Refugee Education and Peacebuilding in Modern Times

Taylor Rockoff

School of International Service, American University, Washington D.C.

It has been over three years since the start of the Syrian revolution in 2011, and since then most Syrian youth have lost months if not years of schooling and education due to the violence of the conflict. Much attention has been focused on the Syrian youth as the older generations see them as a new and free Syria’s future, but the uncertainty associated with their educational opportunities cuts into that dream. The worry and angst over access to quality education for their children has become the real center of discussion. With the reality of the situation being that many child refugees are confined to living in camps around neighboring countries, education especially within the camps has become an important issue.

The situation of uneducated school-age children as described above is comparable in a general sense to the conditions faced by other large refugee populations. With the average length of stay in a refugee camp being 17 years, and the average conflict lasting 10 years, education within camps for children should be a staple service almost like food or water, but it is not organized in this way (INEE). As one could only imagine, there are many barriers and limitations to ensuring that refugees have the opportunity to continue their education, whether that be inside or outside a camp.

Understanding the mindset of newcomers in a refugee camp is essential to the eventual creation of an effective and sensitive education system that could be implemented in the camp environment. At their arrival, refugees typically believe that living within a camp will be a temporary solution and hold out hope for a return back to
their home country. This is especially apparent in refugees whose country has only recently engaged in conflict. This mindset leads to a lack of motivation for adults to send their children to any sort of makeshift schooling in the meantime, unable to see the point of their children being educated if their return to their home country is in their near future. As one refugee teacher in the Zaatari camp in Jordan described, “whereas parents back in Syria were concerned about their child’s education, now their sole concern was that their children were alive” (Petche).

Many child refugees also focus heavily on returning home, which can serve as a source of positivity for them in such difficult circumstances. In the short-run, children mostly enjoy educational activities which are informal, keeping them from boredom but also avoiding a push for them to learn a curriculum. However, in the long-run refugees who are old enough tend to acknowledge the relevancy of an education in the camp for their futures and their children’s futures. A refugee in Kenya expressed that he felt “fortunate for being in Kakuma Camp because it allowed him to go back to school and learn like a normal student…he explained that during the war, he could not dream of school and never thought that one day he would be sitting down in a classroom listening to a teacher lecturing” (Mareng, 477). Once it is recognized that “their” conflict is ongoing and it is digested that their country is engaged in more than a temporary crisis, many refugees begin to desire a more formal system of education, where children can then ensure they will not fall behind upon return to their home country or upon integration into another country’s education system.

SPHERE is the organization that sets the international minimum standards for humanitarian assistance in five categories; water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food
aid, shelter and site planning, and health services (Sphere Project, 2). It essentially excludes education from the rights by those affected in emergencies. Education becomes a secondary necessity, and is often underfunded by international donor agencies. The educational infrastructure is not prepared comparably to that for food, water, or shelter. The process of building an education policy and strategy for refugees is a slower and more latent practice.

In this paper, the focus is to look at three case studies, critically examining the policies and procedures that have been implemented regarding education in emergency situations. While it is challenging to completely separate those education practices for refugees living outside camps and those living inside camps, I work to do so and concentrate on the strategies occurring within refugee camp settings. First, an exploration of the more recent conflict in Syria will lead to the analysis of the systems associated with refugee education in all of its neighboring countries, including Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt; which together have taken in over 2.5 million Syrians seeking assistance (UNHCR). Secondly, we will delve into the education system and policies of the refugee camps in Kenya, where the largest camp in the world currently houses around 350,000 refugees after around twenty years of existence (UNHCR). Lastly, the evolution of the education situation in Palestinian camps inside the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will be dissected.

The basic understandings of the historical evolutions of the way education has worked itself into camps in these areas show how policies and practices are situational based on location, relationship with host country, and the relative conflict affecting each camps’ population. We will see what has been successful, those systems that have failed,
and also the in-between of programs and practices which have somewhat succeeded or somewhat failed. We can also note the ways in which international organizations responsible for basic rights of refugees, refugee children, and education in camps have changed certain practices to better align with lessons learned from case studies taking place at different times in history.

The bottom line to be remembered throughout these examples is that education is a human right, documented and declared in the United Nations’ 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, refugees included, must be given (Article 28).

Taking into account all of the barriers to installing an educational system for children as a sustainable service, we must ask “how can education be seen more wholly as development, giving it more of a priority, vision, and long-term agenda for refugees in camps?” This question is the guiding force to the more important problem statement, which describes youth as the true victims of conflict; often losing their education and hopes for a future, they can become a very vulnerable generation of undereducated and traumatically untreated group of young people.

