which may serve as triggers for violence in the future.[5]

The Rwandan Context

Geography

Rwanda is located in east-Central Africa, bordering Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is a hilly and predominantly agricultural country with a total area of 26,338 square kilometers (approximately the size of Maryland). Despite the fact that Rwanda is a small country, most families lived in relatively isolated units until recently. It is one of the few African countries that have a single African language.

The Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa are the three primary groups that inhabit the region. The history of these groups, particularly the Hutu and the Tutsi, where they came from, when they came, and the relationship between them is fiercely debated and highly political. Some believe that the distinction made between Hutu and Tutsi was a social construction employed by the Belgian colonists to divide and rule the country. Others insist that the Hutu and the Tutsi are radically different peoples with different characteristics and values. Whatever interpretation one subscribes to, it is generally agreed that "Hutus" make up roughly 85%, "Tutsi" slightly less than 15%, and "Twa" approximately 1% of the population.

Before colonization the region was defined by several kingdoms. When the Germans arrived, they helped "incorporate" Hutu kingdoms in the northwest into the centralized Tutsi kingdom. Though there is disagreement about the extent of the pre-colonial war-

ring among kingdoms, it is acknowledged that the central Tutsi kingdom was dominant when the colonists arrived, and it is with this monarchy that the Belgians slowly created a relationship of indirect rule in Rwanda.

The History of Formal Education in Rwanda

As a mirror of society, the education system, too, developed vast inequities. It served the interests of those administering it, namely the colonizers, the Church, and the indigenous group in power.

The Colonizers

Before colonialism, education was informal. The Germans, as noted earlier, were the first colonizers of Rwanda but their influence on the development of formal education was minimal since they lost the colony after World War I. Belgium was given the territory by the League of Nations in 1919, and began administering it in earnest in the mid-twenties. With regard to formal education, the colonial administrators relied heavily on the missionaries who had arrived before them at the turn of the century.

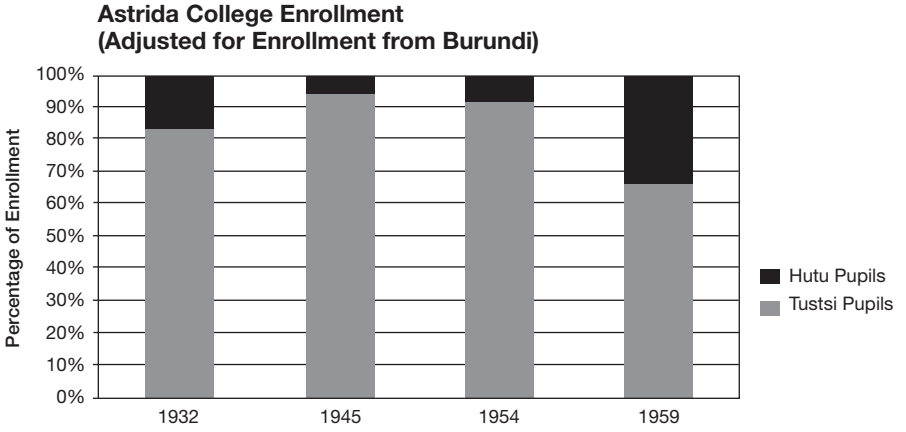
The Partnership between the Church and the Colonizers

Upon arrival in the late 1800s, the Catholic missionary order of White Fathers petitioned the *mwami* (the king in the region that is now Rwanda) at Nyanza for permission to establish a mission with a school at the palace. They were, instead, granted a site five hours away but managed, with the help of their armed escort, to establish a school near the palace anyway.[6] By 1918, quite separate from the colonial administrations, there were close to a dozen Catholic missionary schools operating. Between 1919 and 1943, Protestants including Belgian Presbyterians, Seventh Day Adventist, Anglicans, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Methodists also arrived in the area, but the Catholics maintained their pre-eminent role in education that continues to the present day.

As the Belgian colonial administration willingly let the missionaries carry the burden of running schools, education policies in Rwanda were largely set by the Church and in line with its goal of creating a "Christian African community." Missionaries envisioned "…just enough schooling for the masses to master the catechism and accept the church's teaching without rejecting their traditional way of life and occupations."[7] They also needed a higher quality education for an African clergy. As the White Fathers and Belgians had aligned themselves with the Tutsi, it was in this way that only a limited number of Hutus received advanced training. The bulk of the post-primary school places went to Tutsi sons of the monarchy—those who were to serve as the indirect rulers in the country. The schools existed primarily to serve the interests of the missionaries and the colonizers, as opposed to serving the people.

The enrollment at Astrida College, the institution that eventually emerged from the original mission school located near the *mwami*'s (the king) palace, is illustrative of the preference given to the minority Tutsi during the colonial period (recall that Tutsi make up less than 15% of the Rwandan population). Note that Twa are not even represented in the enrollment figures. Despite their minority population, the Tutsi accounted for an overwhelming majority of its enrollment.

Despite the prevalence of mission schools, the colonial government experimented with schools of its own. Between 1923 and 1925, the administration established four govern-



Data Source: Modified from Prunier, G. 1995. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers

ment schools to train clerks, aides, and other low-level posts in the administration. These were closed by 1929 as they proved to be more expensive and of lower quality than the mission institutions. As a result, the Belgian administrators decided to indirectly control the Church schools (as opposed to compete with them) through contracts and subsidies. There became *écoles officielles* (government schools or schools managed by missions under contract with the Belgian government), *écoles libres subsidiées* (Belgian mission schools with government subsidies) and *écoles libres non-subsidiées* (privately funded schools run by foreign missions). This system mirrored their own in Belgium.

