JEROME CRANSTON

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS

TEACHING IN CHALLENGING SOCIAL CONTEXTS

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In honor of my grandparents:

Margaret Roslyn “Rosie” Brown
Anthony Fowler
Sybil May Harper
William Bertram Sinclair Cranston

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Preface

The changing geopolitical and economic landscape, coupled with sweeping global shifts in migration patterns, has created an unprecedented need for educators to be prepared to teach students who are arriving in their schools from almost every corner of the world. The political economy of the twenty-first century and its concomitant polarization—the division between those who are included in it and those who continue to be excluded from it—play a significant role in erecting and fortifying walls between people. Walls feed the particular sorts of suspicions that nearly always lead to conflict. Many point to the fact that globalization has diffused images, music, movies, and even ideas rapidly across vast swaths of the world. However, economic and social capital—in the forms of wealth and, quite frankly, living-wage jobs—have not been similarly distributed throughout the world. While it may be true that assurances of prosperity and of a better future have echoed the world over, the irony is that the material manifestations of these promises have not measured up to the glossy advertisements.

In some regards, it is generally accepted that, in order to flourish, children increasingly need to take a broad perspective on present-day world events and issues. Arguably, we live in a world that is more interconnected than ever before and yet, in some ways, it is a world more fragmented than it has ever been. While there has been greater integration in some aspects of contemporary life, there continues to be social fragmentation observed through such phenomena as the resurgence of nationalism, the increase in ethnic and religious conflicts, and the upsurge in critical social movements. Globalization has certainly changed the ways in which we interact with others as well as our understandings of our individual places on the face of the planet. Faced with a multiplicity of global linkages and seemingly far-distant events, along with decisions that

impact us both nationally and locally, a reconsideration of the education system seems timely. In particular, it is critical to explore the ways in which it can play a crucial role in creating an awareness of the experiences of school for those who seem to live innumerable miles away.

It is an ambitious commitment, but as Zhao (2010) proposed, effective teaching in and for the twenty-first century social reality requires teachers to become more aware of the global nature of societal issues, to care about people in distant places, to understand the nature of global economic integration, to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples, to respect and protect cultural diversity, to fight for social justice for all, and to protect planet earth—home for all human beings.

In their 2007 book, *Teaching the global dimension: Key principles and effective practice*, Hicks and Holden propose that opportunities are needed that:

- Enable educators to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world.
- Increase understanding of the globalized economic, cultural, political, and environmental contexts that shape society and schools.
- Develop the skills, attitudes, and values that enable people to work together to bring about change and take control of their own lives.
- Work toward achieving a more just and sustainable world in which power and resources are more equitably shared.

Global competence is more than just a skill set that looks good on a resume. It is not an extracurricular accomplishment. Global competence is crucial for a teacher to possess if she or he wants to be effective. Without it, teachers risk obscuring, or even worse, perpetuating the systemic injustices built into a colonial educational enterprise that disadvantages the most vulnerable and, at times, oppresses those who have fled indescribable tragedy.

In short, students from diverse backgrounds need teachers who can recognize and honor the various facets of their identities and who can guide them through interactions in an increasingly interconnected and intercultural world. They need teachers who have developed the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to demonstrate effective and appropriate communication practices and behaviors in an intercultural situation (Deardorff, 2006).

However, scholars such as Walters, Garii, and Walters (2009) have noted that the majority of North American public-school teachers come from primarily White, middle-class backgrounds, and that pre-service teachers' professional identities are often based on their own secondary school experience and grounded in the cultural norms that emanate from those contexts. The perpetuation of a homogenous and conventional teacher-identity model

has served to reinforce traditionally narrow understandings of school norms and to sustain a general lack of global perspective in the teaching profession (Bates, 2008; Santoro & Allard, 2005).

In order to move forward in an interconnected world, it is imperative that teachers and school administrators increase their understandings of the global educational contexts. These educational contexts, at times, extend well beyond conventional understandings of what constitutes formal schooling in traditional North American classroom settings. Teachers need opportunities to learn about other regions of the world and the social contexts of global current events, and they need to be provided with space and time to reflect on the cultural and professional identities that they have constructed for themselves as teachers. They need to be invited to question how these identities might impact their pedagogical approaches and to be enabled to explore what they believe to be true about their students and their students' families' experiences. Teachers ought to be exposed to diverse perspectives and worldviews of what life and teaching looks like beyond the borders of their own countries and firsthand experiences. In the end, perhaps, such a broad examination of learning contexts will act as a catalyst that will encourage educators to consider and, maybe, question some of their firmly held assumptions about teaching and learning both in global and local contexts.

A MODEST BEGINNING

One of the goals of this book is to contribute to the body of knowledge concerning an important aspect of the way in which globalization affects schooling: the increasing flow of people within and across national borders, and the stark challenges that educators face in trying to understand the lived experiences of some of their recently arrived students. It hopefully does so without affirming that the world's nations are converging on a common experience of life in a presumptive global world. The intention of this book is not to suggest that society is quickly becoming *flatter*, the underlying assumption of which would be that the differences among people are becoming smaller and smaller as a global community emerges (Friedman, 2007). I do not believe that this is case, and I do not think that globalization will somehow usher human experience into a state of homogeneity. The sad truth is that, while many in the self-named Developed World champion the rhetoric of global connectedness both technologically and economically, as economists Machiko Nissanke and Erik Thorbecke (2004) have argued, many in the so-called Developing World continue to suffer from the scourge of a global disconnect.

Despite its timely relevance, I must admit that I had never set out to "study"—at least, not in the empirical sense—teaching practices in some of the world's more challenging social contexts. My original intent was to simply document the ways in which a child's right to education, as articulated in the United Nations "Convention on the Rights of the Child" is being met beyond Canada's national borders.

In the spring of 2012, a colleague at the University of Manitoba, Fr. David Creamer, S.J., Ph.D., a Jesuit, pestered me to find time to sit down and have a "cup of tea" with an acquaintance of his. Her name was Sr. Cyril Mooney, i.b.v.m., and she was an Irish Loreto nun who had lived in India for forty years. At the time, our university was recognizing Sr. Cyril with an honorary doctorate for her relentless spirit and incredible humanitarian work with some of India's poorest citizens. She was both an impressive and persuasive force of nature. After many cups of tea over the course of a few weeks—and the occasional latte—I discovered that our conversations were taking me down a scholarly path that I could never have anticipated. I spent ten days in Kolkata, India, in January 2013 to create a series of "five-point-five" mini-documentaries, followed by eight days in Kigali, Rwanda, in April 2014, and then another eight days in the remaining Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal in December 2015.

While in Kolkata, my project assistant and I stayed in what might be aptly described as a spartan and minimally adequate guest house located on the edge of the Sealdah district, which is, arguably, one of India's and the world's most densely populated and poorest urban slums. Sealdah is a neighborhood teeming with people who demonstrate all the signs that are associated with simply trying to survive the effects of debilitating poverty. Sealdah served as the departure point for examining the effort and initiative that are required in order to make schooling available to the children of migrant brickfield workers.

Home base in Kigali was L'hotel Chez Lando. Like l'hotel Mille Collines of *Hotel Rwanda* movie fame, it is a hotel that is intertwined with the tragic history of the 1994 genocide. In my room, which would become my research project's makeshift interview space, I would discover the commitment of ten remarkable teachers—all survivors of the genocide—who were dedicated to peace education and reconciliation in Rwanda. Beyond the cramped comfort of my hotel room, I would meet ordinary Rwandans who conveyed their extraordinary insights into the enduring traumatic effects of the 1994 genocide.

Finally, Fr. Bill Robins, S.J., another Canadian Jesuit, had arranged for me to stay at the Kamal Niwas Jesuit Training Centre in Kathmandu before I would head out to visit the Bhutanese refugee camps in Damak, Nepal. The camps were located near Nepal's eastern border with India, where 120,000

Bhutanese refugees had been unceremoniously deposited after being expelled from the Kingdom of Bhutan in the early 1990s. In December 2015, the Bhutanese Refugee Education programs were struggling to maintain standards for quality educational programming in the face of certain closure within a year.

This book is an attempt to present three specific cases that will hopefully serve as a platform to help educators to make sense of contemporary life in the twenty-first century—an interconnected and interculturally linked life—through a deeper understanding of the ways in which our teaching lives and the teaching lives of others co-exist in the context of a changing global society. In very broad terms, my cumulative fieldwork, which was undertaken over a period of three years, has served as the basis for this book. While each project was underpinned by a particular variation of qualitative inquiry, my choice to employ narrative methodologies across projects is a testament to the fact that the circumstances of the "fieldwork" and "choices" made in the field are as much a part of the findings as are the findings themselves (Whyte, 1964). I make no claims to fictitious objectivity in presenting the three narratives that will follow. I am implicated in both the observations and conversations that took place. These have shaped the ways in which I understood the people whom I interviewed, and this acquired understanding, in turn, has shaped how I have come to understand myself (Devereux, 1967). It is my hope that reading these descriptive cases will allow you to experience, to a certain extent, what they seek to illuminate, both on a cognitive and on an emotional level. Hopefully, the experience will produce a similar effect in you as it did in me.

Acknowledgments

The ethnographic fieldwork that has been represented in the narratives of this book would not have been possible without a tremendous amount of support and trust. There are simply more people than I can list to whom I am clearly indebted for extending to me their trust, companionship, and encouragement. That said, I have endeavored to acknowledge as many of them as I could in the pages of the book that follow. In the event that someone's name is omitted or spelled incorrectly, I sincerely apologize.

Particular acknowledgment is owed to three individuals whom I wish to name. The truth is that this book would not have been written at all without the generous invitation from Nicolette Amstutz of Lexington Books. It was Nicolette who first suggested that maybe there was a seed-of-a-book present in the abstract of a paper that I had written for presentation at the 2015 American Education Research Association's Annual Conference.

"Do you think," she asked me, "that you might be interested in developing this into a book project?"

"Maybe," I replied with an honest uncertainty.

And that was the encouragement that I needed. Without her recognition of the creative possibilities contained within a less than two-hundred-word conference abstract, I am quite certain that the scholarly presentation I gave would have, at best, become another journal article.

Turning three years of messy, ethnographic fieldwork into the narrative chapters of this book would not have happened without the patience and skillfulness of my colleague and writing assistant Stephanie Crook. Her pay stub said something like "Graduate student research assistant," but she became more than what the title even remotely suggests. She was willing to read multiple drafts, offer thoughtful and sometimes unwelcome but, oftentimes,

needed revisions. This willingness, coupled with her unobtrusive manner of asking, "What are you really trying to say, Jerome?" has allowed this book to develop and hang together.

Finally, I am fully aware that I have come across great fortune in quite literally being able to live out the so-called cliché of marrying my best friend. To my best friend and life-partner, Janet: You always appeared to understand even when you did not know why I felt compelled to leave the comforts of home to work in distant locations for weeks and weeks while, in some cases, immersing myself in difficult social and political contexts. You were always there when I returned home, finding myself slightly overwhelmed by all of what I had experienced. To you, I will simply say, "Je t'aime. Toujours."

Chapter One

A Framework for Understanding Teaching in a Complex, Heterogeneous World

As the world becomes progressively more interconnected and interrelated, and the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of students increases in many North American schools, the needs and pressures to prepare teachers to have a level of global competency concomitantly increase. Dealing with cultural and social diversity in classrooms is certainly not a new issue for teachers to face. In various forms, the challenges associated with teaching in socioeconomically and culturally diverse communities have been present for centuries (Lindsey, Roberts & Campbell Jones, 2005).

However, the burgeoning complexity of the twenty-first century, in which a wide variety of languages, cultures, and religions have come into closer contact through increased levels of refugee resettlement and forced migration, has intensified pressure on teachers and school leaders to learn to value diversity, honor it with integrity, and to preserve the cultural dignity of their students and their families. It is clear that teachers will continue to be challenged by the expenditure of energy required to nurture unity within a context of diversity.

It seems safe to suggest that in order to effectively nurture unity within classrooms, schools, and the communities they exist within, it is important for teachers to begin to develop a globalized intercultural awareness of the dynamics of the teaching and learning process. Such an awareness will enable them to better understand what happens in schools and what teachers do in distant places as well as to recognize the global challenges that have impacted some of their students' previous experiences of school.

This book explores some of the ways in which some specific sociopolitical and ethnocultural contexts shape teaching and the social milieu of teachers' lives. Hopefully, it illustrates some examples that might lend themselves as a

means that allows teachers in the Western world to develop a critical intercultural awareness of teaching in some challenging global contexts.

CHALLENGING NARROW WORLDVIEWS OF TEACHING

Our assumptive worldviews influence the ways in which we see ourselves as well as the social roles that we assume. They also determine the social roles that we assign to others. We each have our own long list of social roles with which we identify. For example, I am: *a father*, *a husband*, *a son and brother*, *an immigrant whose parents were immigrants and whose grandparents were forcibly displaced*, *a descendant of tribal peoples from South Asia*, *an advocate for human rights*, *an anti-racist scholar,* and *a teacher*. These are only a few roles through which I construct an identity for myself, but each one certainly contributes to how I see myself and how I interpret the social world I inhabit. Importantly, I accept that my social roles and experiences shape how I view myself as a teacher and the perspective I hold of the profession. And, I am proud to belong to the teaching profession.

Our worldviews and the social roles we occupy enable us to make meaning of our lives and to navigate our relationships. They also aid us in maintaining a somewhat consistent and predictable world, reading it through the schemas that we hold to be true. Our assumptive worldviews ground, secure, steady, and orient us. This is especially important during the times in which we experience destabilization. Yet, at the same time, our assumptive worldviews can limit how we perceive and make sense of those who seem different from us.

The truth is, despite the fact that human beings have much in common at a fundamental genetic level, in some distinct ways cultural differences can be more prevalent than cultural universals. And we have the proclivity, oftentimes unconsciously so, toward what, over a century ago, sociologist William Graham Sumner termed *ethnocentrism* in his book *Folkways* (1906). At the dawn of the twentieth century, Sumner identified that almost every person tends to believe that her or his culture is superior to someone else's. This is the basis of ethnocentrism.

Recognizing and admitting a proclivity for ethnocentric thinking should not leave us feeling guilty or ashamed. The vast majority of people are simply unaware of the cultural norms to which they tightly hold. Yet, it is important to recognize that we use those cultural norms to determine who belongs to our communities and who exists outside of them. This is where the problem lies.

Ethnocentrism, however, should not be mistaken for *xenophobia*, which is a fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners. In mild forms, xenophobia can

lead an individual to harbor negative attitudes toward all immigrants or, in many cases, a subset of immigrants who perhaps speak a different language, practice their religions differently, or simply look different. In more intense forms, xenophobia breeds racism, radical nationalism and, all too often, results in violence against immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.

Despite the security that assumptive worldviews provide, teachers and teacher-educators need to conceptualize teaching—the science, art, and craft of educating other people's children—in ways that transcend the practicalities and limitations of their firsthand experiences. Every teacher's assumptive worldview of teaching has been shaped through the living laboratory of attending and working in schools located in particular neighborhood contexts, which typically reflect particular social milieus. These highly contextual experiences generate preconceived notions, expectations, beliefs, values, and firmly held assumptions about students, schools, teachers, and what constitutes teaching.

GLOBALIZING THE TEACHER PROFESSION

In order to create a professional identity as a teacher in an increasingly globalized world, teachers need to consider the interconnectedness of the meaning of teaching in local contexts with the meaning of teaching in more global ones. To do this means providing teachers with opportunities to reconsider and shift some of their deeply held beliefs and attitudes about teaching and what it means to be a teacher. This is important because as Sachs (2005) stated,

> Teacher professional identity . . . stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of "how to be," "how to act" and "how to understand" their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience. (p. 15)

Recognizing the interconnectedness that binds teachers together into a global profession requires an active negotiation of what it means to belong to a worldwide profession that is committed to instill in young people the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to live peacefully and to work collectively in local communities and as members of a singular human species.

A globally minded teacher recognizes the commonality of some of the vexing educational issues and solutions that exist throughout the world. She understands the value of learning from the experiences of teaching colleagues who work in other national and/or cultural settings and she is committed to

use the experiences of these colleagues to improve her own professional practice. Preparing teachers to contribute to a truly globalized profession requires that they be nurtured toward developing a critical intercultural awareness—an awareness that will serve as a tool to navigate a world of facts and so-called alternative facts—that helps them to analyze the sociopolitical and historical events that shape the world and their profession (Freire, 1983).

SELECTING A ROADMAP

In their book *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (2014), Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña contend that researchers should devote time and energy to developing, refining, and clarifying the conceptual framework that structures their research projects. They define a conceptual framework in the following manner:

> A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, variables, or constructs—and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be simple, elaborate, commonsensical or theory driven, descriptive or causal. (p. 20)

In plain language, a conceptual framework provides a "roadmap" of sorts that explains what the researcher planned to focus on in the study and provides a framing mechanism to explain what went on in the analysis and how the results were derived (Maxwell, 2013). It is important for a conceptual framework to also identify a researcher's positionality on the topic under investigation and to surface her or his assumptions, preconceptions, and biases toward the subject.

In a somewhat general sense, the underlying notion of professional growth and development *of* and *for* teachers is based on two other generally accepted tenets, which are: (1) the concept of teaching as a profession, and (2) the concept of teachers are professionals. While there are seemingly endless debates that flare up in the mainstream media about whether or not teaching *is* or *is not* a profession, I will make my bias known and begin with the stance that *teaching is a profession*, and that *teachers are professionals*. Furthermore, I believe that one of the challenges, but not an insurmountable one, to developing more globally competent teachers is the fact that the concept of a teacher as a professional is oftentimes rooted in narrow understandings of teaching as a geographically and culturally bound process where local context is all that seemingly matters.

Drawing on the work of numerous authors (for example, see Delvin-Foltz, 2010; Guo, 2014; Merryfield, Lo & Kasai, 2008; Santoro, 2009; and Zhao,

2010, among others), I have taken the position that if teachers are to become more globally competent they need to be given opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that lead to such things as: a deepened sense of the struggles that many in the Developing World face and be given a vista into how these impact the dynamics of teaching and learning in some challenging social contexts. They need opportunities that permit them to develop a critical intercultural consciousness that allows them to make sense of the world beyond their national borders. They need to be supported as they gain the confidence and self-efficacy that helps to prepare them to better address the challenges of bringing a global perspective into their local classrooms. And, finally they need professional learning opportunities that can increase their level of intercultural competency so that they can better understand the range of social and cultural norms that appear in their classrooms as embodied by some of their students.