Education is important enough to put more funding and more effort behind it for those confined in a camp setting, because it can be used as a tool not just to keep children engaged and sane while stuck in the in-between, but also as a peacebuilding mechanism for the future. Education within camps should be seen as more permanent rather than a temporary solution, so that quality solutions will be provided for the school-age refugees. The International Network for Education in Emergencies identifies the potential role that education can have on refugee youth:

In emergency situations, quality education provides physical, psychosocial and
cognitive protection, which can be both life-sustaining and life-saving. Education mitigates the psychosocial impact of conflict and disasters by giving a sense of normalcy, stability, structure and hope for the future. Quality education can save lives by providing physical protection from the dangers and exploitation of a crisis environment. When a child is in a safe learning environment, he or she is less likely to be sexually or economically exploited or exposed to other risks, such as recruitment into or joining a fighting group or organized crime. In addition, education can convey life-saving information to strengthen critical survival skills and coping mechanisms. Education in emergencies also provides cognitive protection by supporting intellectual development through the teaching of literacy, numeracy, and study skills. It can also teach peace building and conflict resolution (INEE).

**Case Study Kenya**: Kenya hosts the largest refugee population in the world, with almost 500,000 refugees in its Dadaab camps. They have been in existence for over twenty years since they were built in 1991 in order to host Somali refugees due to the break out of civil war. Since then, Somali refugees have come to the camps due to drought, famine, and anarchy. Kenya also has Kakuma camp, a second area where it hosts about 90,000 refugees (UNHCR). It was built in 1992 for Sudanese refugees, but now serves refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda. Both of these camps require residents to remain inside the camp areas versus permitting free movement in and out of the camps, with the exception for retrieving firewood outside of the Dadaab camp. This requirement is unique to Kenya’s situation and policies. More than half of the refugees in these camps are under
the age of 18 years (UNHCR).

In Kakuma camp, schools began to be built starting in 1992 at the same time of its opening, but the facilities were not ready to open until 1994 (Mareng, 475). This meant that for two years, the education that was provided was taught outside under trees and was frequently interrupted due to weather. When several schools did open and classes moved indoors, materials including desks, chairs, textbooks, and other classroom resources had not arrived or were not in sufficient supply to serve all students. This resulted in lower grades for many students and a delayed education for school-age children (Mareng, 476).

A youth debate club was organized and operated beginning in the early years of the camp by Lutheran World Foundation, with the aim of reducing hostile feelings that youth had begun to develop towards adults in the camps. The club provided a forum where youth could participate in their own discussions and reflections about education, specifically focusing on the education they were receiving in the camp. This program was successful in getting youth to understand the importance of their education, but it did not seek to solve the frustrations they expressed they had with the system. It only acknowledged and discussed their qualms (Mareng, 476). While many of the youth who participated stated they believed in the benefits of education, they also expressed that education did not result in immediate gain like economic participation did. Youth specifically pointed to the difficulty of surviving within the camp without working, due to the very limited amount of food, water, and other essential basic needs given to them by donors (Mareng, 478). Transportation and food availability were other points of dissatisfaction as the walk to school was sometimes prohibitive due to its length. Another
In the Dadaab camp, issues such as very large class sizes, scarce materials, and lack of sanitation facilities at schools are of regular complaint (Refugee Research). For most of its existence, opportunities for higher education within the camp were extremely limited. The first initiative to bring higher education opportunities to refugees was with partnerships with international universities to give certificates, diplomas, and degrees to participants (Refugee Research). In February 2014, a university campus opened within the camp to give refugees education inside the grounds of the camp (UNHCR).

Because refugees are required to stay within camp limits at all times, education within camps has had to suffice for all school-age youth instead of having the option to be integrated into a host Kenyan community. Due to this regulation and the fact that many refugees have been living in the camps for such a prolonged period of time that even third generations are growing up in the camps, youth programming and educational services have grown to be extensive (Sommers, 25). There are now primary schools, secondary schools, and vocational schools. There are also educational services providing activities such as art, music, sports, drama, debate, exchange visits, leadership training, and dance.