After World War II, the region now known as Rwanda became a United Nations trusteeship. The UN criticized Belgium's colonial schools for being too much under religious control and for not providing access to higher education to Africans. In response, Belgium initiated some reforms regarding teacher qualifications, teaching materials, and inspections, but still remained reluctant to provide sufficient access to higher education to a colonized people.[8] While schools privileged the Tutsis, they still mainly served the purposes of the colonizers and the missionaries.

Independence

At the time of independence in 1962 the country had forty secondary schools, including six seminaries and thirty-four écoles libres subsidiées. Almost all were owned by the Catholic and Protestant churches. The 1962 Constitution declared that primary education should be free and obligatory and the new government's goal established its own national university a year later. Though there were some reforms in curriculum and post-primary training, the formal education system was largely inherited wholesale by the new state.

After independence the inequitable access to post-primary education flip-flopped. As the government came under control of the Hutu majority, instead of the "Tutsi sons of the royal court" receiving a disproportionate number of places, Tutsis now had a hard time being admitted to secondary schools. During the "Second Hutu Republic (1973–1994)," under the military regime of General Habyarimana, *iringaniza*, or the "policy of quotas," was codified. This policy was based on an article of public law and regulated the transition from primary to secondary school. Under this policy students were officially admitted to secondary schools based on:

- marks, averages, and points achieved in examination
- continuous assessment or academic history of a child
- regional quotas
- ethnic quotas
- gender quotas[9]

On the surface, these "criteria" gave a sense that there was an acceptable method for determining who would go to school, but in essence, it allowed the Hutu government the possibility to discriminate at will against Tutsi students. The results of primary examinations, potentially the one "objective" assessment that the student had control over, were never published, thereby exposing the process to exclusionary charges. It appears that this method of determining school advancement, whether fair or not, created animosity within the country.[10]

In addition to *iringaniza*, the government enacted the Education Reforms of 1979. These reforms were largely concerned with the problem of human resource development. With a limited agricultural and natural resource base, rural unemployment of youth was seen as a pressing problem. In addition to major structural reform intended to "ruralize, vocationalize, and democratize education," instruction in mother tongue (Kinyarwanda) and local culture were stressed. This inward-looking reform aimed, among other things, to stop double-shifts (where students go to school either in the morning or in the afternoon) in order to increase the amount of times students spent in school. However, despite these efforts, double-shifts continued.

Even with various reforms and initiatives over the years, the educational climate throughout the post-independence era continued to be characterized by inequitable access. In 1990, less than ten percent of primary school graduates were able to go on to secondary school due to the limited supply of school places. In 1991, the seventh and eighth grades were shifted from the primary to the secondary level, creating an even larger numeric divide between the level of education of those who had access to secondary schools and those who did not.[11]

While in theory primary education was free (and compulsory), parents nevertheless had to pay 300 FRW per term, or just over $5 USD per year in addition to uniform and other direct and indirect costs.[12] Rwanda has a per capita income of less than $300 USD per year and for many poor families these fees were prohibitive.

After the Genocide

President Habyarimana's plane was shot down on April 6, 1994. While it remains disputed who was responsible for the death of the president, it is not disputed that, within the emergent power vacuum, the killing began the next day. After the infamous "one hundred days" of violence, the state of the education system was, once again, a mirror of society. The following gives some indication of the scope and the depth of the damage:

> On the human scale: About 800,000 people had been killed. Two million people —or about one-third of the population—had fled the country, to Zaire, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania. One million more were internally displaced. As many as 60 percent of the women were now heads of families. The number of girls and women about to give birth as a result of rape... could not be calculated.
>
> Schools: Of the 1,836 schools, 65% were damaged, and only 648 were operational in October 1994; 1,188 needed urgent repair. Almost one quarter of the

> buildings were still occupied by refugees returning from The Congo and Burundi, by military forces or displaced people... all the schools have been looted and pillaged...
>
> Teachers: Teachers symbolized the elite and the educated in Rwanda. They became a particular target during the genocide. Teachers were also perpetrators of the genocide....Teachers turned against other teachers, neighbors and pupils. Pupils did the same. The result was unimaginable terror and shock; and the total erosion of faith in the education system.[13]

Amazingly, the Ministry of Education re-opened primary schools in September of 1994 and secondary classes for the twelfth grade the following month so these students could be certified for the work they had completed before the genocide began in April. Education policy outlawed any form of discrimination and eliminated the old practice of ethnic and regional identification for students and teachers. Donors provided supplies and funds for teacher training, as well as other support, and the formal education system started rebuilding.

Given the history of the development of the education system, it is not surprising that the school system contributed to creating a context in which the extreme violence of 1994 took place. From its founding, the institution of formal education was exclusionary and systemic injustices continued after independence. Despite major efforts to address the inequalities and wrongs of the past after the genocide, the school system today, as we will see, seems to continue as a source of conflict and could breed potential triggers for future conflict.