The ethnographic narratives in this book are framed as a means through which teachers can develop an intellectual and emotional sensitivity that allows for an increased capacity for tolerance and ambiguity, and an openness to the cultural, political, and spiritual values, beliefs, and practices that are different from those shared by the dominant groups of society (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997). Lacking the sensitivity to understand cultural differences and to accommodate them represents an impenetrable obstacle to developing human relations that are born from being able to communicate with others who come from cultures that are different from our own (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

DEVELOPING A CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

In order to operationalize the notion that contemporary schools represent a microcosm of the "global village" that exists today, teachers need to be more than merely encouraged to toss around ideas about what works best in their local and national contexts for teaching, and how those ideas might influence and be influenced by broader and more globalized understandings of what teaching means. If the adults who are charged with teaching have not developed attitudes that embrace openness, respect, and responsibility, if they do not possess an understanding of historical and current world issues, and if they do not have the ability to communicate across linguistic, religious, and cultural boundaries, it is difficult to imagine that they can support their students to thrive in an interconnected world.

Interestingly, research has pointed to the tenacity with which many teachers in North America cling to prior knowledge and beliefs about other people

based on an assumptive worldview that positions the so-called Developing World as in need of fixing (Tallon & McGregor, 2014). Arguably, while the teaching profession in Canada and the United States has undergone some demographic changes in the past thirty years, the majority of the workforce still reflects a population who can be best described as White, middle class, and heterosexual, and who hold a predominantly Eurocentric worldview (Leeman & Ledoux, 2003; Moreau, 2014; Walters, Garii & Walters, 2009).

As a result, many teachers have little or limited cross-cultural understanding and knowledge of the social dynamics of teaching beyond their personal and professional experience, even though they fully anticipate working with students who have been previously educated elsewhere. In turn, they naïvely regard *teaching as teaching* regardless of the social context in which it occurs. They have, in many instances, formed their beliefs and attitudes toward and about the profession based on a very limited worldview of teaching. Such pervasive beliefs limit their ability to develop the intercultural awareness that allows them to understand teaching as a global profession with all of its similarities and differences.

The concept of intercultural competency is crucial in terms of being able to effectively teach in increasingly diverse North American school settings. Intercultural competency refers to a teacher's ability to communicate effectively across and among cross-cultural contexts, and to being able to respectfully relate to diverse groups of people, some of whom have had markedly different life experiences from one's own (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

As highlighted in the 2013 UNESCO document, *Intercultural Competencies: Conceptual and Operational Framework*:

> The costs of intercultural *incompetence* are so high, including all the dangers of conflict and war, that it is vital to invest in activities necessary to clarify, teach, promote, enact and support intercultural competencies. ([emphasis added] p. 40)

Doing nothing, with respect to offering teachers opportunities to develop a critical intercultural awareness, is clearly a shortsighted decision that could lead teachers to not be able to understand the lives and past educational experiences of some of their students. Students who desperately need their teachers to understand them in order to be able to reach and effectively teach them.

However, teachers can only do this if they are also committed to critically reflecting upon their own experiences of teaching, the experiences of other teachers, and allow themselves to challenge how they perceive and construct their identities as teachers and of the teaching profession. Such a commitment requires that teachers and teacher-educators develop what Paulo Freire (1983) referred to as *conscientização*: a critical intercultural consciousness

that impacts professional practice through the ways in which teachers relate to others and to the planet we all share.

Although some want to deny it, teachers are not born with intercultural competency. Rather, they develop competency through a combination of educational and life experiences. It is important, therefore, for teachers to encounter accurate narratives that will allow them to more adeptly navigate the complex social environments of contemporary North American schools—schools that are marked by a growing diversity of peoples, lifestyles, cultures, and religions. Teachers need to be given opportunities to develop their own awareness and understanding of students who come from backgrounds that are very different from their own, and who have been taught by teachers in schools that are quite different from those in which they have experience (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

A MODEST STEP FORWARD

If we are to achieve a sense of unity within a context of human diversity, we must reduce the likelihood of perceiving others—those who seem to be different from us—through the lenses of broadly held and yet inaccurate stereotypes. I hope that the narrative ethnographies contained in this book, while admittedly modest, make a meaningful contribution to the scholarly work that connects the social and political issues that arise in classrooms to the lived realities that affect all of us who belong to this interconnected and intercultural world (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

As the globalized world continues to grow seemingly smaller, the critical importance of improving teachers' intercultural sensitivity and competence grows bigger in equal measure (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). If teachers are to develop a sense of solidarity in the teaching profession, they need to be given vistas into the challenging sociopolitical and ethnohistorical experiences that some of their professional colleagues in the global community of teachers have had to endure.

Chapter Two

Seeing beyond the Stories

The three cases that form the storied experiences described in this book were connected using the methodology of naturalistic inquiry, which, in this case, relied on "a pluralism of method and occasion" approach (Chamberlain et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Initially conceived of "stand alone" cases within the traditions of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the three cases were eventually integrated for the purposes of analysis and interpretation. The pluralism of method and occasion approach allowed for the data from each case to be analyzed collectively in order to better understand teachers' perspectives on the common challenge of formally educating children in challenging social contexts. Even though the data for each study had been collected in slightly different ways, and most definitely in different places and at different times (Chamberlain et al., 2011), a common theme united them.

As an integrative approach to naturalistic inquiry, a pluralism of method and occasion works well when it offers a means through which to understand the social world of some diverse groups of people who lives and work suffer under some similar societal and cultural pressures (Chamberlain et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By embedding themselves in the places where people live and work, naturalistic researchers can draw on observations, interviews, and other sources of descriptive data, as well as their own subjective experiences, to create rich, evocative descriptions and interpretations of social phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world," stated Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3). Furthermore, they proposed that,

> It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of

> representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Qualitative research, when conducted well and when presented as intelligibly as it should be, is more of an artistic craft than a "slavish adherence to methodological rules" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 5).

It is not, however, uncommon—as in the case of the studies illustrated in this book—to discover that a qualitative study did not conform precisely to a standard methodology. In fact, the skillfulness of a qualitative researcher can be measured by her or his ability "to bend the methodology to the peculiarities of the setting" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 5). In my experience, as McGrath (1982) stated, qualitative research should be more correctly viewed "as a set of dilemmas to be 'lived with'; and as an effort to keep from becoming impaled on one or another horn of one or more of these dilemmas" (p. 69).

The chapters that follow present a series of three ethnographic research studies, which have been linked together and integrated into a multisited ethnographic narrative of formal education as a commitment to human development. Within the boundaries of each case, as well as collectively, the narratives seek to illustratively respond to the following questions:

1. Beyond the traditional confines of schools and classrooms in the Developed World, what does teaching look and sound like in some of the world's more challenging sociopolitical and ethnocultural contexts?
2. What are some of the sociopolitical and ethnocultural factors that have contributed to create the milieu within which the teachers work?
3. What might be learned by teachers in the Developed World about teaching, the teaching profession, the lives of students, and reflexively learned about themselves through deeper understandings of what it means to be committed to student success in such challenging contexts?

NARRATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY

Narrative ethnography seeks to close the distance between an outsider's interpretation or what is referred to as the "etic" perspective of social order, and a more authentic account of the lived experiences of those who are the subjects of the study, or the "emic" perspective (Creswell, 2013). Tedlock (1991) described narrative ethnography as a research approach that renders explicit the

relationships that were formed between an ethnographer and the participants who actively engaged in "ethnographic dialogue to create a world of shared intersubjectivity" (p. 70).

My intent in explaining my research approach is not to make narrative ethnography seem simplistic. Rather, my intent is to demonstrate the ways in which narrative ethnography can be used to illustrate that there are millions of people whose experience is only marginally connected to anyone beyond their local community, who are excluded from the purported benefits of globalization, and of whose lives we know very little (Inda & Rosaldo, 2007). Such experiences take place, quite ironically, in the midst of a globalized world that is marked by complex social mobility and economic interconnection (Inda & Rosaldo, 2007).

Narrative ethnography provides the opportunity for the celebration of diverse worldviews—worldviews that shape the social politics of local communities and which, when accepted as frames for people's understandings of social reality, make the world a little safer for human differences (Ghodsee, 2016).

Ethnography literally means to write or to represent a culture. Ethnographers, therefore, look for patterns, describe local social relations, attempt to understand them and derive meanings from them, and try to make sense of a place and a case in relation to the entire social setting within an interconnected web of social relationships (Creswell, 2013). The value of representing ethnography narratively is best explained by Van Maanen (2011), who wrote:

> The ordinary truth of any research trade—ethnographic or otherwise—is that we traffic in communications, and communication implies we intend to alter the view of our readers. From this perspective, our task is rhetorical. We attempt to convince others that we've uncovered something of note, made unusual sense of something, or, in weak form, simply represented something well. That is to say that our writing is both explicitly and implicitly designed to persuade others that we know what we're talking about and they ought to therefore pay attention to what we are saying. (p. 147)

COLLECTING AND ANALYZING STORIES

Because these research studies were anchored in the notion of lives as they are lived on the landscape (Phillion, 2002) then, inevitably, external events, actions, and happenings also became a part of the research, and were woven into the stories that were retold by both the participants and myself. Following the suggestions of Atkinson and Coffey (2003), I invited participants to

have conversations with me. The conversations were, at times, structured as formal interviews, while, at other times, they occurred as more informal back-and-forth discussions. In each case, the conversations were tape-recorded, transcribed, read and re-read, and then analyzed (Creswell, 2013).

Exploring diverse experiences of teaching and learning through less formal conversational approaches allowed me to begin to understand the cognitive structures and the cultural embeddedness of the purposes of education—the worldviews—as a means to human development and how these understandings are "narratively composed, embodied in people and expressed in practice" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124).

In this way, the data collection progressed through observations and chains of conversations, in which there was not a specific emphasis on precisely finding a representative sample to interview. I had no statistical or numerical sense of how many individuals had to be interviewed because generalization is not a goal of qualitative research. Rather, the focus of the data collection was on finding individuals in each local context who could identify events that seemingly mattered to them, and who would willingly contribute to the narrative research.

Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 provide some basic information about the individuals who participated in each of the cases and who were generous in sharing their time and stories.

RESEARCH INFORMANTS

Table 2.1. Resource Centre for Social Transformation and Brickfield Schools (Kolkata, India)

Sr. Cyril Mooney, i.b.v.m.	Former principal of the Loreto (Sealdah) Day School & foundress of the Resource Centre for Social Transformation
Jon Ellis	Brickfield Schools Program Coordinator, Resource Centre for Social Transformation
Rina Singh	Brickfield Schools Project Coordinator, Resource Centre for Social Transformation
Soumitra Bhattacharya	Teacher-Educator, Resource Centre for Social Transformation
Sanjay	Teacher, Brickfield Schools
Priya	Teacher, Brickfield Schools
Arbind	Teacher, Brickfield Schools
Sahanaj	Teacher, Brickfield Schools

Table 2.2. Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective (Kigali, Rwanda)

Olivier	Clerk of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Christian	Chairperson of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Sonia	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Gervais	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Pascal	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
David	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Jacob	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Raisa	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Thierry	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Xavier	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Eric	Teacher and member of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective
Peter	Taxi driver

Table 2.3. CARITAS/Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Sub-Office and Bhutanese Refugee Education Programs (Damak, Nepal)

Sr. Lourda Mary Thumma	Field Director, CARITAS/Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Sub-Office
Loknath Pokrel	Assistant Field Director, CARITAS/JRS Sub-Office
Martha	Office-based resource teacher, CARITAS/JRS Sub-Office
Rachel	Office-based resource teacher, CARITAS/JRS Sub-Office
Dorji	Head Teacher, Bhutanese Refugee Education Program school
Shakun	Head Teacher, Bhutanese Refugee Education Program school
Prakash	Assistant Head Teacher, Bhutanese Refugee Education Program school

ILLUMINATING DISTANT SOCIAL REALITIES AND WORLDVIEWS

Analytically, the data from each case were initially read, and then re-read as a single narrative; one that described the social context of teaching from the research informants' perspectives. This analytical process required me to listen attentively to the "voices" of the research informants as they were captured in the transcripts and to reflect on my best remembrances of them. It also required me to go back and forth between the field notes that I had written and the photographs that I had taken at each location. The process pushed me back into the extant literature in order to find additional background to the history and research already written about each context. Poignant elements from this process of reading, re-reading, revisiting, and remembering

were surfaced through this iterative process—elements that seemed to stand out and that needed to be written about. These elements have been brought together within each of the narrative chapters that follow.

To present the ethnographic case studies that formed the research projects, I chose to employ a form of narrative ethnography whereby a researcher seeks to lend "thickness" to her or his research in an attempt to validate what has been regarded by some as informal research practices (Charmaz, 1983; Tedlock, 1991). Narrative ethnographies refer to texts presented in the form of stories that incorporate the ethnographer's experiences into the ethnographic study (Tedlock, 1991).

"Narratives are not," however, as Gubrium and Holstein (2008) explain, "simply reflections of experience, nor are they descriptive free-for-alls [. . .] Rather, narratives comprise the interplay between experience, storying practices, descriptive resources, purposes at hand, audiences, and the environments that condition storytelling" (pp. 250–251). Narrative ethnography, as a form of inquiry, is based firmly in the premise that, as human beings, we come to understand and to give meaning to our lives through stories (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). Grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology, it is a form of qualitative research that involves the gathering of narratives—written, oral, and visual—focusing on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences, and seeking to provide, as Josselson (2006, p. 4) aptly states, "insight that befits the complexity of human lives."

Narrative ethnography as inquiry is more than the uncritical gathering of stories. Narrative inquirers strive to attend to the ways in which a story is constructed, for whom and for what purpose, and they also aim to note the contextual discourses upon which a story draws (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Narrative ethnographies are neither sentimental reflections of an experience nor uncritical descriptive recollections of people and places. Rather, they should feature a vibrant, cultural interchange between an ethnographer's subjectivity and the subjectivities of those whose social realties are to be represented (Bochner, 2007). Even so, both subjectivities are partial as our memories are, by nature, selective. Memories play tricks on us (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003).

ACKNOWLEDGING THE SHADOWS

As with other paradigmatic positions in social science research, narrative ethnography is not without its critics. As a researcher who decided to structure this research as narrative ethnography, it is incumbent upon me to share a few of these critiques. One criticism is that "[i]f you are a storyteller rather than

a story analyst then your goal becomes therapeutic rather than analytic" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 745). Another is that ethnographic researchers try to represent narratives as if they were "authentic" when, in fact, "autobiographical accounts are no more 'authentic' than other modes of representation: a narrative of a personal experience is not a clear route into 'the truth,' either about the reported events, or of the teller's private experience" (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 166). Finally, there is a criticism leveled at narrative inquirers that, in their concern to represent the meanings that individuals ascribe to their lived experience, they often fail in the struggle to resist "a globalized, homogenized, impoverished system of meaning" (Fox, 2008, p. 341).

Such criticisms are legitimate, and especially so when narrative ethnographers allow themselves be seduced into a belief that they have the insight and the ability to faithfully represent another's story. Such criticism serves as a warning to those who purport to offer the definitive story of a people. However, if ethnographers listen carefully enough to the stories that they hear, as Andrews (2007) suggests, they will discover that there is much to learn from every story that they might gather, and they can begin to understand the worldview that lends meaning to those lives collectively. In narrative ethnography, researchers work with the data they gather, and, in light of this fact, they must be aware of and remain self-critical of the arguments and claims that they make (Polkinghorne, 2007). In the end, what narrative ethnographers are left with is some understanding, even if only a partial one, of the patterns that cohere among individuals and the aspects of lived experience that differentiate (Josselson, 2006, p. 5).

SHARPENING THE FOCUS

In narrative ethnography, as is the case with all forms of qualitative research, it is important to present methods to justify the scholarly contribution of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985), more than three decades ago, at a time when qualitative research was being challenged by the positivistic science "fundamentalists," proposed that it is important for qualitative researchers to consider the following question in their work and to respond to it: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (p. 290).

In a narrative form, I have attempted to represent the tone and quality of specific aspects of the conversations. It is simply impossible and impractical to include all of the transcripts verbatim or append all of the field notes that I took or to include every image that I captured. Thus, the narratives are necessarily incomplete. The selection does, however, offer a representation

of the subjects that I and the participants discussed and the general tone of the conversations. This commitment to an evocative description is borne out in what might best be described as a fidelity to represent those who willingly informed this project through their descriptions of some of the challenges that accompany teaching in some difficult sociopolitical and ethnocultural global contexts. While each one was admittedly a messy study, in presenting the narratives, I have tried to not lean on that messiness as an excuse to use language that obfuscates rather than clarifies, and that shrouds the limitations of the work behind what Ghodsee (2016) refers to as "a fog of impenetrable prose."

Chapter Three

A Modicum of Opportunity in the Haze of the Brickfields

Not long after the sun had risen, my project assistant, Elise—a twenty-something Bachelor of Education student, and an insistent young woman who had found a way to invite herself into working with me on the project—walked quickly alongside me in order to meet Soumitra Bhattacharya, the teacher-educator who was assigned as one of our on-site handlers, along with his colleague, Rina Singh, one of the brickfield schools' project coordinators. We were to meet them at the Sealdah train station in Kolkata, India. As we walked down the street, we stepped around a few of the thousands of homeless individuals in Kolkata who were still sleeping on the sidewalk, covered in threadbare blankets. We also kept a watchful eye for the rats that scurried over and around them. There were certainly a lot of rats.

At about a quarter of the way to the train station, I told Elise that we should probably pull up the scarves around our necks to cover our mouths and nostrils. I explained that this was to avoid inhaling the toxic ash floating off the burning trash—a collection of rubbish and human waste—that had been brushed into the gutter and doused with kerosene and then set alight. The pungent scent that emitted from the burning pile is indescribable.

Geoffrey Moorehouse, the author of *Calcutta: The City Revealed* (1971), said that Calcutta, now known as "Kolkata," provided for him a window into a society that offered a sight that was enough to destroy any romantic illusions people may cling to about gentleness and brotherly love. It is fair for me to say that, in many regards, even though it has been forty years since he wrote those words, Moorehouse's sentiments described my experience of Kolkata's Sealdah district in January 2013. Sealdah tested me.