Now, while all of these activities are provided, there are gaps between services provided and number of children reached as well as concerns with frequency of some programs. Many sources say that youth are still not receiving any education at all within the camps. The Norwegian Refugee Council claimed that in 2012, “165,000 children and youth in the world’s largest refugee camp (Dadaab) are deprived of their right to
education.” IRIN news said in 2011, “In one of the largest and oldest refugee settlements in the world (Dadaab), education is a luxury denied most of the 90,739 children who live there.” In 2011, UNICEF reported, “156,000 children of school age are now living in the Dadaab camps, but only a third of them are in school.” All of these different accounts show discrepancies in numbers of refugee children with access to education in Kenyan camps. While formal and informal educational programs may be running, it must be noted that they may not have capacity to reach all children of school-age, they may only run temporarily, and that these programs face many obstacles to successful implementation.

There are still other very serious dilemmas in regards to how education, when received, will play into a refugee’s future. In primary school in the camps, it has been decided that children learn the Kenyan curriculum. This strategy of studying the host country curriculum would most logically mean that students are preparing to be integrated into the Kenyan education system in the future, but refugees are actually not allowed to enter the host communities for educational services (Sommers, 24). This points to a huge problem, which lies within making the decision of what curriculum to teach refugee children.

**Case Study Palestinian Areas of Gaza and West Bank:** There are eight official refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and nineteen refugee camps in the West Bank holding approximately 1,327,772 Palestinian people in total. About seventy percent of Gaza's children, approximately 588,000, are refugees. Gaza also houses the largest camp population of the two territories and operates 245 schools serving about 225,000 students (UNRWA). In the West Bank, there are about 35,000 refugee children and 94 schools.
The United Nations Relief and Works Agency provides free schooling for Palestinian refugee children from grade 1 through 9, after which refugee children enter the Palestinian school system outside of the camps. (Save the Children).

About ninety percent of the funding for education inside these camps comes from voluntary contributions by governments, while the rest is provided by the UNRWA. One of the worst problems which plagues the education efforts in Palestinian camps are overcrowded classrooms, which contain an average of fifty students per class (Wildeman). This is mostly due to the fact that it has not been permitted by Israeli authorities to build new schools in these areas since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the area. The school populations have more than doubled since this time, therefore causing this problem of overcrowding (INEE).

Because of the rising numbers of youth needing schooling combined with the inability to build more educational facilities, most schools in the Gaza Strip and some in the West Bank offer double shifts to serve all of those in need (Halsell). The lack of resources, funding, and humane solutions to inhumane problems associated with education have resulted in last resort actions like the following example. In Rafah camp in the Gaza Strip, a school was built from shipping containers. It holds 15 classrooms made from two containers welded together. The school educates over 450 students, but the conditions are not very conducive to learning as there is a lack of ventilation and insulation in the steel containers, which makes the very hot months and very cold months difficult to bear (UNRWA).

Another major problem that interferes with the education systems in these Palestinian areas is disruptive classroom behavior and violent outbursts from the children.
Many children end up falling asleep during class because of their inability to sleep at night for a number of reasons including stress, nightmares, and fear. Violence is said to be “endemic and rising every year” at the schools (Wildeman). Traumatized by living through conflict, students fight with each other, with their teachers, and sometimes teachers lash out at misbehaving students who they have trouble managing.

Physical space and materials are not the only resources lacking in the education system. Qualified teachers have also been difficult to find and keep employed in the camps. Most teachers are female, and this has forced boys classrooms to be taught by female instructors. On top of the difficulty in controlling and managing a classroom of such a large size, female teachers in this situation must fight to gain respect from the boy students. It is not taught culturally to respect females in such a leadership role, and their society still segregates based on sex in most social environments, especially in schools. The UNRWA tries to reach out to NGOs to help in their recruitment efforts to find more teachers willing to work in these areas (Wildeman).

Another obstacle to making schools comfortable and safe for students has been the challenge of providing basic needs for them while they attend class. Water, sanitation and hygiene provide more obstacles to learning when school is held for hours at a time and children do not have access to sufficient amounts of water, or any toilets, or appropriate bathroom facilities (Gough). Many schools within the camps are lacking vital infrastructure that could help alleviate distraction from students’ learning in class.

While UNRWA provides resources for formal education subjects, such as Math, Arabic, and Science, it does not have the funding to provide other educational activities outside of these core topics. Art, music, sports, and other creative extra-curricular
activities are not funded by the UNRWA, because they do not have enough resources to dedicate to these areas. NGOs and other non-profit organizations have stepped in to attempt to give some children opportunities to engage in these activities. The Palestinian Association "Children, Play and Education" or EJE is one of those NGOs that offers some of these informal educational activities through its ten activity centers in Gaza and the West Bank. This organization focuses on providing leisure activities for children while also growing their personal development and encouraging children to be peacemakers (EJE). The only issue with these programs is they do not occur consistently or reach all children in the camps.