Examining Curriculum, System, and Classroom Practices

Theoretical Foundation for the "Negative Face" of Education

Exploring the so-called "negative face" of education is not a new concept. It draws partially on the tradition of critical pedagogy that includes the likes of Paulo Friere, Ivan Illich, and Henry Giroux. These post-modern authors have made the issue of power in the teaching and learning context a central concern. They question how and in whose interests knowledge is produced and "passed on" and view the ideal aims of education as emancipatory. These authors recognize that education and systems of education function in a political domain and, therefore, are not neutral. According to their collective work, education either works to maintain the status quo or to change it.

The recognition of a "negative face" of education has been limited among humanitarian and development practitioners. As they intervene in the new post-war contexts around the world they are, however, reflecting more critically on how their assistance has potentially "aided violence," and new debates have begun about the conditionality of aid and conflict prevention.[14] Agencies are trying to understand how they can both "do no harm" as well directly impact the sectors of another country's society that will prevent conflict in the future.[15] The following section looks at the issues development practitioners and policy makers are beginning to explore and examines the Rwandan formal education system through three lenses: the curriculum, system practices, and classroom practices.

The Curriculum

There is currently a wide range of conceptualizations of school "curriculum." For the sake of simplicity, this section adopts the approach more traditionally taken by the Rwandan

Ministry of Education and understands "curriculum" as "the list of subjects taught in schools."[16]

For Rwanda, the subjects that are most sensitive are the pre-genocide history and civics curricula. The realities surrounding the current lack of a history curriculum and the implementation struggles of the new political education curriculum are also are also important issues.

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Leading up to 1994

What was not taught, the so-called "null" curriculum, is a good place to begin discussions of the curriculum in Rwanda before the genocide. Similar to the rest of colonial Africa, the Belgian colonists did not teach pre-colonial history. This means that most Rwandan students between the 1930s and 1950s did not, among many other aspects of their heritage, hear about the *mwami* (the king) in school.[17] Feminist scholars have studied the negative impacts on gender identity of those who see nothing of themselves in what they are obliged to study.[18] The parallels to ethnic identity are strong.

In interviews conducted in 2001 by the human rights organization African Rights, Rwandese teachers discussed how history and civics courses were manipulated and misused to encourage a sense of community as well as grievance among Hutus in the post-independence era. For example, Jevenal, age 35, was a detainee in Nyanza prison at the time of the interview, but before the genocide he was a teacher in the south-central part of the country.[19]

> The contents of certain courses like civics and history, combined with the approach of certain teachers, had a detrimental effect on the development of relationships between the Hutus and the Tutsis. In history the subject matter was presented with an ideological bias instead of presenting the facts as they happened. It is no longer a secret that in school text books there were entire chapters about the civil war of 1959, the resounding victory of the Hutus, the humiliating defeat of the Tutsis and the exile of the Tutsis and so on. They added that the Tutsis had fled for their lives and some of them had been killed.
>
> When we taught such things all the pupils were influenced. The Hutus were swelled with pride, which was what the texts intended, whilst the Tutsis felt inferior. Most of the Tutsi pupils had seen close relatives either killed or exiled in 1959.[20]

Costatsie, another teacher, saw a clear link between the genocide and how history was taught prior to 1994:

> The contents of the history course, which used to be taught in primary schools, had a direct bearing on the genocide of 1994. It concentrated exclusively on

> ethnic divisions as if they were the only important thing, which is not true. The children used to learn them by heart as if they were the gospel truth. They are in fact the misconceptions which are at the very root of the genocide. [21]

Emmanuel, who has taught for 22 years, discussed the civics curriculum which was taught during Habyarimana's rule:

> We used to speak about the administrative structure. Students ended up knowing all about the ministers and their ministries by heart. There was never any interest in people…. Nobody had the right to change anything in the programme given the coercive political system. There were no teachers capable of opposing it. This teaching contributed enormously to radicalizing ethnic identities. And of course what was taught in the civics course was repeated in the popular political gatherings where the song was the triumph of republicanism over the monarch, of the Hutu over the Tutsi.[22]

Students finishing their teacher training at the Kigali Institute of education this year affirmed these teachers' concerns about the curriculum before the genocide. They referred to it most often in their responses to the author's survey as the factors that they felt were divisive or things they would change in their own classroom.

For example, a 27-year-old male suggested he would not repeat mistakes of the past by "…teaching students that the group they belong to must dominate the other and eat alone the national cake…" or "…telling the children of one group that their ancestors had been dominated and abused by the ancestors of the other group—enhancing revenge."[23]

Over a Decade Later

The contested history of Rwanda, which continues to lie at the heart of the national debate, has been withdrawn from the curriculum. A decade later, students are not officially learning history, Rwandan or otherwise, in school. The Ministry of Education's decision to suspend the teaching of history is generally accepted as necessary. One primary headmaster acknowledged that, "In the past the history taught was nothing short of divisive propaganda. It was mainly focused on the history of migrations, of the ethnic groups, the majority and the minority, etc."[24] This may well have been the embodiment of "successful state-building" after independence. Peter Uvin has noted, "[T]he main strength of Rwanda's regimes lay… in their capacity to legitimize themselves to internal and external forces."[25] The ability to claim, and keep repeating that claim, that one group is the "rightful" or "original" occupier of the nation and another is an "immigrant" or "invader" could go a long ways towards legitimizing one's rule. However, the current void left by the absence of history in the curriculum also makes people in Rwanda uneasy.