NAVIGATING ORGANIZED CHAOS

It was Soumitra's and Rina's assignment to help us navigate the organized chaos of the Sealdah train station and the Indian rail system. We were planning to make the hour-long journey to the Budge Budge train station in order to visit two of the area's brickfield schools. Sealdah station is a terminus for trains arriving from some of India's most underdeveloped areas. It serves as a gateway for the throngs of un- or undereducated poor who are seeking a better life. I watched them pour out of the railcars and step onto Sealdah's platforms, only to discover that their welcome was, however unceremoniously, joining the mass of others who had arrived earlier, now to be found squatting not far from the platforms, surrounded by the meager belongings they brought with them. While I cannot know for sure, they seemed to be thinking about what they should do next.

There was a perceptible irony that struck me as I boarded our train, but one that I chose not to share with my colleagues. We were traveling to West Bengal's Budge Budge station as our staging point for this part of the project. Given that the focus of our work was specifically to document how a child's right to education is met in some socially and environmentally challenging conditions, the obviousness of my project stood out to me.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Budge Budge was the site where the ship the S.S. *Komagata Maru* was ordered to dock following its forced return from Vancouver's harbor in 1914. The *Komagata Maru* incident is identified to this day as one of Canada's most infamous human rights violations.

The *Komagata Maru* was a coal-transport steamship that had been repurposed into a passenger ship and chartered by a group of Indian Sikhs who were attempting to immigrate to Canada in search of a better life. Upon arrival to the Vancouver harbor, the passengers were denied entry to Canada and forced to live on the ship for two months. During the span of time it sat in the harbor, the *Komagata Maru* became something of a media sensation, and drew plenty of attention from the public at large. Eventually, after the standoff in the waters just off the Vancouver coast, Canadian naval vessels escorted the ship back out to sea. The captain and crew of the *Komagata Maru* had no choice but to make the long and arduous journey back to India. When the ship reached India, a British warship escorted it to Budge Budge where the British colonial authorities attempted to arrest a number of the men. A

gunfight erupted and nineteen people died. Those who survived were imprisoned for the duration of the First World War.

More than a century later, on May 18, 2016, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau rose in the House of Commons, Canada's Parliament, and acknowledged that the *Komagata Maru* and its Sikh passengers were refused entry into Canada as a result of clearly discriminatory policies enacted by the Canadian government of the day that were designed, quite simply, to keep them out.

NEGOTIATING A RIDE

After a train ride, during which we made room for farmers traveling with produce and livestock, including a pair of goats that needed to be squeezed into the aisle space, we walked slowly away from the train station. Rina purposefully strode ahead along the dirt road, dismissing one auto-rickshaw driver after another. It seemed that they did not meet her standard. The conversations were always short and pitched, and they ended with Rina giving a huff of disgust in response to whatever the local drivers were suggesting.

"She knows the local drivers, and wants to find an honest one," Soumitra offered before Elise or I could ask what was happening.

"They are not all honest men," he added, with emphasis.

We continued to walk for about five minutes and then, abruptly, Rina stopped and waved frantically for us to hurry up and climb aboard the rickshaw she was standing beside. I could only guess that she felt satisfied that we were not being ripped off. The whole situation struck me as funny because I was fairly confident that the cost of transporting the four of us from the train station to the brickfields was well within our financial means.

It cost us about sixty rupees—approximately one Canadian dollar—to be driven out to the brickfields, have the driver wait for us for a few hours, and then take us back to the train station. I felt somewhat embarrassed that Rina had felt it necessary to haggle so that we could pay a dollar to transport all four of us. I routinely spend more than that on a cup of coffee. And, for the price, it is all too often a bad cup of coffee.

While I had traveled in an auto-rickshaw, or tuk-tuk, as it is called in other parts of Southeast Asia, I had never ridden in one that could be made to accommodate nine people. After we four climbed aboard the seven-horsepower, sputtering people mover and squished ourselves with a sense of modesty to fit on the bench without sitting on each other's laps, the driver got the machine moving.

We did not travel very far before he stopped along the way to pick up a series of fares who found novel ways to either hang on or squirm their way into the tiny spaces between others. At one point, I turned to Elise, who was sitting so close to me that I had to lean away from her so that our noses would not bang into each other, and said, "I think we could get out and walk faster than this thing is moving."

She smiled but did not bother to reply. Her attention was taken by the small woman who was seated in her lap.

SERIAL MIGRANTS AND 3D WORK

Worldwide attention has been focused on the plight of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea to seek refuge in Europe, and, all too often, meeting with tragic consequences. According to a 2017 report by the United Nations, however, migration within national borders is of a far greater magnitude than migration across international borders. Internal migration—the temporary or permanent movement within nations—is occurring on a vast scale and continues to grow (United Nations, 2017).

The International Organization for Migration (2015) estimates that there are approximately 740 million internal migrants worldwide, but the actual numbers are probably higher as the official statistics fail to capture many temporary, circular migrants. Internal migration is induced by a complex matrix of economic, social, environmental, and demographic factors that "push" and "pull" people to migrate from one place to another in search of an income, more promising futures for themselves and their families, and safer communities in which to temporarily reside. While migration can open up new economic possibilities for families, it also comes with high risks, especially for the migrants who constitute a floating and somewhat invisible population—the ones who alternate between living and working in their home communities and in their temporary work site destinations.

Serial or circular migration—the back-and-forth movement of migrants from their homes to their temporary worksites—involves the movement of hundreds of millions of people in India alone. Government social support does not really reach these individuals. This lack of support only compounds the fact that almost all of these serial migrants belong to socioeconomically deprived demographic groups who have attained negligible educational success, if any success at school at all, and, as a result, have no economic or political clout.

Serial migrants are oftentimes employed in "3D" jobs, namely, ones that are dirty, dangerous, and difficult (Castles & Davidson, 2000). They are en-

gaged mainly in work that local residents refuse. Some of the risks associated with 3D work include low pay, either low-quality or uncertain housing, a lack of sanitation and safe water, irregular or no access to utility services, and generally poor access to basic health services (Castles & Davidson, 2000; Deshingkar, 2006). In addition, serial migrant labourers, who typically represent the poorest segment of any population, are also denied access to state-sponsored interventions that are intended to alleviate the effects of poverty, interventions that are almost always delivered in fixed geographic locations. They are left behind precisely because life demands that they be transient (Rogaly, 1998).

The children of migrants are often compelled to travel to worksites with their parents. Smita (2008) estimates that, of the total seasonal migrant population in India, as much as one-third is made up of children from infancy to fourteen years of age. They accompany their parents to the temporary habitats and they are among the most vulnerable segments of the population. They are one of the most educationally and socially marginalized groups. Their access to primary schooling—a constitutionally guaranteed right in India—is severely curtailed as their caregivers' migration patterns result in a disruption of regular and consistent formal education. The net result of this disruption is the intergenerational transmission of illiteracy and innumeracy. Both of these conditions contribute to the vicious cycle of poverty, whose hunger seems, most unfortunately, insatiable.

KILNS THAT STAND WATCH

As we walked down the road and away from the parked auto-rickshaw, we began to see row upon row of tall chimneys, which rose from dozens of oversized brick kilns. On that slightly hazy but otherwise blue day, it was quite the sight to behold along the West Bengal skyline.

Upon arrival at the first brickfield, we immediately noticed the logs, stacked high and awaiting to be used to fire the kiln. We watched as two modestly built men grabbed one of the large logs, which was about the size of a very large tree branch, and lifted it onto their shoulders, carrying it toward the kiln.

We continued a little farther along, not far from the open pit, and walked by the squalid mud huts—the temporary housing for brickfield workers and their families. Each mud hut's roof was comprised of a tattered blue or orange tarpaulin sheet. The sheets flapped in the light breeze, which was noticeable even though the huts were pushed right up against each other. I could not quite tell how many huts there were, but it looked like there were a few dozen separate units crammed, side-by-side, into a small stretch of land.

Elise and I paused for a moment to try and take a better look, but Soumitra encouraged us to carry on, saying that we should not go over any closer to take a look at them.

"We don't want the owners to take notice of us," Soumitra said as he motioned us to continue walking toward the schools.

The previous day, during our pre-departure orientation meeting, Jon Ellis, the Program Coordinator for the Loreto (Sealdah) School's Resource Centre for Social Transformation Brickfield School Project, had been direct as he told us:

> These people, the brickfield workers, live in very tough social conditions and work in a harsh physical world. There is no way around it. They are poor—destitutely poor—and they are going to remain poor their whole lives. Be aware that the brickfields are considered to be closed places. The owners are suspicious of visitors. It is obvious to anyone who visits them that they are quite oppressive places.

As we continued past the brickfields, the hazy air was choking with ash and coal soot from the kilns' furnaces. I learned quickly not to breathe too deeply, as that created the feeling of having clogged my nostrils and having scratched the back of my throat. "Small, short breaths," I reminded myself as I walked.

HAZARDING THE BRICKFIELDS

As we continued up the dirt road, I had trouble reconciling the solitudes of what I witnessed. I watched as both adults and adolescents dug for clay with crude tools and their bare hands, molded the clay into bricks, and lifted dozens of the unfired bricks onto wobbly, wooden carts. They then hauled the carts, loaded with bricks, up the banks of the clay pits to stack them for pickup and delivery to the massive kiln. It was obvious to me that it was grueling work.

The tattered expressions of familial poverty in India were contrasted by what I saw in the faces of the children, who were playing next to the sunbaked cement building that they knew as their school. The smiling schoolchildren laughed and joyfully sang and played as they learned basic literacy and numeracy skills in their native language. It was a sight to behold in the openness of the brickfield school yard.

When we had interviewed Sister Cyril Mooney, a living saint for many of the poor of Kolkata, she had told us that she was shocked by what she had learned from Jon Ellis. This is what she learned, which reflected her inspiration to establish the initial brickfield schools:

> Sister Cyril: They are mostly migrant children from Bihar. They travel with their family, their whole family, including the smallest children, and they are occupied the whole day with making bricks. On a good day, they can make 1,000 bricks. And for 1,000 bricks when we first went there, they were getting 50 rupees; less than a dollar. And now they get 100 or 200 rupees. But even that is still only an absolutely basic amount that can keep them minimally from starvation.

This is the daily reality for about seven months of the year for these serial migrant workers and their families. They leave their remote villages to live and work between India's monsoon seasons in the vast brickfields. They have no choice but to carry out hard labor, day after day, to support their families between the rainy seasons when the brickfields will be rendered into inaccessible mud pits.

Staggeringly, it has been estimated that there are close to 15 million people working in approximately 30,000 brickfields scattered across the countryside of India. As Jon explained, the Resource Centre for Social Transformation was making a very small dent in improving the educational opportunities of the children of the brickfield workers in West Bengal:

> We are running schools at present in only 27 brickfields. And, in West Bengal alone, the number of brickfields is probably more than 2,000. We know that there are a lot of children in the brickfields who still cannot attend school. We do what we can.

Upward of sixty percent of the school-aged children who live in extreme poverty come from India's rural communities. These children have little to no time to attend school. They must help their parents either with daily domestic adult chores or, in some instances, through paid labour (Smita, 2008).

While child labor is outlawed, families have no choice but to work; no one seems to be exempt. The arithmetic is simple: more hands equate to more bricks made, and, since the families are paid on a piecemeal basis per brick, it only makes economic sense to take on the work as a family. The brickfield owners do not require that the children of the migrant workers work. However, family necessity puts them to work. It is also obvious that, because India has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the demand for bricks will only increase. Child labor will not disappear.

This has led to serious lacunae as regards the educational condition of the children of the brickfields workforce. Since the active season is from November to May, the families stay at their work sites for that period only and then they return to their home communities for the remaining few months of the year. The children cannot, in reality, be successful in their home community's school because of their long absence. The children are thus kept out of school

for the whole year. The result is an inertia; the notion of educational opportunity for the migrants' children is, all too often, nothing more than an illusion.

Finding ways in which to bring a formal education to the doorsteps or workplaces of serial migrants, like the brickfields, has required innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to create schools. These schools are not much like the schools that most people imagine, and their operation requires a commitment to train semiliterate and marginally numerate and unemployed youth, who are drawn from the same local communities as the children, to become part-time "barefoot teachers."

THE BAREFOOT TEACHERS

Sister Cyril Mooney developed the Barefoot Teachers Training Program in the 1980s. Referring to the philosophy that motivated her to create the Barefoot Teachers Training Program, Sister Cyril said:

> People need only feet to walk; shoes are a luxury. Given the millions of children who need to be educated in India, a highly theoretical two-year training teacher training course is an unrealistic luxury. We offer short-term courses, stripped off all extraneous theory, that orient teachers to an education system where children learn through fun-filled activities like song, dance, and story-telling—where dry textbooks are replaced with simple, yet exciting aids made from materials available in their environments and customized to respond specifically to the children's needs.

A brickfield school is, quite literally, nothing more than a cinder block or redbrick shed surrounded by a packed down and well-worn yard space. This space serves as the classroom floor. The shed that stores the learning materials is only slightly larger than the garden-variety shed typically found in many backyards in the self-named Developed World. The shed is made from the same gray or red alluvial soil that the brickfield workers mold into bricks day after day with their hands. As I looked around, I recalled what Sister Cyril had said in one of our earlier conversations:

> These kinds of children should be exposed to a different type of teaching; a teaching that presumes that they need to learn from their own environment, which is the best place to learn.

This barren place was the environment where they would try to learn.

The first school was located on slightly higher ground than the open mud pits that dotted the surrounding brickfield. Each brickfield was, in turn, sur-

rounded by one brickfield after another, each one identifiable by a large kiln that was used to fire and harden the molded clay. The kilns' chimneys rose into the haze of the blue sky.

Sanjay stood in front of the students, who were seated on the dirt. At the front on a small ledge, he and his barefoot-trained teaching colleagues had angled a small, old-fashioned blackboard with a few mathematics equations listed on them:

$$3 + 2 =$$
$$5 + 4 =$$
$$5 + 2 =$$
$$4 + 2 =$$
$$6 + 2 =$$
$$4 + 4 =$$

Sanjay spoke to the class of about thirty small children and invited one, a small boy, to come forward to solve one of the problems. The child, covered in well-worn, dusty clothes, paused and waited with the broken piece of chalk that Sanjay gave him. He held it firmly in his hand.

Sanjay paused for just a moment and then pointed at the "3 + 2 =" equation and the child nervously scribbled an almost undecipherable number on the black slate.

I thought it was a "5," but it was hard to tell.

Sanjay patted the boy on the top of his head and the child quickly rushed back to his place on the ground. His wide smile looked as though it might last for the duration of the morning.

While Sanjay was teaching, Sahanaj, another of the barefoot teachers, was standing about ten meters away. She was sharing the same small patch of hardened ground and teaching a group of about twenty children. They appeared to be younger than the ones that Sanjay was teaching.

Sahanaj drew a small circle on the small two-foot by two-foot blackboard at the front of her classroom—the same open space Sanjay was using, but space that was oriented perpendicular to Sanjay's to create an L-shape—and wrote the number "1" next to it. Then she drew two small circles and wrote "2," and three small circles and "3." The children sat and fidgeted while she wrote something in Hindi.

While Sahanaj was teaching, it was hard to tell if the children were listening, let alone absorbing what she was saying. When I focused in on the teaching and learning dynamic, what I saw was remarkably similar to what I have seen in countless classrooms in North America.

As I continued to watch, though, something different struck me. Some students were watching their teacher and paying attention, but many others were distracted by the arduous work that was going on around them in the brickfields. There was a kind of vacant look in their eyes. I wondered what was going on in their minds. But then I realized that, in many instances, children were just children, and prone to distraction in any environment. I also noticed that some were more interested in the chatter coming from a group of boys in Sanjay's "next-door" classroom.

Just down the road was another brickfield school, where Arbind and Priya were "team teaching." At least, that is what I thought they were doing. When I asked Soumitra if this was how they always taught, he knowingly smiled and replied, "Certainly," as if stating the obvious to the confused foreigner.

I am not sure I asked the question I had intended to, but I did not bother restating it. Instead, I decided that the moment was better spent observing because I could ask questions later on. Maybe I would be fortunate enough to get a few answers by watching and not speaking.

The students in Arbind and Priya's class looked older than the ones in Sanjay's and Sahanaj's classrooms. I guessed that the children were somewhere between ten and twelve years old. Their clothes were more worn than those of the children in Sanjay's and Sahanaj's classrooms. The garments were dustier, and their colors seemed to be more faded. I guessed that, perhaps, their school clothes were used for more than just going to school. However, I caught myself as I realized that this might just be a story that I was conjuring in my own mind.

Dissimilar to the first school, the yard was littered with empty plastic bottles and other garbage. The garbage was all strewn about the schoolyard, being blown about by the light breeze. That did not seem to matter to anyone there. The children stepped around and over the refuse, seemingly content with the fact that they had a school to attend. I could not help but notice that Soumitra had tossed the wrapper from his own stick of gum on the dirt floor without a care.

Arbind and Priya looked like they were perhaps in their early twenties, but as is often the case, it was quite hard to tell. Arbind was wearing a striped blue cardigan over his grayed white dress shirt and dark slacks, while Priya had on a lavender outfit and long draping ochre scarf. It was clear that they were in charge. They looked like teachers.

The students stood in a circle, but only some of the children were covered by the partial shade from the single tree in the yard. The others were bathed in the hazy sunlight, and seemed to be unfazed by standing in the sunshine.

I ended up becoming distracted by the sight of large container ships. I could see them behind the students, traveling up and down the Hugli (also called Hoogly) River, an arm of India's famous Ganges River. The river

made me think of the history of the S.S. *Komagata* and the connection that Canada has to this part of the world.

Almost all of the children were moving about as Arbind and Priya rhythmically spoke and sang. A rope was strung between the tree and the cinder block shed, on which were hanging laminated sheets of paper with the numbers 1 through 20 written on them with colorful, hand-drawn pictures of a single umbrella, two shrubs, three insects and so on, to illustrate what each number represented.

The lesson resembled some of the systematized pandemonium that often occurs when a few dozen children are up on their feet and moving about an open classroom or gymnasium, despite the fact that the teacher is trying to teach something.

At first, I did not notice it, but after a few minutes it became obvious. Three of the young girls were standing in the circle participating in the lesson, each one with a very small child clinging to her back. I was struck by the fact that each of these students was at school learning but, out of necessity, they each had to bring what was most likely a sibling along with them. I figured that they must be caring for their siblings while their parents toiled away in the brickfields. These older girls shifted uncomfortably, trying to distribute the extra weight as they moved. They smiled as they tried to find a way to support themselves and also their familial responsibilities.