Other issues that plague the education system here are high rates of student failure in UNRWA schools. It is common practice for children to stop enrolling or drop out of school at the early age of thirteen or fourteen, particularly boys. For the school year from 2009 to 2010, 22 percent of children in the West Bank were not enrolled in secondary education, and 75 percent of those children were male. Reasons for dropping out include poor progress and achievement in school, joining the labor force, long walking distances to school, restricted access to their schools, and early marriage (Gough).

Still, the desire for education continues even despite all of the difficulties described above. This highlights the need for creative solutions to those difficulties that are present in Gaza and the West Bank. The children, the adults, the people within the camps acknowledge the importance of education and push for it to continue. This is most obvious by the first and most pressing problem facing the implementation of educational programs, which is overcrowding of classrooms. Just the fact that there are so many students fighting to attend schools within the camps shows the intense motivation to
continue with their schooling. As one boy within the Jabalia camp in Gaza stated, “If I was the President of Palestine, I would focus on developing the education system, building more schools and centers for children” (Save the Children). By grasping the realities that face a population confined to a camp and how they have managed to maintain a resemblance of an education system further evolves the process by which such a system in this area and in others can continue to progress into something with more to offer those it serves.

**Case Study Syria:** The youth of Syria have been termed “a lost generation” since the conflict in their country began to severely impact their access to education (Save the Children). Syrian refugee youth in camps are an especially vulnerable population that has been most recently affected by conflict in comparison to the other case study examples. In the exploration of measures taken so far, we will look at the location of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries and understand the size of the population of refugees within camps and their specific situation regarding education compared to those residing outside of camps. This will help to understand the importance of education within camps, since many refugees inside face challenges to integration into host country schooling.

Second, each country’s respective strategy for Syrian refugee education will be laid out. Currently, one main goal and strategy for Syrian children is to integrate them into host country schools as soon as possible. This happens more easily with refugees residing outside of the camps, where host country schools are typically quickly filled and utilized to the maximum capacity available. There are some refugee children who are living outside of camps in local communities who also cannot access educational services, but it is harder to track these children. Within camps, monitoring and evaluation efforts help to
keep data on youth and education efforts up to date and reliable. Using the data and contextual analysis below, one can compare the current number of Syrian refugees who are living outside camps to the number who are living inside camps in the five countries which have absorbed the most refugees since the conflict began; Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (UNHCR).

Lebanon holds the largest Syrian refugee population currently with a total of about 990,000 Syrian refugees (UNHCR). Of the 990,000, according to the data below, 52 percent of these refugees are minors under the age of 18 years old. Lebanon has not constructed refugee camps and has allowed Syrians to settle into communities freely. The Lebanese education system is working to absorb all Syrian youth of student age, and it has implemented double shifts in most schools to increase capacity. Overcrowding and tensions with the host communities are rising due to these adjustments (UNHCR). Up to this point, Lebanon remains committed to refugee integration, and therefore there is no analysis of education within camps for this country.

![Demography Chart](image)

Source: UNHCR (Apr 2014)

Turkey holds over 713,000 Syrian refugees as of April 2014, according to the data collected below, with over half being children and youth under the age of 18 years (UNHCR). While the number of Syrian refugees living outside of camps is larger in Turkey than those living inside camps, there are still over 200,000 Syrians in total residing within the twenty one camps across the nation (Brookings). Even as the number of refugees living outside the camps continues to grow with time, the number within the
camps continues to increase or remains about the same as time passes.

Statistics show that Turkey’s response within camps in regards to education has been relatively successful in regards to scope and reach. According to the Ministry of National Education, as of March 2014, only 7 percent of school-age children were not enrolled in school in refugee camps in Turkey, while 74 percent of school-age children outside of camps remained out of school (UNICEF). Education for children living in camps has taken on a mixed strategy of placing children in camp schools, in NGO and community based schools in host communities, and in local public schools outside the camps as well (UNHCR).

In Turkey, it is more difficult to ensure that Syrian refugee children outside of the camp receive educational services than ensuring the same for children residing inside the camps. Using a system of mixed educational services could be a take home lesson in regards to best practices for refugees. When capacity is reached in host communities, there should be schooling provided outside the public school system. When all education providers in the local communities are full, schools within the camps should provide remaining youth with education, formal and informal.