Devote, an experienced teacher in her late forties, believes that it was "a falsification of history which led to the genocide," but she argued that awareness of the misuse of history in the past should not lead to paralysis, but to a greater effort to learn from the past. We see in her words the need to talk about this part of Rwandan history,

> People need to know their origins and history so that they can talk of building a future. In the third year of secondary school, children take exams and they should, by then, have a good general knowledge of history. These children need to know where all the hatred in Rwanda came from; they need to understand that political and financial interests were at the root of it all. People were en-

> couraged to kill and steal because there was an emphasis on, and promotion of, self-interest. Children who had never drunk were promised crates of beer if they killed, so they did. Children need to be made aware of this history so they can choose a useful and peaceful life over one which is centered on money. This emphasis on money has been evolving since colonial times.
>
> You can't hide the genocide, so you must deal with it. People need to talk and to find common ground. Everyone saw it happening. This doesn't mean that you have to relive it all the time. But parents with relatives in prison have to make children understand why they are there. The child must grow up not wanting to be like his/her father in prison. Mothers often tell children whose father is in prison that "the Tutsis put him there with lies." The new justice system of *gacaca* must establish who has killed and who has not and not allow people to live a lie.[26]

Although Rwanda has suspended the teaching of history, it is clear that the past needs to be addressed. There are signs that students will once again study history, a non-divisive history. In an interview with the National Curriculum Director in April 2004, the author learned that the University of California at Berkeley Human Rights and Education programs had been requested to help in crafting the new history curriculum. The Curriculum Director was also planning to attend a seminar over the summer 2004 on the "Facing History and Ourselves" program. This educational program examines the historical development of the Holocaust and other examples of collective violence and links history to the moral choices students confront in their own lives. Both of these resources are promising for the future. In the meanwhile, the closest that the current curriculum comes to addressing these historical topics is in "Political Education" or "Civics" as it is called at the primary level.

It may be puzzling to those interested in education and conflict that more than ten years after the genocide there is no explicit conflict resolution or peacebuilding curriculum in Rwandan schools.

This course was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 1997 and has replaced the highly ideological civics course taught since independence. Looking at the table of contents for the new incarnation, one might wrongly assume that things are now "taken care of." Topics in the course include: citizenship, human rights and freedom, participation, civic values, formation of a common identity, social cohesion, and peace. Teachers, however, complain there are no lesson plans, materials, or teacher training to aid in implementing the revised curriculum. The course is also among those subjects that are not tested in the advancement examinations and is, therefore, given less focus by the teachers and weight by the students.[27]

It may be puzzling to those interested in education and conflict that more than ten years after the genocide there is no explicit conflict resolution or peacebuilding curriculum in Rwandan schools. According to the National Curriculum Director conflict resolution has been "integrated" into the general curriculum. However, the joint review of donor support to the education sector in 2003 confirmed that there were no explicit conflict resolu-

tion activities to be pointed to. The question, then, becomes, "What does this 'integration' look like and is it effective?" During the author's classroom observations she did not observe any evidence of obvious "integration." More information needs to be collected in order to address this question.

System Practices

In addition to the curriculum that teachers and school administrators are responsible for passing on, there are practices which teachers are obliged to follow as well. Many of these practices are seen as having contributed to the genocide and others serve as triggers today. Mandatory racial identification, as described below, is one such system practice prior to 1994.

Leading up to 1994

Wellars, a 52-year-old primary school teacher reflected on the treatment of children in schools:

> [B]efore the genocide, each pupil's ethnic origin was recorded on his or her school registration form. At the beginning of each academic year, racist Hutu teachers used to call out the Tutsi students only, making the point that the rest of the class were Hutus. The Tutsis often felt bad about standing up because the rest of the class had a bad image of them. However, distancing oneself from certain attitudes is not enough. We really need a completely new system to eradicate the old. What was taught cannot be undone and it remains ingrained in the hearts of some people.[28]

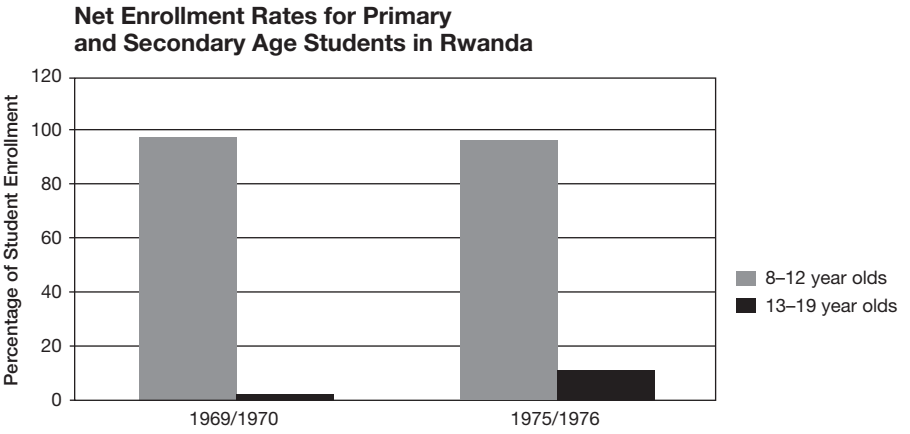
Though he has an obvious Tutsi bias, and portrays an extreme example of this practice, collecting information on race and place of birth was a very sensitive affair. These two pieces of information, over which the student has no control, were acknowledged to be some of the deciding factors in the student's admission to post-primary school (the *iringaniza*). These ethnic and regional quotas, combined with the practice of not publishing the students' test scores, created conflict around the limited opportunities for post-primary education, generally seen as the key to social mobility in the country.