At the end of the school day, which amounted to about two hours of the morning, the class ended with what can best be described as the brickfield school version of the game "Duck-Duck-Goose." The children sat in a shape that was supposed to be a circle but was more like an oval. On Priya's command, two children rose to their feet and raced around the small blob of humanity, trying to win by being the first one back to her or his spot on the hard ground. They had ear-to-ear grins as they tried to best each other. Once again, they simply reminded me of the schoolchildren I might find on any playground in Canada.

The Resource Centre for Social Transformation operates out of a cluttered meeting room stuffed full of educational resources and a few folding chairs in the Loreto Sealdah School. It is a private school for over 1,500 girls, and it has established brickfield schools in a few dozen of the more than 3,000 local brickfields.

"It is a drop in the bucket," admitted Jon, but he also seemed reticent with having to accept that fact:

> We simply don't have the capacity to work everywhere. Not being able to get into every brickfield is in many ways not a problem for us. We can't, at least not currently, stretch ourselves any more than we presently do.

Without these schools, the children of migrant workers may never have been afforded the opportunity to attend school at all. Staffed with Barefoot Teachers, the school focuses on delivering early literacy and numeracy skills. Children learn in their native language through simple, fun-filled activities that use resources that are sourced from locally available, and often recycled, materials. Sitting in the shared "office" space at the Loreto School, and surrounded by the bundles of dusty papers that made up the student records, Jon said:

> Sadly, as I have said, it is obvious that the needs are tremendous. Sometimes it bothers me that we're not providing a better standard of education than we are. But, we are doing what we can. We have to work with the capacity of the teachers that we have. What we are trying to do is to give her or him some basic literacy and numeracy skills so that maybe she or he can move one rung up the social ladder in India.

The arrangements for these schools are tenuous and require difficult negotiations with the brickfield owners. When questioned by outsiders, the owners are quick to point out that they do not employ the children, since child labor in India is largely outlawed. As Jon Ellis pointed out, the owners were only convinced to permit the establishment of the schools when the NGOs sold the idea that the parents and older siblings could be much more productive and profitable if they did not have to worry about tending to the young children who were often underfoot. Jon explained to us that when he ventured into the brickfields, the general view among the people he spoke to about the plight of the children and their families was that brickfield owners would not allow anybody to go into their property and do anything with their workers. The owners were suspicious that the outside agencies, who claimed that they wanted to offer the brickfield workers aid and support, were really there to interfere with their business operations.

However, over time, the attitudes of many of the brickfield owners in West Bengal had softened toward the Resource Centre for Social Transformation. Jon stated:

> They have allowed us to run schools in their brickfields and they now allow us to run health camps as well. True enough, occasionally there is a brickfield owner who doesn't want anything to do with us, but since we don't have the capacity to work everywhere it's not a problem for us.

The success that has been achieved does not gloss over the back-and-forth negotiating that had to occur over a period of years. Pointing to the diplomatic approach she took when she first started meeting with the brickfield owners, Sister Cyril said:

> I felt that there were two choices before us. We could go in and start being activists, and start a big row about these poor people not being paid properly. And, what would have happened was the gates of the brickfield would be closed on us and that would be the end. We wouldn't get back in. Instead of that, I decided that we would go in as friends, as allies. We talked to the brickfields owners and told them what we felt about these children.

Rather than being appropriately indignant toward the profit-focused owners and managers who cared very little for the welfare of the serial migrants that they took advantage of, this globally recognized septuagenarian nun took a different approach. Sister Cyril noted:

> I explained that if the small ones were in school and were not hanging around the work sites and breaking the bricks, which is what they used to do, then the brickfield owners would benefit and profit. The small children would oftentimes be playing around and half of the bricks their parents would make would get broken. We convinced the managers and owners that if they allowed us to establish schools, the children would not get in the way and that their parents would be freer to do more work. The parents could earn more money because they could make more bricks, which is what the owners were after. We sold it as a win-win situation.

As a result, the brickfield schools were established not so much for the purpose of providing educational opportunities, but because they met a very real economic need in the eyes of the managers and owners.

Referring to the philosophy that motivated her to develop the Barefoot Teachers Training Program almost four decades ago, Sister Cyril Mooney is quick to note that people need only feet to walk—shoes, she claims, are a luxury. Given the millions of poor young children who need to be educated in India, Sister Cyril will tell you that a highly theoretical two-year training teacher training program is an unrealistic luxury. If you give her the chance, she will add that teaching elementary education may indeed be somewhat complex, but it does not have to be made more complicated with so much theory that it becomes inaccessible to individuals who could otherwise teach basic literacy and numeracy to some of the world's most disadvantaged children. Many modernized Western forms of education, she says, have devolved into cumbersome catchphrases and inaccessible technical jargon:

> One of the most important things in all of these methods we use is to plant hope in people's hearts. We teach in ways that get them, students, parents, and the barefoot teachers, to realize you can move out of these terrible situations if we are willing to make the effort, and we try to help as much as possible. The rest of the developing world should open its eyes and look around it and see where

the areas of need are, and focus their teachers' energies towards addressing those needs. And also, be aware that when you become too highly organized, you lose. You lose a lot.

PROMISES THAT ARE HARD TO KEEP

On the fourteenth of September 2005, the heads of state of the members of the United Nations gathered in New York to endorse the Millennium Development Goals, referred to as the "MDGs." In essence, the MDGs represent eight aspirational targets intended to improve the lives of billions of people in Developing World countries by 2015. More than a decade later, it appears that those signatory nations are still committed to achieving them even if the actual quality of life of the very poor has not improved much in material terms.

The second Millennium Development Goal was a commitment to the provision of free, universal primary education. It is hard to argue with the very real impact that would come through the realization of this goal. This is especially true for those children who are trapped in a poverty that they cannot escape. However, enacting policies targeted at moving the needle on this single social policy lever—universal, free primary education—has come with a tremendous cost.

India's commitment to Education for All, the government's response to Goal Two, has resulted in a massive teacher shortage across the country, but a shortage that is most acute in the poorest and most remote communities. Some estimates suggest that close to twenty percent of the teaching jobs in government-run primary schools sit vacant. Put another way, there is a massive collective shortage of qualified primary teachers right across India.

What the figures obscure is the fact that some regions in India face an even greater shortage of teachers—areas like Bihar and Jharkhand, where most of West Bengal's brickfield workers hail from. These areas are home to about one-third of India's billion-plus population. There is a shortage of more than twenty-five percent of the necessary primary and secondary teachers in the government-run schools. Such stark numbers paint a bleak picture of the likelihood of getting qualified teachers into the brickfield schools.

SERIAL MIGRATION'S IMPACT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Children are the most unrecognized and vulnerable group among internal migrants. Children migrate independently or as dependents when their families migrate. Migrant children often lose access to basic entitlements, miss out on

schooling, and are subject to health and security risks. Child migrants forgo the critical inputs necessary for their physical, psychological, and intellectual development during their formative years. This has an irreversible impact on their emotional and cognitive development.

Migration delays school entry, denies or interrupts schooling, increases the number of children dropping out and, ultimately, leads to child labor. Child migrants are found to be working in sectors such as construction, brick manufacturing, salt making, sugar cane harvesting, stone quarrying, working on plantations, and fishing. In these sectors, they are an integral part of the labor processes, which benefit from their small hands and light bodies. Payment of wages at work sites on a piece-rate basis allows children to work for long hours as unregistered and invisible labor in family labor units. Being constantly on the move, migrant children face the disruption of friendships and they lack a peer support network. These social conditions hamper their sense of security and familiarity and, furthermore, expose them to risks of drug abuse and sexual exploitation. When they do attempt to return to school, reintegrating migrant children poses a serious challenge since migration-induced dropouts account for a large segment of the out-of-school youth population.

Research across India is beginning to piece together a picture of an increasingly mobile labor class. Addressing the risks faced by this population, especially those risks felt by the children of migrants, must be made a key priority in order for India to meet its development targets. Source-based interventions can protect children from the greatest risks of migration and ensure that no family is forced to remove their children from school due to migratory pressures.

SMALL INTERVENTIONS, IMMEASURABLE POSSIBILITY

No one seems to be delusional with regards to the impact that the brickfield schools—staffed with non-certified Barefoot Teachers—will make. The schools, with their teachers, are only a small intervention intended to slow down the ever-expanding numbers of the illiterate and poor in India. Nevertheless, if you spend a day at a brickfield school with the Barefoot Teachers, you are left with the impression that, in the area of educational opportunity, it is through these initiatives that India might have a real chance of ensuring that the fundamental right to education, which is guaranteed by its constitution, is translated from paper into practice. Jon noted:

> We are realistic with what we expect. We like to think we are giving them a bit of extra strength and that, perhaps, we are opening a few doors for them. We are

> certainly opening the possibility of literacy, which, in a few cases, may lead into other types of work. In the end, I am content in what we are trying to do because even these children are entitled to some kind of education. It is no longer acceptable to refuse to provide them with one; an education.

A visit to the brickfield schools can offer hope that these kinds of initiatives will help ensure the fundamental right to primary education for our youngest citizens, many of whom have been historically disadvantaged and who, in the absence of practical interventions, are destined to endure a life in poverty.

Largely unheard of and seemingly unheralded, the Barefoot Teachers who teach far away from the comfort of classrooms take literacy and numeracy to the doorstep of the underprivileged and marginalized in the brickfield schools. In doing so, they demonstrate that small steps forward are not only imaginable but also possible. Jon spoke about the patience that initiatives like the brickfield schools require:

> One aim that I have, personally, is that as long as there are children in the brickfields who do not have access to school, we need to find ways to run more schools in more brickfields, and prepare the teachers who will have to work in them. But, I know we can't do it all right now.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO FIND SUCCESS

Globally, much has happened since the United Nations formulated the Millennium Development Goals. However, in some regards, very little has changed in terms of substantially realizing those goals and progressing beyond words and into concrete implementation. All children deserve an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Education is a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity. When children go to school and learn, they create opportunities, transforming and empowering their lives and their communities.

Harnessing the power of education, in close cooperation with other social sector levers, is key to addressing the damning effects of poverty. No nation can claim to have succeeded if it has not educated its most vulnerable citizens. Not only is formal education important in reducing the effects of poverty, but it also plays a key role in an individual's overall well-being. "The power of education," said the indomitable Nelson Mandela (as cited in Strauss, 2013, n.p.), is that it "extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation." Nowhere is formal education more impactful than during a child's early years (Ramey & Campbell, 1991).

The staggering interrelationships between child labor and education are not hard to find. In India alone, for example, the Office of the United Nations' Special Envoy for Global Education (Brown, 2012) estimates that:

- 115 million child laborers are involved in hazardous work
- 61 million children are shut out of primary schools
- 34 million adolescent girls are not in school
- 16 million children with disabilities are not in school.

Education is regarded as a crucial component of any effective effort to eliminate child labor, a frequent correlate of familial poverty (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002; Okyere, 2012).

Relative deprivation, in terms of familial income, can yield absolute deprivation in terms of a child's development and capacity for success (Sen, 1999). Arguably, child labor is the result of many interlinked factors (Okyere, 2012). Children's participation in the labor force is varied and volatile, and adjusts in response to changing market and social conditions. Interventions that are intended to put an end to child labor are matched by the flexibility of the large, global, unprotected, potential child labor force (International Labor Conference, 2002). Poverty and social exclusion, labor mobility, discrimination, and a lack of adequate social protection and educational opportunities all influence child labor outcomes.

Far too many children, through no fault of their own, cannot access the education they need to improve their life circumstances. Abject poverty is more than not having money; it is a form of social exclusion. Regrettably, it is sometimes even sustained by society through child labor practices since they offer short-term economic benefits for a country and privileges for a few. However, not only is this an abuse of human rights, it is also an immense waste of national human potential.

Researchers and policymakers recognize that education can make a significant and long-lasting difference in the lives of children who experience poverty (Barnett, 1998; Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Karoly et al., 1998; Stebbins & Knitzer, 2007). However, an enduring challenge has been identifying ways in which to create concrete learning opportunities for some of the poorest children in the Developing World. Brickfield schools and the Barefoot Teacher Training Program are responding to that challenge.

Amid the harsh toil of life in some of India's brickfields, a few nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are working to improve the seemingly inevitable future for these young children. A handful of NGOs have managed to get permission from the brick factory owners to establish schools in the brickfields so that the undocumented child laborers can have a chance to receive an education for at least a portion of the day.

Chapter Four

Beacons of Hope Twenty Years after Genocide

When I boarded the first leg of my flight to Rwanda, I felt fairly confident in my research plan even though I realized that the complexities of a post-genocidal reality could never be predicted, especially by an outsider. Though my research approach had been approved by an institutional research ethics board and was backed by a funding body, I knew, based on my experiences with about ten previous qualitative research studies, that I would most likely have to make some minor adjustments on-site once the interview process began (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). I was aware that the requirements of research tend to become more complex and demanding in international collaborations (Green et al., 2004; Hennink, 2008). I was prepared for most things that might come my way. Or so I thought.

Examining the unknown, not just conceptually, but in encountering lives lived in wholly different circumstances, is part of what attracts me to extending my curiosities beyond my own national borders. And, obviously, one does not embark on studying life on Rwanda with any sense that it will be just another research study. I had a particularly unsettling feeling about this upcoming journey, despite my previous experience with international research and data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

As I checked my bags, I tried to attribute my uncertainties to the long hiatus between the emails that my Rwandan host, Olivier, and I had exchanged. In the two months leading up to my departure, I sent him almost half a dozen emails, and had heard nothing by way of reply to many of the questions I had. Then, about thirty-six hours before my flight was scheduled to leave Winnipeg, I received an email from Olivier:

> Nothing to worry about. All is good. I will meet you at the Kigali airport when you land. Have a safe flight.

His four-sentence response did not leave me with a sense of confidence or comfort that there was, in fact, "Nothing to worry about."

THE 1994 RWANDAN GENOCIDE

On the night of April 6, 1994, two surface-to-air missiles were fired at the Dassault Falcon 50 private jet carrying Juvénal Habyarimana, the president of Rwanda, and the Burundian president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, along with seven other officials and a three-man French crew, as the jet approached Kigali's airport after peace negotiations in Tanzania. All of them died in the crash.

Within hours of the assassination, Hutu extremists began slaughtering Tutsis and Hutu moderates. Over the ensuing months, the genocide gathered momentum and an estimated 800,000 people died, a group made up of the majority ethnic groups of Tutsis and Hutus but that also included members of the minority Twa ethnic group. Eventually, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (the RPF), led by Paul Kagame's rebel forces, defeated the Hutu government and seized power by defeating the civilian and military authorities responsible for the killing campaign in July.

According to numerous reports, as the RPF soldiers advanced south down the eastern side of the country and then swept west, they drove military, militia, and other assailants from the region and so made it possible for Tutsi to emerge from their hiding places in the swamps and bush. The RPF soldiers saved tens of thousands from annihilation and relentlessly pursued those whom they thought to be guilty of genocide. In their drive for victory, the RPF killed thousands. Exact numbers may be impossible to know, but the RPF likely killed tens of thousands during the four months of combat from April to July and into September.

As the summer faded into the fall of 1994, Rwanda was barely a carcass of a nation that had been ravaged by genocide. With hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced, and the psyches and hearts of its people broken, the country was a desolate place. Many in the international community held little hope that life would ever normalize again for Rwandans. The carnage had laid bare for the world the complicities of Rwanda's systems of governmental and social institutions—like schools—to promote the kinds of divisions that were unleashed on the evening of April 6 with a sickening brutality. The genocide and its aftermath tore away any semblance of trust that may have existed among Rwandans. The survivors of the genocide—Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa—were demoralized and divided.

When the new government took control, its primary concern was to guarantee that lethal extremism, fed through the orchestrated colonial rhetoric of

ethnic division, would never be repeated. Security and stability were the first concerns, coupled soon thereafter with basic humanitarian relief—shelter and food—as attention then slowly shifted to improvements in health, the economy, and education. Education was regarded as one of the primary levers that could be used to build a new national identity, an identity as Rwandans instead of as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa. Rwandans aimed to create a school system that would build a nation. They could not have known that, twenty years after the genocide, they would still be working to climb out of the shadows of the trauma that had enveloped the country.

A RESEARCH PLAN IN PLACE

"Hello. Professor?" A smiling face greeted me and a man extended his gracious hand.

"Yes, hello." I replied. "You must be Olivier?" I asked.

"Yes, sir. Very nice to meet you." Olivier continued smiling as he ushered forward his colleague, who had been standing a few feet back. His grin was equally welcoming. "This is my colleague, Christian. He is the chair of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective."

As I collected my first bag, Christian explained that he and Olivier would be riding with me on the hotel shuttle bus so that we could discuss the "particulars" of my research study.

Through a series of emails, I had arranged with Olivier, the clerk of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective, to come to Kigali, Rwanda, and to collect data over eight days, working with individuals who had survived the 1994 Rwandan genocide and who had gone on to become teachers. My research interest, I had explained, was to examine the ways in which teachers who had survived atrocity conceived of peace and committed themselves to peace education.

There had been limited communication between us after the initial emails approving tentative plans. However, in the few early ones where we did connect, Olivier verified that fourteen members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective had agreed to participate in the study. He confirmed that I should plan to come to Kigali in late April 2014. Early April would be too busy, Olivier wrote, since the official commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide would be in full force.

"We have arranged for five people to be interviewed on Saturday and five more on Sunday," Christian said as we squeezed into the small minivan that served as the hotel's shuttle bus.

"Sure," I replied. "Ten will be just fine." While this was not the number of participants I had initially hoped for, I was content to know that there were, in

fact, ten confirmed interviews. I was very tired as I had spent close to twenty-four hours en route.

As I waited to check in at the hotel, Christian asked if we could have dinner the next night to get better acquainted and to work out some "other" details.

"Over dinner tomorrow, we can discuss a number of topics related to your work and try to figure out how you will interview all of them," Christian noted.

"I don't think that will be a problem. I have interviewed larger groups," I replied, attempting to assuage any questions that Christian might have about my research abilities.

"I can put together an interview schedule and I can give it to you tomorrow evening," I said. "Then maybe you can let each person know what date and time they should come?"

Christian, who was still sporting the same welcoming smile, replied, "Oh no, Professor. They are all coming at the same time, five on Saturday and five on Sunday. It will be in the afternoon each day since they have community service on Saturday and church on Sunday."