Jordan holds the third largest Syrian refugee population of almost 600,000, with about 52 percent being under the age of 18 years (shown below). Most of the refugees,
about 80 percent live outside of camps, in the North of Jordan, while the remaining 20 percent live inside three camps, Zaatari, Marjeeb al-Fahood, and Cyber City (Migration Policy Centre). Approximately 120,000 Syrian refugees live in the Zaatari camp in Jordan, half of them children. This makes it the second largest camp in the world.

![Demography chart]

Source: UNHCR (Apr 2014)

Jordan recently just opened a fourth refugee camp in planning for the influx of more refugees from Syria (Migration Policy Centre). The new camp is being built using lessons learned from the Zaatari camp, in regards to all services including education. This brings hope in regards to giving forethought and placing urgency on education for refugee populations, as two schools have already been built in expectation of the incoming flow of new arrivals from Syria (Al-Khalidi). As INEE states, “A growing body of evidence on education’s life-saving and life-sustaining role has resulted in a change in beliefs, with education now being included in the planning and provision of humanitarian relief.” While the construction of school sites at the camp pre-refugee arrival is a step forward, the fact that there are only two when the camp has been built to host 130,000 refugees points to a potential capacity problem when working to provide education to all that will need it (Al-Khalidi).

In an article written in late 2013, it was reported that access to educational opportunities for Syrian youth in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan was limited (Petche). While UNICEF and Jordan’s Ministry of Education are responsible for the operation of
two formal temporary schools inside the camp, these institutions only each have the capacity to educate 5,000 children at a time. This means that approximately 10,000 children have been offered the opportunity to continue their education, while at least 50,000 just inside this camp alone are without formal educational resources (Schmidt).

In January and February of 2014, it was reported that there were twelve different organizations operating within Zaatari camp on educational initiatives, including ten various NGOs and two UN affiliates (UN). These programs are of formal and informal subject matter. Many of the informal educational programs within the camps are designed with the intention of assisting in preparing students to either be eventually integrated into the Jordanian school system or to return to schooling in a conflict-free Syria.

Iraq and Egypt also host Syrian refugees inside their borders, although at a much smaller scale than the previous three countries. Iraq hosts a total of about 220,000 Syrians who have sought refuge within its borders. It holds 40 percent of refugees in seven camps and 60 percent who have integrated into local communities, mostly in the North (UNHCR). Iraq allows refugees to move freely in and out of camps. As of 2012, it was reported that around 75 percent of school-age refugees within one of the larger camps, the Domiz camp, were not enrolled in school for the following reasons reported by the parents; the need to send their children to work, cost of study, and lack of documents that confirmed the child’s grade (Migration Policy Centre, 4). In Egypt, about 130,000 Syrian refugees are estimated to be residing within its borders, with around 44 percent of the total Syrian refugee population there under the age of 18 years (UNHCR). There are no refugee camps in Egypt. Egypt’s initial response had been to absorb the refugees into local communities as best as possible, rejecting the idea of building camps. The country
had opened up its public schools to accept Syrian refugee youth, however in mid to late 2013, the government began to close public schools to Syrian refugees and insist that private schools be utilized. Most Syrians could not afford sending their children to private schools there. Egypt began to make life more difficult for Syrian refugees, making access to previously granted services and rights less attainable. It also began to detain refugees and expel them from the country beginning also in late 2013 (Amnesty International).

From these case studies, and by studying and analyzing historical and ongoing conflicts with refugee populations that have existed for many years, we can focus on what has been and should be done for school-age refugees. INEE explains, “Education can provide stability, normalcy and hope in a child’s day to day life during a crisis situation which can last for months and years.” Education is not just a time-filler for refugees in camps, it is a productive way to address all of the issues that these children have and will be exposed to due to conflict. Informal education can be used to directly address non-violence, secularism, and peace, while formal education keeps children engaged in the world, hopeful, and motivated. Youth can be prepared to be leaders, whether they decide to take on that role or not.

One issue that is seen throughout all case studies is the way violence and trauma affect students learning and ability to succeed in the future. One way education has addressed the theme of conflict resolution and prevention is by using peace education programs to promote these themes within camps. Most youth living in camps due to conflict in their country have witnessed horrible atrocities. They are traumatized along with the adults, but this trauma has to be addressed and often times it is not addressed properly. Many youth act out or act violently after having witnessed somebody close to
them fall victim to violent groups within their country or after having experienced the violence themselves due to the conflict. Peace education can address ways to potentially deal with this built up anger and hostility that the youth themselves may not think is abnormal or problematic due to their surrounding environment.