Consider the data on the top of the following page that gives a general indication of the discrepancy between primary and secondary enrollments during the 1970s.[29] One can imagine the general level of frustration within a society in which only somewhere between 2 and 11 out of 100 teenagers are able to access education beyond primary school.

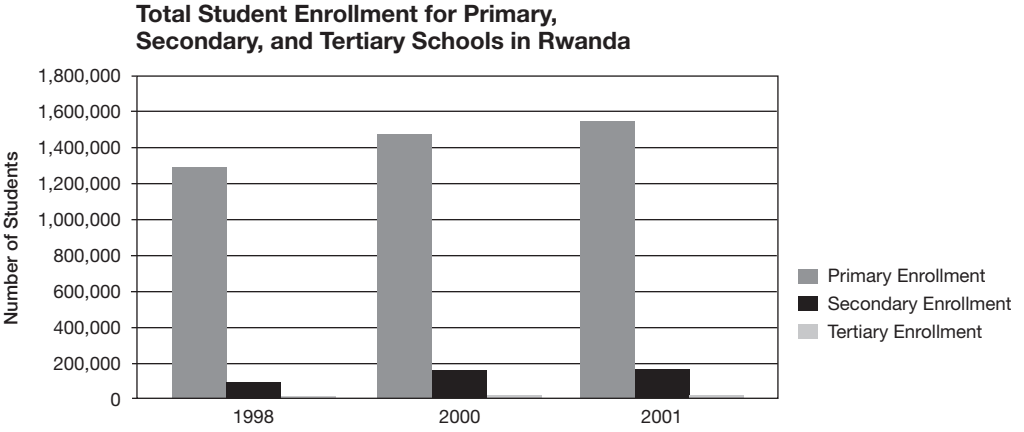
Over A Decade Later

Unfortunately, reliable data are still very hard to come by today, but the picture is apparently not very different. The World Bank's most recent figures that can be used to approximate this picture are from 1998, 2000, and 2001. It is regrettable that more recent numbers are not available because we might be better able to discern whether the figures show an upward trend of continued rebuilding and change after the civil war and genocide, or if they demonstrate consistent and significant barriers to increasing access to post-primary education.

In second table on the following page, similar to the data in the 1970s, secondary students make up no more than 11% of the student totals (they constitute 7% in 1998, 10% in 2000 and 10% in 2001). We can also see that the barely discernable columns



Data Source: Ozinian and Chabrillac (1975) as cited in Obura (2003) p.41



Data Source: *http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats*

(representing 0.41% in 1998, 0.77% in 2000, and 0.79% in 2001) represent the percentage of Rwandan students pursuing tertiary education. Even this does not paint a complete picture. For 2000 and 2001 the primary enrollment totals represented only 84% of the primary school aged children. So the primary enrollment column in the figure above would actually extend another 14% higher if all Rwandan children were receiving a primary education; heightening the contrast with post-primary percentages even further.

Despite efforts made after the genocide to ensure transparency and accountability in the promotion of students to secondary school (test scores are now published in the print

media and selection is based on merit) access to post-primary education can still be viewed as a trigger for frustration and conflict. The above context makes any program for "special treatment" problematic.

For example, a government fund, the Fond National pour l'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide (the FARG), was created in 1998 to aid the victims of the genocide. This pays for school fees and supplies for Tutsi children who lost a parent in the genocide. While this fund is both an important symbolic and practical effort at mitigating some of the socio-economic legacy of the genocide, there are some current difficulties with it. Once again, students are being asked to identify by their ethnicity within the formal education system, this time to receive funds to attend secondary school. This support is given, in the words of one student-teacher surveyed, "even when they are not in real need."[30] The perception of publicly financing Tutsi children who do not need the support comes about likely due to a combination of the manner in which the funds are allocated (by ethnicity and not income), and the accompanying lack of financing for the orphans left behind by Hutu victims. There were an estimated 50,000 moderate Hutus who were killed alongside Tutsis during the genocide. These Hutu families, however, do not qualify for assistance from the FARG.

Another change in the country that has the potential to create division in Rwandan society today is language. In an effort at fostering unity and supporting political and economic relationships with its Anglophone and Francophone neighbors, the Rwandan government has instituted a tri-language policy. Every Rwandan child is to learn Kinyarwanda, English, and French in school. The danger, however, noted both by those in the International Bureau of Education study as well as in the author's survey and interviews is that this can serve to further separate Rwandans. Currently, every child receives instruction in his/her mother tongue until grade four. At that point, parents choose a school that has either French or English as the language of instruction, with the other language being taught as a foreign language. Given the recent social migrations of Rwandans, this also can serve as a quasi-ethnic identifier, differentiating between families who stayed in French-speaking Rwanda and those who fled to a neighboring English-speaking county or further in exile. Those just entering schools recognize the importance of language:

> …[I]t is my hope and prayer that by the time I finish (training as a teacher), French and English will be commonly used by all students in Rwandan secondary schools such that I will mix all students in the class without any language barriers.