I responded, somewhat reluctantly, "Okay. Five and five, and in the afternoon, I guess, it is." It was getting very late and I could feel that I was getting more tired, and slightly irritable. I paused and wondered what had happened to the study protocol I had planned, which was, of course, one that they had previously seemed willing to facilitate.

TREPIDATION

Over dinner, I learned from Olivier and Christian that the individual interviews should become two focus group sessions out of "necessity."

"It is simply easier," Olivier offered, "if they come together at the same time. It is more comfortable for them this way. It's what we need. You understand, of course?"

"Yes, I understand," I responded. I did not think I could protest given the timing of the interviews—in three days—and the fact that my hosts had facilitated my access to the Collective's members.

As we talked about life in contemporary post-genocide Rwanda, they informed me that we could not, in fact, use their office space to hold the interviews.

"We cannot use your offices?" I asked.

Christian smiled and disclosed that the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective did not have a real office, but rather, the organization operated with a post office box and a website.

"We can just use your hotel room. Okay?" Olivier quickly added in a presumptive manner.

He did not wait for my reply. "We told them to just come to the hotel. Don't worry, Professor. Nothing to worry about. We will be there also. We can help you."

"Yeah, sure. I guess so," I said. My thoughts began to race as I envisioned seating guests in a small room that was comprised of a bed, a desk, and maybe two chairs—I wasn't sure if I was remembering that correctly. I had just come up with a tentative seating arrangement when I remembered that Olivier and Christian would also be coming.

"Seven. Plus me in the room. Eight of us? Do I have that number correct?" I asked.

Christian and Olivier looked amused at my confusion.

"No," Christian said. "The ten participants include us—Olivier and myself. Five are coming each day. And, so with you, that makes six." He held up six fingers, and looked at me.

Between the jet lag, and what I thought were the initial side effects of the antimalarial medication, my mind was spinning. "Got it. Five plus me in the room; six," I said.

They simply smiled and nodded their heads. I finally had it correct.

After dinner, we walked back to my hotel, chatting about European football clubs. However, my thoughts wandered. I wondered what other researchers did when confronted with similar situations. What do you do when you are informed of significant changes that immediately require you to change your research approach and design?

As I lay awake in bed that night, still dealing with the effects of jet lag, I realized I had six days to fill up without any interviews to hold. I decided to contact the hotel's front desk in the morning to inquire about booking a driver. Just as I became content with my new plan, the electricity went out.

My room was pitch black. Load sharing, maybe? But, all the same, a blackout. When I checked in, I thought I heard the staff mention something about Kigali dealing with rolling power outages, and some vague reference to the electricity being cut off starting at ten o'clock.

"Dark until six in the morning," someone had said. "Nothing to worry about. Just pitch black."

The few Rwandans I had met so far were certainly trying to impress upon me the fact that there was nothing to worry about.

I tried to fall asleep but I could not. Instead, I lay awake in the dark, my body denying the time zone switch and my ears registering the determined sounds of Kigali's mosquitoes. My mind began to wander. Malaria? Six people in this small room? No electricity for the next eight hours? Really; what had I gotten myself into? Just as the sun started to rise outside my window, I finally fell asleep.

KIGALI MEMORIAL CENTRE

I had planned to visit the Kigali Memorial Genocide Centre at the beginning of my trip. Most of the information I had read online mentioned the profound emotional impact that this Centre had on its visitors. I knew I had to go.

I asked my driver, Emmanuel, if he could wait outside for an hour and a half, the time I estimated it would to take me to visit the Memorial. Emmanuel pleasantly agreed, and told me that he would wait in the shade by his car just in case I needed a little more, or a little less, time.

I arrived that morning knowing that the crowds would grow throughout the day, as Rwandans and others commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the 1994 genocide during "Kwibuka20." Kwibuka means "remember" in Kinyarwanda, the official language of Rwanda, and Kwibuka20 was designed as a global framework for activities, events, communities and people participating in the 2014 commemoration of the Rwandan atrocities.

I rented an audioguide and wandered around the memorial. I was struck by the strange serenity of a place dedicated to horrific acts, a feeling amplified by the calm voice narrating the events of the genocide. The remains of more than a quarter of a million people, gathered from different districts of Kigali, were buried in the cemetery of the memorial site.

The grounds were neatly groomed, free of litter, and noticeably linear. On this particular day, the sunshine illuminated the massive gray slabs of concrete that covered the tombs. It felt like a sacred space. The Kigali Genocide Memorial contains oral testimonies collected from genocide survivors. There are documents, publications, and human bones and skulls on display. Weapons such as machetes, clubs, and swords used during the genocide have also been included. The Memorial exhibits rosaries, photographs, identity cards, shoes, and clothes. These artifacts serve as graphic reminders of the lives that were suddenly extinguished during the deadly conflict. For me, perhaps the most solemn moment was when I stood in front of the display that revealed row upon row of family photos of the victims: a photo-memoir of family bonds and love eviscerated in 100 days of carnage.

I stood in a sobering silence, trying not to stare at the images. But I did. As I looked at them, not a single thought went through my characteristically busy mind. I just gazed at the thousands of photos selected by family members to memorialize their losses.

When I exited the memorial, I noticed a large, well-dressed crowd gathered at the entrance. Some people held flowers and many wept inconsolably. Making a point not to gawk at their sorrowful exhibition, I walked past the crowd and made my way back to my taxi.

Emmanuel, who had been lounging in the backseat of his cab, hopped out, smiled at me, and said, "Right on time. Lots of people crying. Shall we go?"

"Sounds good," I simply replied.

KIGALI'S NEIGHBORHOODS

On the ride back from the Kigali Memorial Centre, Emmanuel and I agreed that he would be my on-call driver for the duration of my trip. We exchanged phone numbers and decided that the next day, he would guide me around Kigali.

The time that we spent together gave me the opportunity to hear his story. I asked him some questions, switching between English and French, which seemed natural for both of us. Mostly, though, I was fully absorbed as Emmanuel revealed some of his firsthand experiences of living through the genocide, and then of surviving in a post-genocide world.

He had been one of countless children who lost most of their family members to horrific atrocities. When he was fourteen, the threat of the genocide subsided, but Emmanuel decided not to return to school. Instead, he began a transient life. Emmanuel tried to go back to school once, as a sixteen-year-old, but, as he put it, he "couldn't do school." "Going to school was impossible," he said. "It was just not possible to return. Il était tout simplement trop difficile de revenir."

Emmanuel's story resonated with King's (2014) words: "As students returned to post-genocide schools, they faced a multitude of challenges" (p. 111). It was obvious to me that Emmanuel had experienced overwhelming trauma. For him, formal schooling ended at the outset of the genocide.

As we talked, it became clear that Emmanuel was, in many ways, still living through the aftereffects of the genocide. King (2014) estimated that "More than 1.2 million children were left orphaned, representing 16 percent of the entire population, or nearly one-third of all children" (p. 115). Emmanuel had been one of those children—children who were now the adults responsible for rebuilding their country.

While we stopped at a roadside cart to purchase drinks, Emmanuel disclosed that his dreams had ended with the genocide. He had not held a steady job since "then." He worked in construction, then in a hotel, did some manual labor, and now had settled on driving a taxi, at least until something better came along.

"Are you married?" he inquired.

"Yes. And I have three children," I replied.

"I would like to marry one day," Emmanuel said. He smiled. Then he paused for a moment, and turned the conversation to his two younger sisters.

His youngest sister had died in 1996—an "outcome" of the genocide, he said.

I wanted to know how she had died, but I did not want to ask. I wanted to try to understand Emmanuel's story, but I was loath to become an intrusive researcher scrutinizing a "subject."

I chose not to ask anything at all about his sisters, and we simply stood in silence next to his cab. A few moments later, he told me that his sister had succumbed to "une maladie du génocide." A Google translation would never convey the soberness with which Emmanuel uttered that phrase: "a sickness from the genocide."

Numerous reports (Human Rights Watch, 1996) identified that the Interahamwe, the Hutu paramilitary organization that had rampaged during the 1994 genocide, had used rape as one of the most atrocious forms of murder and torture. Although not a new weapon to terrorize and degrade individuals during conflicts, the use of rape as a means to achieve the obliteration of Rwanda's Tutsi population was starkly depraved (Human Rights Watch). During the Rwandan genocide, people who were HIV positive were used as weapons to inflict a long and lingering trauma on its victims.

Perhaps it was not the trauma of wartime rape or the resulting HIV that had taken the life of Emmanuel's sister. Maybe she had gotten sick from something else related to the genocide. At least, this is what I tried to console myself with as we stood in the morning heat sipping our cool Fantas. As much as I wanted to, I did not believe the story that I was trying to tell myself.

After staring at the expanse of the banana plantation in the nearby valley, I changed the subject back to Emmanuel's struggles to find permanent employment. While many economic indicators suggest that the quality of life in Rwanda has improved, estimates suggest that close to 45 percent of Rwandans currently live in poverty, compared with an estimated 57 percent in 2006 (African Development Bank, 2012). Making idle small talk about chronic unemployment was just easier to chat about than the depth of human suffering that his sisters and he had endured.

ONE BED, A FEW CHAIRS, AND TWO FOCUS GROUPS

The five focus group participants arrived en masse each day; five on Saturday and five on Sunday. I had purchased a cell phone and had given my number to Olivier and Christian. They texted me when they arrived at the hotel's front entrance: "We are here." I headed downstairs and through the green grounds of the hotel. Security made them wait until I arrived at the gate. As I approached them, I was greeted mostly with the civility of firm handshakes and

warm smiles, but also with a few hugs, like those I typically give to relatives on special occasions or, sometimes, to very close friends. I just accepted it as this: life in Rwanda. People hug.

Once inside in my room, we worked together to rearrange the furniture so that the six of us could all sit comfortably. I handed out the "Informed Consent" forms and pens, and reminded my guests that they did not have to participate. "Even if you do participate," I told them, "you do not have to say anything." They smiled and nodded their heads.

I told them about the member-checking process and explained that I would email each one of them a copy of the focus group transcript. I tried to reassure them they could withdraw from the study at any point.

I took more smiling head nods as being a group, "yes."

And then we talked. As I listened, they transitioned from guests in my cramped hotel room and into the study's participants.

The ten participant teachers—eight men and two women, all members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective—had been in Rwanda in 1994, survived the genocide, and had subsequently become teachers. As a group, they taught across the grade spectrum in primary and secondary schools. The majority traveled for at least one hour by bus to participate in the study. One of the teachers, named Thierry, had traveled from a town near the Rwanda-Tanzania border, a bus ride of almost three hours. I was ever more grateful for their commitment.

COMMITTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One of the most compelling reasons I had for conducting the study was to find out how the survivors of such barbaric acts could muster the strength, commitment, and compassion to become teachers, peace educators, and to face the children and/or grandchildren, in some cases, of those who had perpetrated the genocide. There was also a dearth of research on the factors that motivate some trauma survivors to take on the emotionally taxing role of teacher. No studies to date had explored teachers needing to face the progeny of their perpetrators and to teach them how to peacefully coexist.

The reasons why people choose the teaching professions above other career options has remained a popular area of research since at least the mid-1970s, if not longer. It was 1975 when Dan Lortie published the book *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Lortie and many others have identified "vocation," a sense of calling, as a key motivating factor for those choosing the teaching profession. Given everything my study participants had endured, had responding to a vocational call led them to become teachers?

I quickly learned that, while a normative understanding of vocation—a form of public service that generates lasting personal and professional fulfillment to those who offer it (Hansen, 1995)—was one aspect of the Rwandan teachers' motivation, there were other reasons that they became teachers. As Sonia commented, teaching was an extension of who she was, what she and other Rwandans had endured, and what she could offer to build a new Rwanda. Some of their comments about talent, desire, and interest, taken at face value, might resemble any other teacher's remarks, but the shared desperate context of genocide underpinned every statement the participants uttered.

> *Sonia:* I decided to become a teacher because I felt I had a talent to teach. I am a genocide survivor and the 1994 genocide is my story, and the story of my country. This is why I wanted to teach.

For Eric, surviving the genocide played a vital role in his decision to become a teacher. He said he could remember first thinking about becoming a teacher while he was in primary school right after the genocide ended. As he was completing his first university degree, he made his final commitment and chose to become a teacher. Eric said emphatically, "I knew teaching is what I needed to do."

It was clear that Eric, Sonia, and the other members of the Rwanda Genocide Teaching Project felt a sense of calling or duty to become teachers. This calling, though, seemed much larger in scope than one focused on individual fulfillment. It was evidently tied to building a peace-oriented post-genocide Rwanda. They believed they could contribute to setting a nation's path toward reconciliation.

> *David:* After the bad history of the genocide against the Tutsi, I wanted to participate in building our Rwanda as a teacher. I wanted to build a good future for Rwandans, a good future for the world, and a world without genocide; a world without any kind of violence, and a world without any kind of injustice.

In David's mind, this was the work to which Rwandan teachers were required to commit if they wanted to help rebuild a nation and to create a national identity of being a Rwandan in the minds of schoolchildren. Like many teachers in very diverse social contexts, these teachers reminded me of the work by Giroux and McLaren (1986), who identified the capacity of teachers to act as "transformative intellectuals." David and his colleagues believed it necessary to exercise forms of intellectual and pedagogical practice that attempt to "insert teaching and learning directly into the political sphere" be-

cause formal education "represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations" (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 215).

A number of researchers (for example, see Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009; Harris, 2004; Reardon, 1997, among others) suggest that a wide spectrum of post-conflict educational initiatives have been adopted around the world as a means of reconciling estranged communities. The initiatives range from peace education, curricular reforms, and the reshaping of historical narratives, to the development of integrated schools geared toward reconciliation. Regardless of the specific initiative, research demonstrates that in order to alter pedagogical practices from supporting state-sanctioned forms of oppression, teachers need to adopt an agenda of peace education that is built on a framework of justice.

> *Jacob:* I wondered what my contribution could be. How could I help children to become good citizens and to live in country where there is peace? That is when I decided what my contribution would be: to repair Rwanda, a country that had suffered through genocide. I thought I could teach children how to live in a country where they could develop without the fear of being persecuted. I wanted to live in a country without any more atrocities, and, by becoming a teacher, I might help to achieve this.

It was clear that these teachers believed in the power of formal education to build a peaceful nation, and that they wanted to participate directly in that process. Perhaps not surprisingly, such beliefs align with the work of Reardon (1997, pp. 31–32) who proposed that teachers can enable students to "renounce the institutions of war and replace it with institutions more consistent with the visions and values" of peace and justice. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) suggest that teachers play an important role in socializing and persuading entire generations to make peace a priority. So, the members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective were not the first to think of themselves as effecting such changes as they embarked on such an enormous task.

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOLING PRIOR TO 1994

More than a century ago, Emile Durkheim (1897/1951) rejected the idea that teachers could transform society and resolve its ills. Durkheim argued that the enterprise of formal education is only the image and reflection of the current state of any society. Durkheim offered a view that education was a conservative social enterprise, one that imitates and reproduces, not one that creates an alternative vision of society.

While some unapologetic optimists may dismiss Durkheim's claim outright, it is important to note that, throughout history, there have been obvious instances that have highlighted the intersection of politics and education, wherein various dictatorial and authoritarian regimes have used the education system and its teachers as political pawns to reinforce broad social and political structures that can be used as levers to stoke conflict (Davies, 2010; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). In Nazi Germany, for example, newly elected Adolf Hitler almost immediately made changes to school curriculums and to teacher preparation. Education in "racial awareness" began, and children were constantly reminded of their racial duties to the "national community." Biology, along with political education, became compulsory. In biology classes, students learned about "worthy" and "unworthy" races, and about breeding and hereditary disease, in order to cement the superiority of Aryans over all of the lesser races (Wegner, 2002). Hitler saw formal schooling as an important lever that could cast the image of Aryan superiority in the minds of Germany's youth.

This is an important point to understand because of one rampant presumption too easily adopted by teachers and teacher-educators: that "all" teachers, by virtue of choosing that vocation, have an instinctual moral compass that drives them to be innately good, expert, and honorable. History tells us that the teaching workforce is just as likely to be infected by the apparatuses of state-sponsored manipulation as anyone else.

In fact, the teachers in my study spoke firsthand of how the pre-1994 Rwandan government manipulated the education system, specifically its curriculum and teachers, to promote fear and hatred among children (Freedman et al., 2008). As two of the teachers noted:

> *Thierry:* In 1994, the school system was a divisive system and some of the teachers created the divisions.
>
> *Xavier:* The curriculum was taught through the wheel of politicians. The history of Rwanda was presented to students in ways that mirrored a political propaganda that led to an ideology that endorsed the kind of hatred that could lead to genocide.

As shocking as it sounds, Bird (2003, p. 36) recalled that in pre-1994, "A senior Ministry of Education official in Rwanda stated that in a mathematics lesson it would be common for a teacher to say, 'You have five Tutsis, you kill three, how many are left?" This is a graphic illustration of fostering division through teaching practices. "The school system before the genocide," Christian said, "was based on hatred and discrimination. It was not inclusive. Some benefited, while others were told they could not amount to much."

Over the course of our conversations, the teachers offered examples of what the pre-1994 Rwandan school system was like.

Many of the illustrations that they provided mirrored the conflict-provoking manifestations of education that Bush and Saltarelli (2000) proposed. In pre-genocide Rwanda, there was:

- A history of an unequal distribution of education wherein some were denied access, while others were not.
- A pattern of using education as a means to cultural repression or ethnocide.
- An intentional use of education to serve the political goal of manipulating history.
- A widespread mandated use of class texts that reinforced ethnic stereotypes and bias.
- A deliberate plan to use formal schooling as a means to decrease self-worth or to encourage scapegoating.
- The systematic use of the education system to reinforce inequality, low self-esteem, and ethnic stereotypes.

Through these mechanisms and others, the Rwandan education system was used as an implement to stoke conflict and violence in ways that exacerbated, rather than addressed, the ugly history of ethnic divisions created via colonization.

The colonial powers had effectively ingrained in Rwandans the blind acceptance of the Hamitic myth to control them. Acceptance of the myth created a division among Rwandans based on the illusion that a superior group of nomadic invaders, the Tutsi, an ethnic group the colonizers claimed looked more European-like, had migrated to Rwanda and were destined to rule over the more primitive Hutu who existed simply to serve them (Van den Bersselaar, 2006). A series of political regimes—colonial and Rwandan—used the school curriculum and teachers to promote views that led Hutus and Tutsis to perceive each other as enemies (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Specifically, Eric noted that, prior to the spring of 1994, "the history of Rwanda that we taught was done through the wheels of politicians and it mirrored a propaganda laced with an ideology of genocide."