Some signs that youth have been affected and should receive attention have been documented in camps around the world. In Syria, many youth play war games, pretending to be the Free Syrian Army, the opposition forces against the government regime in Syria (Petche). There is an arcade games tent set up in one area of the Zaatar camp, where a game based on killing and shooting happens to be the most popular. Most imaginary games being played are put in the context of the war, with the children choosing one side, working to take down the other (Petche). In Kenya, a significant and common expression of violent behavior is rape. Boys, who are not marrying as young as expected, feel they must rape since they will not marry as planned. The boys without education or hope for a career in the future, which constitute a great number of total men within the camp, are not being offered wives in the way in which they would if they were living in pre-conflict times in their own societies. Now rape has become the answer for many in dealing with this change of cultural custom, which occurs typically as women go outside of the camp borders to collect firewood (Sommers, 24).

What education can do, and specifically peace education, is work to provide children with neutral games and activities, where their focus is not aligning with a certain group, or fighting, or conquering one side or the other. Education can help children focus on more positive and less violent activities and thoughts. It can also help in more practical ways, such as educating men about sexual practices, the harm caused by rape if
we look at the previous Kenya example, and how to deal with the issues that lead many men to rape.

For Syrian refugees, Project Amal ou Salam operating out of George Mason’s Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution, works on a small scale to bring educational activities to children in camps promoting non-violence. Aziz Abu Sarah is the co-founder of the project and volunteers working in various camps to bring educational programming to child refugees that regularly don’t receive it. Abu Sarah says, “The international community—already overwhelmed by the basic humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees—is in no position to adequately respond to the critical challenge of education…However, five years from now, due to this lack of foresight, the world will have to deal with an uneducated and very possibly disenfranchised generation that is ripe for radicalization” (National Geographic).

What educational programming can do is work to prevent this environment, which encourages radicalization. As Dr. Marc Gopin, director of George Mason University’s Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution describes, educational peace projects can lead to “civil society building.” This view needs support from the international community, and it must realize the vital importance that education in camps has for the future of the state of world affairs. Gopin defines how leaders of a successful program based on peace education can help a community affected by conflict by “modeling a shared space of political and religious diversity and difference, bonded by common civil commitments to nonviolent forms of conflict management (Huffington Post).” With this realization and understanding, the possibility to gain more support and funding for education in emergencies could be increased.
These leaders he describes are also part of the Project Amal ou Salam, and it has been impactful. Project Amal ou Salam has reached 1,400 children in two separate locations, although its goal is to expand and reach more children in more locations in the future (Everson, Kabawat). More peace education programs, like this one, should be running concurrently to increase the amount of child refugees receiving its benefits, in Syrian camps as well as in other country camp locations.

There are three approaches to education for refugees in emergency situations. One is the humanitarian approach, which “views education as one component of a rapid response, providing immediate protection to children and preventing human rights violations. It does not frequently involve collaboration with governments or institution-building.” The second is the human rights approach, “which emphasizes education as a human right to be realized and cultivated through education in any situation, including crises.” The third is the development approach, “which recognizes education as a long-term investment for society and the lack of quality education in a crisis as holding back development potential, even allowing backward development.” The development approach looks forward to the growth of a society and its people’s ability to thrive in the future (Burde, 11). While all approaches touch on the grave importance of education for refugees, encouraging the development approach will drastically increase the quality, the quantity, and the urgency of educational programming in these situations. The issue is convincing the international community that education is just as important as say food, water, and shelter, but in an entirely different and more sustainable way.

Education should be seen as critical to development, development of youth populations who will grow into decision-makers and leaders of change. Using education
as a tool in post-conflict zones is a strategy to be utilized in guiding these youth populations down a healthy road of awareness and action of peaceful initiatives. We can see that more emphasis has been placed on education with time as lessons have been learned from previous similar post-conflict examples. There has been a shift of pushing host countries to integrate youth rather than segregate them and force only camp education. This right away answers the question of uncertainty about the role of education in a refugee student’s future more so than if they are solely receiving education in a camp with no insight as to where it will lead them.

Peace education initiatives that acknowledge trauma and move children away from violent actions and separatist mindsets are invaluable in these settings. More organizations, more collaboration can be extremely critical in shaping the youth into a generation willing to reconcile rather than punish.
References