Although this hope, from a 27-year-old preparing to begin her career as a teacher, is unlikely to be realized, the national language policy is still seen as provisional, and is being revised and developed. In the meanwhile, however, it appears to be playing a role in segregating students along ethnic lines. Tutsi children show a stronger preference for Anglophone schools, due to their exile, and Hutu for Francophone.[31]

Classroom Practices

A respondent in the 2003 International Bureau of Education (IBE) study said, "You can change the curriculum but this will give nothing if the approach does not change. Inversely, you may succeed by changing the approach."[32] It is important to note that both areas discussed thus far, the curriculum and the system, are "represented" in the classroom by

the teacher. The teacher is the "filter" through which the curriculum is actualized and the policies interpreted. It is the face of the teacher that the students and parents see, and it is the relationships within the classroom that largely determine the manner and the extent of what is learned by students. Those going into the teaching field, such as the one we just heard from above, can have immense influence on the lives of students. Whether this is seen more objectively, as in the evaluation of a students' work, or subjectively, as in role-modeling, these "street level bureaucrats"[33] cannot be ignored when any meaningful change is intended. Unfortunately, based on the author's interviews and observations in March and April, it appears that the role of teachers is given too little attention as the country attempts to reform aspects of its schools.

There is a lack of information about specific practices in classrooms prior to 1994. However, we know that teachers tend to teach the way they were taught—this is one factor that lies at the heart of the conservative nature of formal education. We also know that teachers can and do learn to teach differently when they see a reason to do so. It is hoped that teachers will be motivated to do things differently if they see the potentially harmful effects of some of their practices.

This section looks at the lack of critical thinking, student discussions, and collaborative learning, as well as the suggestion that there may be a hidden curriculum that divides students along ethnic lines. After exploring these characteristics of classroom practices the author suggests a link between such practices and the conditions that enabled the genocide.

Part of the author's research included observations in five schools (three primary and two secondary) and eight classes in two regions of the country. Each class, without exception, was characterized by a teacher-focused, didactic lesson. "Checking for comprehension" was generally "accomplished" by asking "Are you with me?" The intended and received answer was a resounding, choral "Yes!" Not once in the author's experience did a student ask a clarifying question much less say, "I don't understand," even when it was apparent that the students were not understanding the concept.

Some of those participating in the IBE study reached the following conclusion:

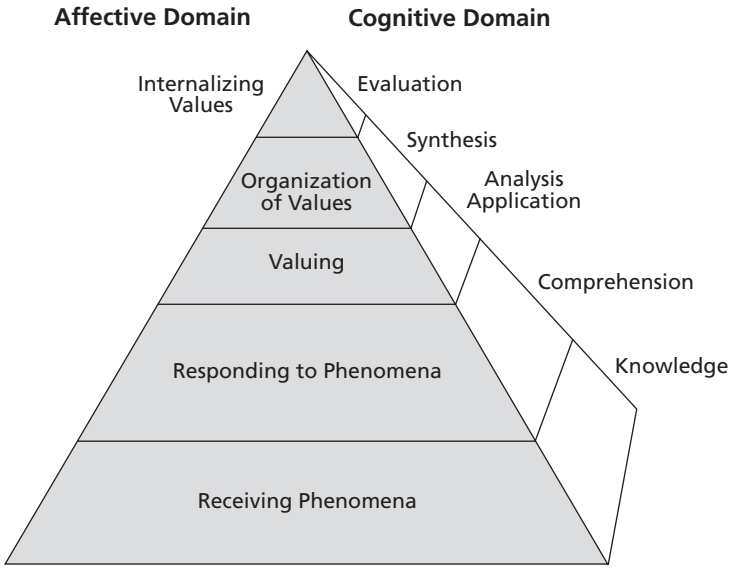
> The curriculum should implement active pedagogy that allows students to develop their critical thinking, sense of action, and openness of mind, solidarity, tolerance, and acceptance…active pedagogy encourages interactions between students, participation, sharing, respect of different points of view, and individual abilities."

Because this recommendation is the sense of what should be, it seems a corroboration of what the author observed, that teachers are currently not encouraging students to participate, to think critically, and to share differing points of view. These characteristics are explored below.

Lack of Critical Thinking

Bloom's (1964) classic taxonomy gives a sense of differing "levels" of pedagogy possible in any classroom. The paradigm includes hierarchies of cognitive objectives and affective objectives. Often the main emphasis in education is on the lower levels of cognitive learning, knowledge acquisition and recall, comprehension and application. Because these levels of learning can be assessed relatively easily, they feature prominently in examina-

The Bloom Hierarchy of Affective and Cognitive Education Objectives[35]



tions, and teachers, parents and students often see them as the essence of schooling.[34]

The type of pedagogy, however, which those participants in the IBE study were advocating demands teachers and students to operate at the synthesis and evaluation levels of the cognitive domain as well as applying, comprehending, and recalling information. It also demands that attention is paid to developing the affective domain of an individual as well the cognitive. This active pedagogy is essential, indeed, if the desired "sense of action, and openness of mind, solidarity, tolerance, and acceptance" referred to in the IBE study, is to be fostered in Rwanda's schools.