Research focused on post-conflict states is increasingly acknowledging that the wrong kind of education aggravates tensions between different ethnic groups. Education can drive a wedge between people instead of uniting them (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005a, 2005b, 2010; Osler & Starkey, 2010; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). This line of research is significant because formal schooling is generally regarded as a panacea for a broad spectrum of social ills.

Yet, naïve assumptions abound that formal state-sanctioned education—approved curriculum and trained and certified teachers—can only positively shape the understandings, attitudes and, ultimately, the behaviors of individuals. Such beliefs ignore the evidence that formal schooling can produce negative and harmful effects. In fact, education has been used to exacerbate ethnic hostilities and tensions through uneven access to education, the use of education as a cultural weapon, the manipulation of history, curriculum, and textbooks for political purposes, and the segregation of education to ensure inequality and stereotyping. In the case of Rwanda, these teachers made it unfailingly clear: formal education can have a destructive impact on intergroup relations (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE GENOCIDE

In the aftermath of the genocide, as Xavier recalled, many Rwandan children were taught in temporary schools that were set up by United Nations volunteers (King, 2014). "Volunteers staffed a lot of the schools," Xavier remarked. "Sometimes the teachers were Africans who had come from away to help. Other times it was U.N. volunteers who taught, but they did not understand us and what we had been through." In addition, for many Rwandans, especially those who lived outside Kigali, there was little to no access to government-run schools for a number of years in the immediate period after 1994.

> *Eric:* After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis—when I was in primary—we had no teachers. Many of my teachers were killed during the genocide; they were some of the victims.

A few days prior to the focus groups, Christian had recounted that there was no school for him to attend after recovering from his injuries upon being rescued by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The RPF soldiers rescued him after he had pretended to be dead for days.

He explained that he spent almost two years out of school before he was able to return. "I just couldn't go," Christian said. "I had too many bad thoughts, too many bad things had happened—even before the genocide against the Tutsi. School was not a place where I felt like I belonged anymore."

He explained that once the rampaging ended, he wandered among refugee camps, sometimes also living with various relatives who had survived the genocide. None of these places provided the stability and safety that he felt he needed in order to focus on his studies. He simply survived for two years, etching out a life.

Recollections like Christian's are consistent with the literature on the immediate context in post-1994 Rwanda. Earnest (2013) suggested that the Rwandan education system was devastated during the genocide. By the end of the conflict, almost two-thirds of the country's schools were destroyed or severely damaged, and of the teachers who survived the atrocities, few were actually qualified to teach (Earnest, 2013). The education system was particularly targeted during the genocide; teachers as educated, thinking people, were singled out for assassination. Sadly, teachers were both victims of and perpetrators of genocide in state and church schools (Obura, 2005; Walker-Keleher, 2006).

Until I interviewed these teachers, I did not realize the extent to which the teaching workforce in Rwanda had not only been systematically victimized, but also how some had been the perpetrators of the ideology of genocide. More alarming is that I was unaware of how hard it could be for child survivors to feel safe in schools when schools were previously sites of hatred and division.

THE RISK OF TEACHING THE OFFICIAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

I have little doubt that the teachers I interviewed were committed to moving away from the artificial classification system—one that had been imposed by European colonizers and had become ingrained in how Rwandans saw themselves and each other—as belonging to the social constructions labeled as Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa. Instead, they stressed that there was one nation, one people, and they said repeatedly: "We are Rwandans. We are one people." The clear ethnic divisions between Hutu and Tutsi were etched into the pre-1994 schools' textbooks, and minds of many of the teachers.

Yet, as I listened, I was struck by reference to these specific categorizations when referring to the events of the genocide. It was difficult to describe it as anything but "the genocide against the Tutsis."

> *Olivier:* Genocide destroys the minds of people, those who participated, those who did not and those who come after. That is what we learned from the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis.

Christian, Sonia, Raisa, and Gervais all emphasized that students needed to know about the root cause of "the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis." In fact, it was clear to me that, as a group, the members of Rwanda Teaching Genocide Project supported the officially sanctioned labels of the ethnic groups involved in the 1994 genocide.

I never asked if they were, or had been prior to 1994, formally identified as "Tutsi" or otherwise. The subject never came up, and, given their emphasis on the pathway forward—one without the old ethnic divisions—I chose not to inquire. Yet, in the context of their commitment to teaching their students to be "one people," it seemed paradoxical to identify the victims as singularly being the Tutsis, thereby promulgating the ethnic divisions among Rwandans with the fact that Tutsis stood alone as the victims.

In her book, *From Classrooms to Conflict in Rwanda*, Elisabeth King (2014) raised the implications of the stigmatization and devaluation of Hutu suffering both during and after the genocide. As one Hutu woman told King (p. 117), "I lost three-quarters of my family during the war. But we Hutu don't have any right to say that we lost people." King contends that, in general, Rwandans have simply found new ways to use these old ethnic distinctions: "To the government, 'survivors' refer to Tutsi and 'perpetrators' to Hutu" (p. 117).

Arguably, there may not be a single, identifiable root cause that can explain the depth and breadth of the atrocities committed in the 1994 genocide. The conventional view is that the 1994 genocide was built on a festering hatred between the Hutu and Tutsi, a hatred that was embedded into Rwandan society centuries ago by a series of colonial powers. The various colonizers, Germany and Belgium, enacted mechanisms of oppression, categorizing people along ethnic lines to create both a monarchist class and a subjugated class. Over the centuries, colonial oppressors stoked and fanned deep-seated hatred among Rwandans until the point of combustion. It would not take much to cause an explosion, and on the night of April 6, a spark was provided.

Such a view, however, does not fully explain why, in some areas that were almost entirely populated by Hutu, Hutu slaughtered Hutu with maniacal abandon. There are documented cases in which the machete was wielded to settle personal disputes, steal property, and, in some cases, brandished for the sadistic thrill of killing.

In post-conflict states, many times, state-sponsored histories have been rewritten in ways that favor the development of a unified country (Kearney, 2011). In an examination of Northern Ireland, Nolan (2007) notes how an emphasis was placed upon the importance of creating a shared understanding of history. This was the case in 2014, twenty years after the Rwandan genocide. A critical unifying feature of the country's education system in 2014 was the adoption and implementation of a state-sanctioned and mandated official history of the 1994 genocide.

> *Gervais:* The education system now is one that is trying to correct the mistakes that have been committed by the people who were leaders before the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. It used to be that when you lived with your neighbors you had to judge them based on whether they were Tutsi or Hutu. Today

> Rwanda is trying to create a new generation. We want to create a society where we give a chance to everybody.

As I listened to Gervais and his colleagues, I wondered if there might be a danger in developing a school system that systematically created a unified, national memory of what Adichie (2009) has called the "single story." It is a version of reality that separates a pre-genocide history, one based on clear ethnic and class divisions, and the creation of a new post-genocide national identity that renders ordinary Rwandans collectively innocent for their ancestors', formerly labeled as Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, past actions.

Some scholars have emphasized the need to portray history as it occurred, and in ways that acknowledge the pre-conflict injustices and inequalities as they were prior to reconciliation seeking (Davies, 2004; Laplante, 2008). Time will only tell what the impact might be on Rwandans when their future is cast through an unquestionable rendition of history that identified Tutsi as victims and Hutus as perpetrators. At the same time, teachers suggest the country will move forward without a division between Tutsi and Hutu.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION EDUCATION

Scholars and international bodies have consistently pointed out the crucial relationship between education and reconciliation (Barakat et al., 2008; Minow, 1998; Smith & Vaux, 2003). In order to address conflicting ethnic relations, education reforms have to take a prominent role in peace-building initiatives. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (as cited in Nicolai, 2009), teaching children how to live together peacefully, by recognizing the other and by overcoming prejudices within the individual and between individuals and communities, should be the main objective of peace initiatives. At the end of a conflict, it has become common for governments to turn to the education sector to find ways in which to foster social and political reconciliation and integration. Arguably, education can provide opportunities to dampen the impact of the conflict, to nurture and sustain an ethnically tolerant climate, to desegregate minds, to foster linguistic tolerance, to cultivate inclusive citizenship, and to disarm history (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

> *Sonia:* Peace education means that people live in peace without violence and with their human rights intact.

The members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective were steadfast in their belief in the transformative power of peace education initiatives

and genocide studies to wipe out any vestiges of the history of hostility that had fueled the 1994 genocide.

> *Xavier:* Peace education is built on teaching people how to live in harmony without violence. It is built on respecting human rights. It is when students learn about how they can live without making someone else suffer.

Their beliefs did not seem misplaced given that the "political will to work towards the social integration of conflicting ethnic groups" is crucial for reconciliation initiatives (Steiner-Kahmsi, 2003, p. 181). Interestingly, given the dark history of how state-sponsored education has been manipulated for ill-intended means, it is important to recognize education for reconciliation as a still overtly political process, though it is aimed at creating peace. It is a process that requires ongoing commitment, effort, and vigilance.

These teachers, perhaps like millions of other teachers, want to construct what it means to be a citizen of a nation, and, more broadly, the global community. They are committed to the intellectual, social, and emotional development of children who begin to regard themselves as citizens of one nation who can peacefully co-exist alongside their neighbors. As Gervais said, "We hope we are going to change people's behaviors. We hope that our students are going to be good builders of peace. We hope that they too will contribute to develop future generations that do not care for all of those divisions that used to exist."

It is obvious that a fundamental commitment of the members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective is their desire to vanquish any psychological ghosts of the ethnic divisions that led members of previous generations who, even though they may have attended school together, and in many cases, because they attended school together, viewed their own ethnic groups as virtuous while learning to label the other ethnic groups as evil.

> *Jacob:* I would like to see the new generation having peaceful coexistence for the common good of their country. That requires tolerance and where there is a problem, dialogue should work over confrontation. And, I would like that generation where everybody struggles for individual and national development.

It is clear that they are trying to shift their students away from identifying solely along ethnic lines that emphasize blood ties, color of skin, and ethnic origin—characteristics that tend to divide people along "us versus them" dichotomies. What they hope for is to create, in their students' minds, a broader national identity as children of Rwanda who will develop as the citizens of a unified nation (Gaudelli, 2003).

The teachers regarded schooling as a social commitment that could detoxify the next generation of Rwandans from the ideology of genocide (King, 2014). As for the future, these teachers wanted to create a new meaning of being "Rwandan." That much was obvious.

ENDURING LEGACY

Beyond the obvious atrocities and physical scars that the genocide created, numerous psychological impairments were created, the evidence of which can be observed through the increased prevalence of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other mental health impairments, faced by today's Rwandans (Bolton, Neugebauer & Lincoln, 2002). These teachers are concerned with the enduring legacy of mental distress caused by the 1994 genocide that continues to plague the population two decades after the genocide.

> *Gervais:* I worry about some of the predictable consequences of the future. How will grandchildren of those who survived genocide but lost their families think about the perpetrators? I worry about the grandchildren of the genocide's perpetrators. All of the testimonies have been recorded and are stored on a server. If someone looks on Google what will she see? What will that child think if her grandfather killed ten or twenty people?

It was evident that Rwandans continued to struggle with the legacy of genocide in April 2014. In an interview with a convicted member of the Interahamwe militia, Nyirandegeya Mwamini, journalist Lillian Leposo (2014) quoted the jailed Mwamini as saying:

> The genocide will never fade out, even to killers, or those who participated, like us, that picture—where the international community has seen you as a killer—can never go away from you easily, and just say it is over. But my hope is not for me; it is for my children and those who are linked to me, that they can never be part of what I went through.

For some of the other participants, there was a concern that the visual symbols of the genocide—the memorials that mark the places that served as killing fields and serve as reminders of the horrors of what Rwandans did to each other—may not remain standing beyond the current generation.

> *Sonia:* I am concerned about the sustainability of the genocide memorials and the history they represent. Will they still be there in fifty years? Will the understanding of the suffering we endured remain if the visible memorials are gone?

Sonia told me that, from time to time, she visits what is left of the old Catholic church in Nyamata where so many died. On the Friday prior to the first focus group, I had visited the Nyamata church with Emmanuel.

NYAMATA CHURCH

As Emmanuel drove me to the memorial on our third trip, he asked, "Well, sir, what do you think of Rwanda?" Then he added, "Que pensez-vous jusqu'ici?"

"It is a beautiful country and the people are amazing," I replied. "C'est vraiment un pays des mille collines," I added in French.

"Oui, vraiment," Emmanuel replied. "But a sad country; n'est-ce pas?" he added.

"I guess so, Emmanuel. But, you've all been through a lot," I replied. "Vous avez eu l'histoire difficile."

Our guide at the Nyamata memorial was a survivor of the genocide. Emmanuel acted as my translator as the guide spoke in Kinyarwanda. The guide told us about those who had sought refuge in the church as we walked slowly through it. They thought that they were safe hiding in a Roman Catholic church, at least until the Interahamwe and the Rwandan Government Forces violently burst through the doors with rifles, grenades, and machetes.

The guide drew our attention to some holes in the sheet metal awning outside the front entrance and pointed to some pockmarks in the bricks.

"Grenades," said Emmanuel.

The men, women, and children who had been inside the church were massacred. The small children were picked up by their feet and their tiny skulls were smashed against the walls. The guide pointed at one of the church's interior walls and made a swinging motion with his hands and arms to demonstrate how this was done.

Now a genocide memorial site, the church's interior was full of disintegrating, bloodstained garments that once clothed the bodies of young, innocent children. There were shoes lined up, items of clothing draped over the pews, and small skulls assembled. In painstaking detail, our guide told me how each child was brutally tortured—this one, attacked with a machete, has a slash mark, another with some pointed holes was struck in the head with a spear—but most were bludgeoned to death.

For a few hundred Rwandan francs, the guide allowed me to descend into the tombs to see the rows and rows of skeletal remains that were boxed up neatly in the wooden crates serving as familial caskets. The genocide memorial at the Nyamata church was beginning to show its age, with signs of crumbling bricks and unkempt grounds. How long would it stand as a memo-

rial? For now, it provides a graphic and horrifically vivid reminder of one of the many killing campaigns that punctuated the history of the late twentieth century, reflecting the truth that genocide has occurred "over and over again" (Slovic, 2007).

On our way back into the city, we stopped near a large plantation field. Emmanuel explained how his parents had sent him into that exact banana plantation to hide during the warring chaos. He and his two sisters had survived by playing a weeks long game of "hide-and-seek." The rest of the family did not get out of the house before the militia arrived and killed them.

"Il était un jeu malade," Emmanuel said.

Winning at a child's game, of all things, had saved their lives.

Emmanuel explained that they left the cover of the fields and ventured back to their homes and those of their neighbors to scavenge for whatever food and supplies they could find. He described how they had to be strategic and quick because they knew that the Hutu militias would return, and, if found, the Interahamwe would kill them.

"There were not enough Tutsis still living to satisfy the thirst for blood that Interahamwe had," Emmanuel said. "So sometimes they came back and hacked at the corpses. Just in case one of the bodies lying there was still alive."

BEYOND RWANDA'S BORDERS

The world is painfully aware of how the 1994 Rwandan genocide ended: the cavalry did not arrive to save them. The international community did not intervene to stop the slaughter that began in April 1994. The Developed World, and, explicitly, the member-states of the United Nations, sat idly by, claiming neutrality while the slaughter unfolded on the nightly news.

> *Pascal:* It is important that the legacy of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis be understood that while Rwandans perpetrated it, Rwandans also ended it. The international community stood idly by during the genocide, but rushed in as soon as it was over to help us.

The political and moral stance of the outside world needs to be labeled for what it was at the time: a display of utter apathy and the abandonment of a people at a time of tremendous need.

It seemed fairly clear to me that we, in the pseudo-enlightening discourse of the Developed World, have a lot to learn from the survivors of the 1994 genocide—the victims and perpetrators, and their sons and daughters—as they stand side-by-side and take on the hard work of moving slowly forward

on a pathway to reconciliation. Was it fair to label only those who did the killing as the perpetrators in the Rwandan genocide?

And then, after two days of sessions in my awkward and cramped hotel room with the future teachers of Rwanda, we were done. I turned off the recorder and thanked each person for making the journey and taking part in the study. Before the room emptied, I handed a brown envelope with 180,000 Rwandan francs in it to the group leaders, Christian and Olivier. This would amount to about thirty Canadian dollars for each person, and would cover any bus fares and a meal before they headed home. It was, as Olivier had told me at dinner on the second night, customary to offer cash as a thank you.

As we walked back to the hotel gate, I eavesdropped on their congenial banter about shopping, dinner plans, and misgivings about having to visit too many relatives while they were in town. I caught myself listening as keenly as I had been the whole weekend, and then consciously reminded myself that they were no longer willing participants in a study.

NTARAMA MEMORIAL SITE

The Ntarama Genocide Memorial site was the last stop on my research trip. Traffic was slowed that day by large trucks and tour buses rumbling along the roads. "Lots of people are here for Kwibuka," Emmanuel said. "I am hoping it stays busy. I could use the business. I want to buy a house one day."

As we climbed out of Emmanuel's taxi, he explained that the Ntarama church was a place where some of the most brutal killings of the genocide had taken place. The site's custodian, who also functions as the guide, explained that about five thousand people, many of whom were women and children, were killed here. The children were taken into the one-room school and systematically killed. Many women were raped before being killed, and others suffered the degradation of having a long, sharp pointed stick inserted into their vaginas, and then forced upward.

Emmanuel stopped translating at that moment and went silent even though the guide kept speaking.

I did not need to know anything more about what happened with that stick. I did not want to imagine. I understood enough.

After Emmanuel's silence, he started to speak again and explained that the people who had been hiding in the separate kitchen building were burned to death. The custodian, who showed us through the church and other nearby buildings, told us that he was fifteen in 1994, and that he was the only surviving member of his very large family; the rest were all killed.

It was a short stop, maybe an hour. I knew I was done. The jet lag, the side effects of the antimalarial medications, the heat, and the food poisoning I had experienced on the previous weekend were making the emotional weight of this last day almost unbearable. As Emmanuel and I drove back, I looked out the open cab window and tried to let my mind escape to admire the beautiful landscape and the hills of Rwanda.

"Do you think you will want to go see the mountain gorillas, sir?" Emmanuel asked. "I am free to drive and could find you a good, honest guide?"

I knew Emmanuel needed the business; he had told me as much. While people back home had encouraged me to go "gorilla trekking" while I was in Rwanda, I just could not fathom how to turn off my emotions to have some "fun" on the trip.

"No, Emmanuel," I replied. "My research is done, and it's time for me to go home."

AFTERWARD

Quite a few times, I began to try and work through the data I collected during the fieldwork on the study and stopped. I hit an impasse. Almost each time I got jammed, I thought about my two encounters with Dr. Elliot Leyton in the late 1990s on the grounds of St. Angela's Academy in Prelate, Saskatchewan. "Elliot," as he asked to be called, maintained a hunting cabin nearby and visited the academy to smell the wild rose bushes. "I need to come by and smell them," he said as he told me about the emotional baggage he carried with him from his trip to Rwanda in 1996, where he studied the Rwandan genocide for his book *Touched by Fire: Doctors without Borders in a Third World Crisis.* Elliot, a professor of anthropology at Memorial University, and among the most widely consulted experts on serial homicides, had a look etched on his face as he told me about the impact of the 1996 trip on him; a particularly lasting impact in spite of all he had learned by studying other serial killers. I can still recall that look.

Periodically, I returned to the data I had collected and attempted to make some sense of my notes and the transcripts. I read and re-read as much as I could on post-genocide Rwanda, peace education, and international research approaches. I knew that social science researchers such as Creswell (2013) and Hennink (2008) had proposed that it is not unusual for qualitative researchers to enter the field and to begin to collect data, only to find that the research questions must change, the forms of data collection must be altered, and the individuals to be studied and the sites to be visited need to be modified. But I do not think Creswell and Hennink were thinking of a

post-genocidal reality in which every socially constructed act, like teaching, has to be rethought.

The notes I had scrawled down in my study journal a few days after my return to Canada hinted at my doubts and echoed the sentiments of Freedman et al. (2008), who asked themselves after their research study in Rwanda had ended: "Was this project a failure or success?" As they did, I noted, much less eloquently, that coming up with an all-or-nothing conclusion to this kind of work is not only impossible but also unrealistic.

As a researcher, I want to explore the outcomes of peace and reconciliation education. I want to examine how teachers who have survived atrocities conceive of peace, and commit themselves to peace education. In some modest ways, I think I did accomplish this goal and perhaps something else: in some ways, the study opened up the opportunity for me to better understand what Strong-Wilson (2013) referred to as a critical self-consciousness, one that does not mindlessly dwell on the emotional baggage of the past. The study provided a means to consider the aftermath of a single, but impactful, dark period in history through a perspective that is critically aware of other places and times, through the experiences of some of those who survived it. This awareness gives rise to possibilities for learning and acting in the present.

HOPE IN THE PALL OF UNIMAGINABLE VIOLENCE

Twenty years after the genocide ended, there is much to admire about Rwanda. The banana plantations are green and full of fruit. When classes end, schoolchildren emerge from their studies laughing and playing, as children tend to do once the dismissal bell rings. The physical beauty of the hills and valleys, and the indomitable spirit of Rwandans, stand in jarring contrast to the abhorrent cruelty of those once-hindered days in 1994.

To me, it is clear that the Rwandan teachers I interviewed are fully committed to genocide studies and peace education. It is also clear they want to build a unified national identity for Rwanda. Amid all this, Rwandans are still going through some fairly significant political struggles. Freedman et al. (2008) comment that teachers have become a key lever to promote the "official historical narrative" of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. I have little doubt that I was offered, in part, the official narrative. And, as Freedman et al. wrote:

> The inability to discuss issues of ethnic identity, the distortions of a history that government wishes to tell, the constraints against teaching students how to be

> critical thinkers, and, above all, the fear of productive conflict have profound implications for the establishment of a progressive history curriculum and a healthy democracy. (p. 309)

Therein lies one danger to moving forward.

The Collective's members are committed to acting as social reconstructionists who will try to reverse, rather than reproduce, the norms and values that contributed to the 1994 genocide as critical pedagogues (Stanley, 1992). For them, education is a means for transforming a long-standing mind-set that once emphasized violence and fostered a culture of maliciousness, into the possibility of an idealized, unified Rwanda. They are committed to teach students the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are needed to bring about behavioral changes that will discourage conflict and violence in Rwanda. They aim to promote alternative ways of dealing with conflict, which they hope will create the conditions that are conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national, or international level.

The teachers' perceptions of their role as agents of change echo the recommendation of a report by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors, 1996). Education is known as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual (Burcu, 2012). In the technical sense, education is viewed as a process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another. A World Bank study (2005) identifies formal education as a key social lever to prevent conflict. It is of utmost importance in the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation process. To be a positive force for change, education must be supported by schools and staffed with teachers who are committed to inclusivity. As Arendt (1961) proposed, teachers must take seriously their responsibility as mediators "between past and future." This is the critical role that educators play in shaping a society.

While teachers and the system they work within can be co-opted by regimes that are committed to violence for political purposes, such as was the case in Rwanda, they also offer the potential to dismantle the ideology contributing to structural violence that can lead to mass atrocity and genocide. However, such a weighty responsibility rests on the shoulders of educators who know, all too well, that once again humanity faces challenges of unprecedented proportions, which include the continued development of weapons of mass destruction, conflicts between states and ethnic groups, the spread of racism, and an increase in other forms of violence (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In many respects, we expect quite a lot

from teachers. We do not, however, have much of a choice given the fact that education is the most effective method for preventing future genocide and for fostering common citizenship (Kamboly, 2007).

LINGERING TENSIONS

The teachers, all victims of and survivors of the 1994 genocide, were silent on the impact that the event has had on the contemporary Hutu. Aside from the tens of thousands of Hutus who were killed, many had been forced into committing atrocities during the 1994 events against their wills. This is where I keep finding my mind wandering, beyond the formal findings. For me as a researcher, there remains a lingering and internal tension. I am left with a sense that there is another dimension to the "official historical narrative" that remains unspoken and unshared.

I am not certain that I know why this is the case. I have thought about it, and I have also tried to stop thinking about it. As much as I want to try and understand, I know that I can never fully appreciate the pressures that these teachers are under. Living and teaching in a post-conflict nation is very different from teaching in Canada or the United States.

What is clear is that wounds, especially ones carved deeply over centuries, require time and a real commitment of energy to be healed. Admittedly, there probably is no such thing as "healing" from genocide. Perhaps, however, the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective's successes and, in a larger fashion, Rwanda's future, involves a recognition that the new chapter that Rwandans hope to write may never be totally decoupled from the harrowing history of the 1994 genocide. While the terms "Hutu" and "Tutsi" may, in fact, one day vanish from the contemporary discourses of schooling—and if you listen to the voices of these teachers that would be for the better—it is hard to argue for "Never Again" if the state-sanctioned narrative obscures the painful history that Rwandans share.

If teachers hope to empower their students to think critically about the impact of their choices, then those same teachers must face and understand the history that they have inherited and learn from it before they can profess to teach about it. Futures—all of our futures—are inextricably linked to our individual and collective pasts.

The Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia in the 1970s, the ethnic cleansings in the Balkans in the mid-1990s, Rwanda's 1994 genocide, and the ongoing brutality of the Islamic State have proven that mass atrocity can happen in any nation, on any continent, at any time in history. We cannot,

however, in response to these disturbing facts, shrink into either the darkness of despair or into disinterested apathy about some distant people. Educators need to continue to examine the factors that enable individuals collectively and individually to perpetrate mass violence and to expose the instruments they use as fuel, including the education system. These steps are crucial for developing pedagogical practices and programs, and for re-committing efforts to teach students to recognize evil for what it is and to identify ways in which they can work to counteract it.

Chapter Five

Refugee Camp Schools beneath a Setting Sun

The classroom huts were arranged around a central courtyard, which displayed signs of the wear and tear of decades of use. The courtyard garden was sparse, but was still alive, at least in parts. The walls and ceiling of the classroom were constructed from woven bamboo. Classroom hut lined up after classroom hut. It was clear that the design and construction of the facilities had been carefully planned. The walls of the classrooms were engineered and assembled to let the natural light in, an important feature since the classrooms were not wired with electricity. The tightly thatched, bamboo-weave roofs kept the heavy seasonal rains out. The floors of the classroom were slightly raised and made of concrete—for obvious reasons.

In most cases, it used to be that a single blackboard featured at the front of a classroom hut. However, almost a decade after initial resettlement efforts began, with the camp population around twenty percent of what it had been at its peak, many of the classrooms have been torn down. The surplus of some classroom equipment served as a visual reminder of the tear-down. Many of the half-empty classrooms actually had two or three blackboards arranged at the front, but each month, fewer and fewer students were seated in front of them to learn.

The teachers still used the blackboards for direct instruction, which was the preferred method of teaching in the refugee camp schools. They wrote out the daily lessons using small, broken pieces of chalk, clearly aware that some of their teaching supplies were dwindling. Students sat quietly in their places and copied from the blackboard in their tattered lesson books.

One of the head teachers in the refugee camps' schools, Dorji, told me that sometimes students were called to the front of the classroom and allowed to write something on the blackboard at the teacher's request. However, the

teachers, he added, only called on the students who they knew had the "correct" answers to write on the blackboard.

"We wouldn't want the children to see and copy down the incorrect information," Dorji said. "Mistakes on the blackboard; that is never good. Only the smart students get invited to write on the blackboard."

Such a disciplined commitment to exactitude and precision—like the construction of the classroom huts and the care given to the school grounds—seemed to illustrate one of the reasons why the educational managers and program support staff of Bhutanese Refugee Education Programs believed that their schools and their students were a shining example of success. They held tightly to this belief with respect to a variety of organizational arrangements and structures of refugee camp school programs, which were offered under the political direction of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (referred to as the UNHCR).

THE EMERGENCE OF A REFUGEE CRISIS

Worried that the growing ethnically Nepali minority, who represented almost one-fifth of Bhutan's total population, threatened the culture and, more importantly, the political dominance of the Bhutanese Drukpa majority, in early 1989, the thirty-three-year-old King of Bhutan proclaimed a policy of One Nation, One People. Henceforth, it seemed that, by virtue of a royal edict, it became government policy that all Bhutanese would be required to dress and speak like Drukpas. Even though the ethnically Nepali population had lived, farmed, and contributed socially to Bhutan for generations, the teaching of the Nepali language to ethnically Nepali schoolchildren was banned. They would have to learn Dzongkha. All citizens would also have to wear Drukpa attire, the *gho* coat for men and the *kira* for women (Acharya, 2011).

Beginning in 1990 and continuing into early 1991, a massive tsunami-like wave of members of the ethnic minority Nepali population living in southern Bhutan began to flee rising levels of violence and persecution at the hands of the Bhutanese government. Dissimilar to what happens in many other refugee crises, the majority of the approximately 120,000 total Bhutanese refugees arrived en masse. They found shelter on the banks of the Kankai Mai River. In the absence of a coordinated effort to support the establishment of the camps, in combination with the lack of international aid, a cycle of poverty quickly took root. A cholera epidemic spread and claimed numerous lives (International Organization for Migration, 2008; Jesuit Refugee Service, 2015).

Initially, the international community hoped that the Nepali government would integrate the Bhutanese refugees and offer them access to Nepali

citizenship. However, Nepal was consumed by a political upheaval of its own, including a Maoist rebellion that began in 1995 and continued for the next decade, ultimately ending the monarchy. Political instability, along with the challenges posed by other refugees already living in Nepal, meant that integrating the Bhutanese refugees into Nepal was not a viable option. Denied their citizenship rights due to religious and cultural differences, the group eventually sought protection in the UNHCR-established refugee camps in Nepal, which was granted to them in late 1991. At that time, the UNHCR commenced an almost twenty-five-year commitment to provide basic sustenance through the World Food Program (referred to as the UNWFP), health care, and education services. Ultimately, over the ensuing years, the population swelled to almost 120,000 ethically Nepali Bhutanese refugees who were living in seven camps located in the Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal (Brown, 2001; International Organization for Migration, 2008; Pande, 2008).

Early on during the Bhutanese refugee crisis, the Nepali government entered into repeated talks with the Bhutanese government to negotiate the safe return of the refugees to their homes. All of the talks failed. In 2006, all parties decided that third-country resettlement was the only option for the Bhutanese refugees to enjoy the protections of citizenship (Brown, 2001; Pande, 2008).

The year 2007 was a significant milestone in their collective history as refugees because it marked the year in which seven host countries—Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States—agreed to and embarked on the resettlement of the Bhutanese refugees. It also marked the beginning of the transition to close the Bhutanese refugee camps. As the resettlement progressed, it became increasingly clear to the staff of the non-governmental organization who managed the camps' schools on behalf of the UNHCR that they would encounter some unanticipated challenges. These challenges arose as they worked to find durable and lasting solutions for the few thousand remaining Bhutanese refugees who either could not, or would not, be resettled.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another nation that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement. The process of resettlement of a refugee population does not typically occur in a single wave. It is important to note two features that are sometimes

obscured by the humanitarian crisis of refugee resettlement. These are the stark facts that: (1) refugee camps were not intended to be permanent fixtures; and, (2) even within a single camp, not all refugee experiences are the same (De Montclos & Kagwanja, 2000; Sinclair, 2001). The Bhutanese refugees were, in many respects, a diverse group in terms of their life histories and backgrounds. They represented more than sixty castes—the system of dividing society into hereditary classes—and were also a religiously diverse group whose majority practiced Hinduism, but which also included those who followed the traditions of Buddhism, Kirat, and Christianity (International Organization for Migration, 2008).

DESIGNING EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR UNCERTAIN FUTURES

In 1992, the UNHCR delegated the responsibility for the provision of secondary and higher education programs and services for the Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal. This responsibility was delegated to the Nepalese offices of Caritas, a non-governmental agency, under the management of the Jesuit Refugee Service office in South Asia. The Jesuit Refugee Service (referred to as the JRS) is an international Catholic non-governmental organization whose mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. The JRS's programs are found in fifty-one countries where the staffs provide assistance to: refugees in camps and cities, individuals displaced within their own countries, asylum seekers in cities, and those who are held in detention centers. The main areas of work of the JRS are in the field of education, emergency assistance, health care, livelihood activities, and social services. The JRS, in turn, contracted out the day-to-day operations of the Bhutanese Refugee Education Programs to Caritas Nepal.

As is the case for all children, refugee children and their parents consider school to be a safe place where students can learn, develop socially and emotionally, and thrive (Sinclair, 2001). Attending school helps refugee children and their families to restore some sense of normalcy in their lives—even as they live stateless—while they develop and even begin to think of their future goals, ones that extend beyond the all too often harsh reality of a refugee camp (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). While the conditions are commonly accepted by the residents, the conditions in the camps are very different from those under which people live in nearly all other circumstances. As a result, the teachers who commit to work in refugee camp schools, and the administrators who support them, deal with challenges that are uncommon to almost

all mainstream schools (Kirk & Cassity, 2007). The challenge of providing education to refugees is complex because it involves, among other factors, the interplay of economic, social, political, psychological, ethnic, and religious tensions (Sinclair, 2001).

Although teacher recruitment, training, and retention are challenges across many contexts (OECD, 2005), they are particularly vexing in refugee camp settings (Ring & West, 2015). Beyond the typical scarcity of attracting and retaining a cadre of talented individuals who might serve as teachers, refugee camps face the uniquely unstable—and, at times, hazardous—sociopolitical challenges that accompany humanitarian crises (Ring & West, 2015). Even in the face of such tremendous hardships, refugee parents place a high value on education and the hope that it offers for a more prosperous and safer future for their children (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Yet, as Dryden-Peterson (2015) pointed out, refugee education is of low and uneven quality globally. As a result, "even those resettled refugee children who have been able to access education in their countries of first asylum are likely to have skills and knowledge far below the expected grade level for their age" (p. 10).

The quality of the educational programs and services in refugee camp schools is largely influenced by the quality of the teachers who work in the schools (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Ring & West, 2015). As is the case in any context, it is insufficient to simply place an un- or under-prepared adult at the front of a classroom and expect that learning will happen. More needs to be known about how to best attract, train, and retain teachers in refugee camp schools. This is especially true since education pushes humanitarian action beyond a medicalized endeavor intended to save lives. Education becomes a commitment that shapes futures—not only the immediate ones of those who leave the camps, but also those who remain in the camps once the repatriation or resettlement process has begun.

REACHING OUT TO DISTANT RELATIVES

Initially, I had hoped to visit the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan for my research project. I had contacted JRS International in early 2014 and, via email, I had inquired about the possibility of conducting a small-scale research study. I wanted the study to focus on the challenges that educators in refugee camps face with respect to teaching peace and peace education. My interest in this research question stemmed from the fact that the students and the teachers have had to endure intense conflict and war.

At first, the JRS staff I contacted seemed interested in facilitating the necessary contacts. However, my optimism faded upon receiving an email

in late 2014, stating that the schools' staff in the Zaatari camp, and, indeed the whole organization, was overwhelmed by the scores of refugees flooding the camps. Coordinating the logistics of my study, they said, was just more than they could commit to at the time. It was clear to me that I had been disinvited, even if understandably so.

I replied that I understood, but politely inquired if they might suggest an alternative location to the Zaatari camp. A few weeks later, I received an email suggesting that there was a possibility that something could be arranged to host the project in northern Iraq. The offer came around the same time that the news media were reporting that the Islamic State of Iraq—ISIS as we have come to know them—had engineered a prison break in Khalis, which is about fifty kilometers north of Baghdad. I declined the offer, but asked if they had another option.

Some time later in the spring of 2014, someone from the JRS organization emailed me back, writing that they had considered connecting me with their JRS office in Beirut, Lebanon, as an alternative, but had decided not to because there had been a recent rash of kidnappings of foreign aid workers in the country. I told them that I appreciated their willingness to help me, and then resigned myself to allowing the research idea to remain dormant, or potentially wither and die. There had simply been a convergence of geopolitical events and bad timing on my part. I recognized that the staff at JRS International had more pressing concerns than to help a Canadian academic with his research.

About a month had passed when, to my surprise, I found an email from the JRS folks in my inbox with the subject line: "Could the BREPs in Nepal work?" After some initial Google searching, and some back-and-forth emails, I learned about the history of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and the plan to close the camps in late 2016. As my JRS contact put it, it would be a rather unique opportunity to examine a refugee camp that was nearing closure.

"It is quite rare these days," the email read, "to find a camp that is being closed. And, while we have experience opening and operating them, closing one—while a positive outcome—will bring some unique challenges. Might this be of interest to you, and can it work?"