The author's observations suggest that classrooms in Rwanda have a heavy reliance on teacher-centered instruction and a lack of productive student interaction. Teachers control most everything that unfolds regarding intended learning in the classroom and the students play a very scripted role within the bounds set by the teacher. Yves, a secondary student training to be a primary teacher, while reflecting on his classroom experience said, "When they teach, we take notes; we don't give our points of view."[36]

Lack of Student Discussions

Student opinions were indeed noticeably absent in the classrooms observed. Research in others settings has demonstrated the pro-social outcomes when students engage in dialogue. One ten-nation study of civic attitudes found that students' values of antiauthoritarianism and participation in political discussion were greatest in "classrooms that stressed the fostering of students' independent thought and 'free discussion' and that minimized the use of drill and rote learning."[37] Drill and rote learning, however, is the norm in Rwanda. In a review of research on the political socialization in U.S. high schools, Ehman found that "positive political attitudes are most likely to develop in classrooms where students have opportunities to discuss controversial issues in 'open classroom climates' where

students have influence and are encouraged to express alternative viewpoints."[38] These are not the environments the author observed.

Lack of Collaborative Learning

With a reliance on the more traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, Rwandan students also can miss the opportunity for collaborative learning in the classroom. Not only have there been positive academic outcomes associated with cooperative activities, there have also been a number of pro-social effects on interpersonal attitudes, behaviors, values, and skills.[39] Data from fifty-one desegregated schools in the United States seems to suggest that; "working on tasks in biracial groups and participating in biracial teams had strong positive effects on both White and Black students' racial attitudes and cross-race behaviors." This finding led the authors of that study to conclude that "[T]eacher training designed to foster interracial interaction should be focused not on understanding intergroup relations but on specific teaching methods that promote student interactions."[40] The author did not observe any teaching methods that encouraged students to work together in or outside of classes. Singing the alphabet in a primary school English class was the closest approximation to collaboration.

Rwanda is a very different context from the United States, where several of the aforementioned studies were conducted, but it is interesting to see variations of Allport's 1950s "contact hypothesis"[41] underlying peacebuilding efforts around the world today. In Rwandan classrooms, however, the author observed zero structured interaction between students. There were many examples of unstructured interactions (ie. whispering or discrete physical horseplay) but the conception of the teacher at the front of the room with all the questions and the answers was ubiquitous.

The Hidden Curriculum

The final aspect of classroom practice this study will explore is the hidden curriculum. Sociologist Brian Jackson coined the phrase "hidden curriculum" in 1968 to refer to a range of conscious and unconscious socializing influences in a classroom. A more recent author defines the hidden curriculum as "consist(ing) of those things pupils learn through experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of such institutions."[42]

One might think, therefore, of the hidden curriculum as part of the "rules of the education game." These rules have been referred to in the education literature to explain some of the differential achievement based on ethnicity, gender, and social class. An example comes from a school program evaluator who, after observing many lessons in schools in East Africa, composed the following visual to represent the hidden curriculum she saw being taught and learned there. It makes explicit that which is hidden [see box on next page].

The hidden curriculum related to gender was evident in Rwanda; many girls' hands were passed over in answering questions, and other girls were observed mumbling bashfully into those same hands on a cold call. The hidden curriculum related to ethnicity, however, was not recognizable to the author as a result of her relatively short period of observation and her outsider perspective. It is possible that a local observer with a keen eye would unveil such a hidden curriculum related to ethnicity. This could be a very telling inquiry and could give valuable information about students' experience in Rwandan classrooms today.

EXCLUDE GIRLS!
EXCLUDE GIRLS
FROM REAL SCHOOL LEARNING

Girls shall be permitted to be present in class. They can be allowed to observe the rest of the class learning. They are permitted to speak in the sense that they can speak to each other. But no form of overt participation is tolerated, no speaking to the class, no speaking in front of the class, and no groupwork in front of the class – NO FORM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
When they raise their hands to speak they must be ignored. If they learn--this will depend entirely on their own efforts and be entirely at their own risk. This institution cannot be held responsible for their learning (or not-learning).

Source: Obura 2002 p. 194

Links to the Genocide

Uvin has delineated the three main views of what led to the Rwandan genocide. One view is the elite manipulation theory, or the notion that a small circle around President Habyarimana felt threatened and wanted to stay in power. Another is the ecological scarcity argument, which attributes the violence to the lack of resources in a country with the highest population density in mainland Africa alongside one of the highest rates of population growth on the continent. The third view relates to the particular socio-psychological features of the perpetrators, where "the 'unquestioning,' 'obedient,' or 'conformist' nature of the Rwandan 'traditional' mentality made Rwandans especially inclined to follow orders from above, including orders to slaughter their neighbors."[43] It is impossible to draw a causal link between genocidal behavior and a lack of critical thinking taught in Rwandan schools. However, the possibility that there is a link suggests the need for more research to understand the desired extent to which critical thinking should be fostered in classrooms.[44]

In concluding this discussion on classroom practices, it is important to note that currently there is no department or program, governmental or otherwise, that observes teachers in classrooms in Rwanda. As mentioned earlier, students' school experience is almost completely shaped by their classroom experience. It is in the classroom where political/civics education is being taught, where students may or may not continue to be identified ethnically, and where children are taught how to think and if or when to question. With-

out an emphasis on what happens in the classroom the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy will not change. One implication, among many, is that students will continue to lack opportunities to practice engaging in meaningful dialogue on any topic, much less a topic as politically and emotionally loaded as the genocide. The author fears that instead of providing a safe space for Rwandan children and youth to explore active political discussions and engagement, schools will foster a value of submission to authoritarianism, first a teacher's and then a government's. Without opportunities for safe, collaborative learning activities, divisions between Hutu and Tutsi students will likely grow in the context of systemic triggers like access to post-primary schooling and language policy.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the so-called "negative face" of education and has highlighted the important fact that education has the potential for harm as well as good. It has used some of the experiences of Rwanda and Rwandans as an example; but this African nation, and those who live there, are not alone in seeing the divisive potential of a formal education system.

An important lesson to be drawn from this analysis is how crucial context and goals are when viewing education systems and practice. For example, while teacher-centered instruction can and does meet many learning objectives in countries around the world, it cannot, in isolation, meet the current and explicit peacebuilding objectives that have been set by the Rwandan government. Those who would seek to assist in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and conflict prevention in society must apply a more critical analysis to formal education, the system tasked simultaneously with reproducing and changing society. As reproducing the conflict in a country is not the goal, more attention must be devoted.

In another paper, the author has discussed examples of the "Positive Face" of formal education and possible steps forward that are appropriate for Rwandan educators, foreign governments, multilateral institutions, and international NGOs.

ENDNOTES

1 UNESCO, "Education for All: Is the World on Track?" EFA Monitoring Report. (Paris: UNESCO, 2002).

2 Emily Vargas Baron, Institute for Reconstruction and International Security through Education, in Allen Smith and Tony Vaux, *Education, Conflict and International Development* (London: Department for International Development, 2003).

3 See Jamil Salmi, "Violence, Democracy and Education: An Analytical Framework" (Washington, DC: The World Bank, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office 2000) 21; Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000); Allen Smith and Tony Vaux, Education, Conflict and International Development (London: Department for International Development, 2003).

4 Image found in Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000).

5 Inspired by Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000).

6 Susan Hoben and Boston University African Studies Center, "Language and educational reform in Rwanda." (Boston, MA: African Studies Center Boston University, 1988).

7 Ibid., p.11.

8 Susan Hoben, "School, Work, and Equity: Educational Reform in Rwanda." (Boston, MA: African Studies Center Boston University, 1989), 13.

9 John Rutayisire, John Kabano, Jolly Rubagiza, "Redefining Rwanda's Future: the Role of Curriculum in Social Reconstruction," in Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, eds., Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion. (Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004).

10 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001); John Rutayisire, John Kabano, Jolly Rubagiza, "Redefining Rwanda's Future: the Role of Curriculum in Social Reconstruction," in Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, eds., Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion. (Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004).

11 It is appropriate to forecast here that a more nuanced discussion of access to post-primary education will take place in the context of "systemic practices" below.

12 Cooksey (1992) as quoted in *Anna Obura, Never Again: Educational Reconstruction in Rwanda.* (Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, 2003), 40.

13 Anna Obura, *Never Again: Educational Reconstruction in Rwanda.* (Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, 2003), 46-48.

14 Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda.* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998).

15 Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Agencies Can Support Peace—or War.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

16 This has begun to change within the Ministry but the broader aspects of curriculum, issues such as unplanned learning and the hidden curriculum, will be included elsewhere.

17 Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000).

18 Sandra Acker "Feminist Theory and the Study of Gender and Education," in Gendered Education: Sociological Reflections on Women, Teaching and Feminism. (Buckingham, Open University Press, 1994), 43-54.

19 African Rights has changed the names of those it interviewed.

20 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001).

21 The fact that there have been only four history textbooks written since the beginning of formal education in Rwanda is significant. A Rwandan doctoral student has collected these and is analyzing them as to omissions and "inflammatory" curricular messages. His study is sure to shed interesting light when published.

22 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001), 8.

23 Survey responses from the author's study, Kigali Institute of Education April, 2004.

24 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001), 27. Jessica Walker-Keleher

25 Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998), 23.

26 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001).

27 Ibid; Author's survey, Kigali Institute of Education April, 2004

28 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001), 68.

29 Although these figure's reliability is questioned due to the unlikely high enrollment rates for primary age students.

30 Author's survey, Kigali Institute of Education April, 2004

31 Author's interview with an educator, March 30, 2004.

32 John Rutayisire, John Kabano, Jolly Rubagiza, "Redefining Rwanda's Future: the Role of Curriculum in Social Reconstruction," in Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, eds., Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion. (Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004), 355.

33 Richard Elmore, "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions" Political Science Quarterly 94 (4) (1979), 601-616.

34 Margaret Sinclair (personal communication)

35 Depicted by Pamela Baxter via Margaret Sinclair.

36 African Rights, "The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools." (Kigali, Rwanda: African Rights, 2001), 18.

37 Torney, Oppenheim, and Farnen (1975) as cited in Daniel Solomon, MarilynWatson, & Victor Battistich, "Teaching and Schooling Effects on Moral/Prosocial Development." in Virginia Riachardson, ed., Handbook of research on teaching (American Educational Research Association, 2001), 578b.

38 Daniel Solomon, MarilynWatson, & Victor Battistich, "Teaching and Schooling Effects on Moral/Prosocial Development." in Virginia Riachardson, ed., Handbook of research on teaching (American Educational Research Association, 2001), 578b.

39 Ibid., 576a.

40 Ibid., 576b.

41 This hypothesis encourages "equal status contact and cooperative effort toward common goals" for attitudinal and behavioral change.

42 Michael Haralambos, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, (London: University Tutorial Press, 1981).

43 Peter Uvin referencing Henri-Phillipe Cart in "Reading the Rwandan Genocide," International Studies Review 3 (3) (2001): 84.

44 Nel Noddings, *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002).