As I re-designed the research study in my mind and on paper, I did so with the awareness that there were only a handful of studies on refugee camp schools and, of the published studies and reports focused on refugee camp schools, almost all focused on the experiences of the students and not on those of the teachers, administrators, or program managers (Sesnan et al., 2013). Therefore, I sought to create an ethnographic case study (Creswell, 2013) that might illustrate some of the challenges that refugee camp school teachers, administrators, and program managers face. I imagined

that it was challenging to provide students with an education that prepares them academically, psychologically, and socially for the transition into their new home countries, communities, and schools, while at the same time facing the reality of both dwindling human capacity and diminishing financial resources.

While it was not the study that I had planned to do, it was an opportunity that I did not want to miss out on. Beyond the uniqueness of examining a camp's school closure, and the unlikelihood that I would be snatched, held for ransom, or murdered—real possibilities in some of the earlier potential locations—the prospect appealed to me personally. Although I never met them, my maternal grandmother was a tribal woman from Nepal and my maternal grandfather was Anglo-Burmese, the child of a British soldier and a Burmese tribal woman. I felt like I was being drawn by distant familial ties to work with this community. It seemed to be the perfect way to close out three years of researching the practice of teaching in some very challenging global contexts.

A FOCUS ON CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

During the three-day on-site field visit to the Bhutanese Refugee Education Programs (the "BREPs" as they are referred to by the JRS/Caritas Nepal staff), almost all of the educators associated with the BREPs made a point during the conversations to highlight the historical successes of the Bhutanese refugee camp schools and the students who attended them.

On the first day at the initial orientation meetings, which were held at the JRS/Caritas Nepal offices in Damak, Sister Lourda Mary Thumma, a Roman Catholic nun who was serving as the field director of the JRS/Caritas Nepal Sub-Office, stressed:

> At the beginning, the output from the BREPs was very good. When the Nepali national average for class ten exams was around thirty to forty percent, the refugee students' scores were in the seventies to eighties. The refugee children were our asset and we had to show it to the outside world and say: see the Bhutanese refugees, in their refugee status? Their commitment is so much. They are doing so well; why not come forward and help?

The pride associated with achievements of the students was genuine, and many of the reasons provided by the interviewees are well documented in other research conducted on the BREPs (for example, see Brown, 2001; Jesuit Refugee Services, 2015; Pande, 2008). The various officials and administrative support personnel I met in the Damak sub-office identified

the following factors as significantly contributing to the favorable conditions that permitted the establishment of the Bhutanese refugee education programs: the exodus-like migration of the historically Nepali Bhutanese refugees, the commitment of the Bhutanese refugee community to education, and the relatively high level of education and professional status that some of the refugees had prior to their displacement.

As Sister Lourda Mary commented, the sudden and massive arrival of the Bhutanese refugees had created an immensely critical pressure, but also had provided an opportunity:

> Because so many of the Bhutanese refugees arrived all at once, the organization of the camps and schools happened all at once. This was both a positive and a negative. The initiative was there to establish schools, but there was a big need.

A little later on she added:

> The time that the community gave, that the teachers gave, and that the volunteers gave was a big part of the success. It is like watering a big garden; there is no direct personal benefit. But, there is a community benefit.

Mr. Loknath Pokrel, who himself had arrived as part of the first wave of refugees, was serving as the assistant field director of the JRS/Caritas Nepal Sub-Office. He held a measure of pride with respect to what "his people" had achieved when he spoke:

> The education in the Bhutanese refugee camps were initiated by them, the Bhutanese refugees, and were mostly managed by them. After arriving in Nepal, the community felt that the biggest thing they had brought with them from Bhutan was a desire for education. And, the little thing that the children themselves could carry forward was an education. We felt the greatest resource we had was ourselves.

A little later in the morning, over chai, Loknath said that the fundamental principle that had been embraced early, with respect to the daily management of the schools, could be summed up in a three-part statement, which was the schools' credo: "by the Bhutanese; with the Bhutanese; and, for the Bhutanese." He added that one of the only "assets" that the Bhutanese refugees had when they arrived in Nepal was a firm commitment to educate their children.

Another advantage that the BREPs had over some other refugee camp contexts was the fact that a critical mass of the adult population was educated or were willing to become educated. This is not always the case in refugee camp contexts, as sometimes the level of literacy and numeracy within the

adult population of a refugee camp is low. Prakash, an assistant head teacher at one of the two remaining BREP schools, was open about this:

> Even though many of them were farmers, there is no doubt that it helped that some of the refugees had held jobs in the government as civil servants. They became the first teachers in the schools.

Over a period of about twenty years after they were first established, the BREPs' school operations grew to become much more than just primary and secondary schools. They became centers for vocational training and community engagement. Martha was one of the two remaining permanent, office-based resource teachers who worked out of the Caritas sub-office in Damak. She traveled the ten or so kilometers to the schools two to three times a week to work with the teachers who taught the spoken English classes. She said:

> We began to offer adult language programs in spoken English for adults who had not attended formal schools. Our programs were inclusive. We added programs for the disabled and established child play centers and then, youth-friendly after-school centers. The model was an inclusive one.

The tone Martha used reflected a sense of accomplishment with the fact that the programs and services offered in the BREPs had grown, particularly with respect to the variety of services that the JRS/Caritas Nepal staff offered.

Shakun, one of the head teachers in the BREPs' two remaining schools, said:

> As part of the vocational training initiatives, the BREPs established a community technology access program. We offered such things as computer operating courses, web design, and basic Internet user courses to refugees and the surrounding community.

During the orientation meeting, Loknath had explained that over 10,000 Bhutanese refugees had benefited from the BREPs' vocational training programs. The otherwise undereducated adults had been able to get training in such areas as: computers, hairdressing, dressmaking, auto repairs, and secretarial skill development. The courses, he explained, could last anywhere from two to three months and up to six months.

Sister Lourda Mary added that the staff from JRS/Caritas Nepal and the school management team knew they had to find ways to reach the Bhutanese refugees who, if not educated, would likely get left behind once resettlement began:

> Beginning early, some time around 1998, the UNHCR sponsored the vocational training. It was designed to help the school dropouts specifically, and provide

> them with basic skills to earn a living. This vocational training was well taken. The refugees who complete the courses become an asset if their training gives them an opportunity to, at least, have a chance to enter into the job market in developed countries.

According to Loknath, the vocational training programs, while initially developed to support school dropouts who needed some skills if they were to survive and provide for their families, were expanded to include other individuals who were considered "vulnerable," such as the disabled, those suffering from addictions, and divorced and widowed women. The goal was to equip as many Bhutanese refugees as possible with some form of education, and not to leave any behind simply because educational opportunities for betterment did not exist.

The many successes of the BREPs should not be overlooked or disregarded. It is well documented that these refugee camp schools can serve as examples of the positive effects that early- and midstage refugee camp schools can have on refugee communities and refugees who, all too often, face a stark reality that, at times, offers little promise of improvement (Brown, 2001; Jesuit Refugee Services, 2015; Pande, 2008).

THE HUMAN CHURN OF RESETTLEMENT

However, the reality that began in 2007 in the seven Bhutanese refugee camps was that each week, hundreds of Bhutanese refugees began to leave Nepal, bound for a new life in a new country. While resettlement offered excitement and hope for a secure future, it also brought daily changes for all Bhutanese refugees. Loknath stated:

> There are some, and I think myself included, who have been worried that the younger generation who are leaving will lose their Bhutanese identity.

There was certainly an impact on those who prepared to depart as they faced the anxiety of leaving behind friends and the comforts of the lives that they had known for nearly twenty years, as they headed to a foreign land filled with unfamiliar traditions and unknown challenges. There was also anxiety for those whom they left behind. While appreciative of the opportunities that resettlement brought, Shakun admitted:

> Resettlement was a good thing, but it also caused a disruption in the community and the education system for those who remained behind as others left. Fairly early on during the resettlement process, some of the schoolchildren and their families simply began to wait in anticipation for their travel papers and date

> of departure. Waiting became a preoccupation. And, over time, it has had an impact on their motivation. More and more just began to wait; unmotivated to contribute to camp life.

Both Loknath and Shakun commented that some of the older generation of Bhutanese refugees—those who had not been born and/or raised in the camps as children—were not keen on the idea of third-country resettlement. Neither Loknath or Shakun said that these refugees were unappreciative of the host countries' generosity to accept Bhutanese refugees. Rather, the very prospect of resettling to a country so very different from the ones they knew was too overwhelming for some of the older Bhutanese refugees to think about. These refugees still held out hope, more than twenty-five years since first arriving, that they would either go "home," back to Bhutan, or even, in some cases, remain in what would be left of the camps and live out their remaining days in Nepal.

At the time of my research study, in mid-December 2015, approximately 18,000 Bhutanese refugees remained in two of the original seven camps: the Beldangi and Sanischare camps. The other five camps had been closed and dismantled. Communities were consolidated, and refugees who had known their neighbors and had developed a sense of community over almost a twenty-year period of living stateless were relocated to the remaining two camps.

While recent global history has, unfortunately, taught us how to assemble refugee camps and, all too often, how to expand them to squeeze in more human suffering, we do not have much firsthand experience with planning for closing them down. The loss of community and the connections that come from belonging to a camp and from belonging to a school community had rendered some of the remaining refugees strangers to each other.

I learned before I arrived, through email communication with the JRS/Caritas Nepal sub-office, that the UNHCR was planning to close the two remaining camps and withdraw their support by the end of 2016, even though it was anticipated that close to 3,000 Bhutanese refugees might not qualify for resettlement, or even want to be resettled. However, email exchanges about the inevitability of what lay ahead could not capture the anxiety that many of the few thousand remaining refugees were feeling. Those who remained, either awaiting the opportunity to resettle or holding onto hope that they would be able to return to Bhutan or stay in Nepal, all faced the loss of neighbors, companions, and family members as they were to leave the camps.

As Prakash, one of the assistant head teachers, said:

> Many of the refugees who live in the camps were born stateless and have no recollection of Bhutan. Some of the older members of the community who remain here cling to the faint hope that, at the closure of the camps, they will

> be permitted to return to Bhutan. Yet others recognize that their ethnic origin is Nepali and want to be absorbed into the local population. But, with one year to go, no one is quite sure what will happen.

Over almost a decade, grandparents had lost grandchildren, siblings had become separated by continents, and extended families disintegrated. Each change that is experienced at the camp level has an even larger impact on the refugees at a personal level. Schools had lost teachers, principals, and counselors. And, the JRS/Caritas sub-office, which had invested in developing not just the teachers, but also the local leaders (who were responsible to provide a community voice in how to best manage the schools for the Bhutanese refugees), was also gone. It was under those circumstances that the refugee camp school program managers were attempting to maintain a semblance of the high-quality educational standards with which the BREPs had long been associated.

INITIAL PRESSURES CAN LEAD TO CRACKS LATER ON

Both Sister Lourda Mary and Loknath noted, in a number of our conversations, that from the outset, the schools faced the ever-present challenges associated with teacher recruitment, preparation, and attrition. For example, from the beginning, the Bhutanese refugee camp schools faced the challenge of what some participants referred to as a "brain drain."

Based on her experience working in the BREPs, Martha noted:

> Quite a few teachers, once they acquired some training and a few years of experience, became attracted by the job offers from outside the camps. This was especially true of resource teachers—the ones trained for curriculum development and professional workshops.

The program managers and directors of the BREPs recognized early on that the cross-border movement of skilled labor constitutes an integral part of globalization. It was a goal that they used to prepare the Bhutanese refugees for resettlement. Meeting the needs of the Developed World, that is, for a well-educated and highly skilled workforce, was one of the goals of the educational programs, and one that Loknath said they used to remind everyone—students, their parents, and the teachers—of why the success of BREPs mattered so much.

However, anticipating something and experiencing it are not always the same. Loknath said that the speed of the vicious cycle of flight of human capital and teaching talent caught the organizers of the schools by surprise.

It was clear that the constant churn of talent had worn out some of the program's staff:

> The very first real challenge we faced was a brain drain. I know that refugees are not allowed to officially work outside the refugee camps but, in Nepal, the Bhutanese refugees have the same ethnic background as the Nepalis. They—the Bhutanese refugees—could move out of the camps and take opportunities in the private sector and get a good job to earn good money. It was a challenge for us—the brain drain—because we had to keep training teachers regularly as some teachers left for jobs outside the camps once we had trained them. Once the resettlement process began, the effects of the brain drain became exponential.

At least as early as 2001, the UNHCR had identified that the phenomenon most commonly referred to as the "brain drain"—the flight of the best and the brightest from Developing World to Developed World—can lead to adverse economic conditions in the places that are the least prepared to deal with them (United Nations, 2001).

Another challenge that became evident can best be described as a form of inertia—an outcome of the uncertainty of whether the refugees were going to return to Bhutan, remain in Nepal, or be resettled to a third country. Sister Lourda Mary noted:

> I think the uncertain future they faced was a problem for them. Not knowing if they were going to stay in Nepal, return to Bhutan, or be resettled led some to become frustrated with the situation and this caused a drop in some of the teachers' motivation.

As it became clearer that the only durable solution to the Bhutanese refugee crisis was third-country resettlement, the strains on the resources—human and financial—became even more obvious. Loknath elaborated:

> Once the third-country resettlements began, our teacher training efforts increased by double, maybe triple. Our teachers, our asset, the ones we had trained, were among the first to be resettled. We were already facing a brain drain, but then it became worse. The frequency of our teacher training programs increased considerably as compared to our earlier efforts. We needed to ask the UNHCR to increase the teacher-training budget. We got some money, but it was barely enough as the need to retrain and retrain again never ended.

In some various and obvious ways, the obstacles that were emerging during the early- and midstage period of the Bhutanese camps and, by extension, the schools, foreshadowed some of the more profound challenges that the schools would face as they began to wind down operations.

UNSETTLING STORIES OF THE RESETTLED

Loknath pointed at picture on a shelf in his office as he spoke.

> We hear from many of our resettled students that they are faring well and getting on well. One of my students who was resettled in 2013 said that he is in one of the top colleges in New York where the children of U.S. senators are studying.

But, Loknath also acknowledged that even though the vast majority of the students from the Bhutanese refugee camp schools had found academic and social success after resettlement, there were stories trickling back to the camps about some individuals who had not successfully transitioned out of the camps to life in their new host countries. Without providing any details or statistics, he simply said some who resettled had met a sad end.

While suicide is still a major cause of death in the United States, particularly among immigrant groups (Sher & Vilens, 2011), the high incidence of Bhutanese suicides is somewhat shocking because, collectively, the community represented one of the newer groups of refugees to be admitted to the United States and it had been through formal resettlement pre-departure orientation programs (Glionna, 2014; Mishra, 2014; Preiss 2013). In part, such orientation programs are meant as prevention measures against such disastrous outcomes.

According to the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center (RHTAC), which is principally funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the 2011 statistics estimated that approximately 11 out of every 100,000 people within the United States died by suicide. However, among refugee groups, the rate of suicide was higher and the RHTAC reported in 2011 that the rates of suicide within the Bhutanese refugee community were more than three times as high as that of the general population. Clearly, some of the resettled Bhutanese refugees were struggling to adapt to their new lives.

Sister Lourda Mary said that the transition from the simplicity of a refugee camp, in which the Bhutanese refugees were surrounded by people who looked like them, spoke in languages that they understood, and had a shared common history and refugee experience, brought about some profound psychological and cultural challenges for some. It took a lot to adjust to an unfamiliar big city or large town in the Developed World.

While it was true that many of the young Bhutanese adapted well and felt equipped and empowered to pursue their dreams, there were also, she said, documented cases of severe depression and instances of suicide attempts and death by suicide by the newly resettled Bhutanese refugees. There was, she added, not much more that the school staffs could do to better prepare them.

AS DUSK BEGAN TO SETTLE OVER THE REFUGEE CAMPS

Over the three days that I spent visiting the various offices and schools in the refugee camps and talking with staff, it became clearer to me that everyone involved in the BREPs recognized a number of explicit challenges that late-stage refugee camp schools face. Those challenges were at risk of being obscured as an outcome in the midst of the heavy focus on the important and positive effects that the early- and midstage BREPs had on their students and their families. As the refugee camps and the schools began the formal transition process to closure, all of the individuals I spoke with—from the program managers, to the head and assistant head teachers, right through to the office-based resource teachers—in some fashion, spoke at length about a number of profound challenges the BREPs faced that worried them.

In general, as the population in the camp dwindled, the majority of the adults and children who remained in the two camps had much lower literacy and numeracy levels than those who had already been resettled. Yet, it was precisely this segment of the remaining adult population from which the current corps of teachers had to be drawn, and many of the new teachers had either not completed their formal secondary schooling while in the refugee camps, or had chosen to exert little effort in completing it. Martha remarked:

> The last two years have been a real struggle to find qualified adults to train as teachers. Most of the educated refugees have been resettled and now we are left to train illiterate adults to become teachers.

At a different point in one of our many conversations, Loknath had commented:

> Whereas early on we had more reliable and confident teachers and resource teachers, now we have a group of young and inexperienced teachers. The best teachers we have today would not be able to get into that group of the previous cohorts of resource teachers. All of the teachers we have now require much more help from the Caritas/JRS, Damak office. We still have some school-based resource teachers, but they need a lot more support from the office-based resource teachers.

Dorji, another head teacher in one of the camps schools, whose daughters had already left the camps and resettled in the United States, said:

> As a result of constant resettlement, students can easily see different teachers in a single year. It used to be the same teacher for the whole year. The current teaching staff is young and their maturity level and experience is low.

When we were driving between the two camp sites in the UNHCR-supplied Toyota Land Rover, Sister Lourda Mary had a sobering internal assessment of the challenges. This assessment demonstrated her sense that where donor agencies were targeting their limited resources was impacted by the existing humanitarian crisis emanating primarily out of Syria and the global politics surrounding refugee resettlement.

Whereas North American teachers are keenly aware of the negative effects of narrowly ascribing educational success to standardized test scores, the plight of the remaining Bhutanese refugees was directly tied to low student achievement test scores that the educators had no ability to improve. Sister Lourda Mary commented:

> This is one of the greatest challenges. Because of the turnover in the teaching staff, the experienced and best-trained teachers have left the camps. This has affected the standard of education quite a bit. We can see this, and so can our funders, in the changes in the results of the Class 10 Exams. They have dropped over the years and we know that they will not get better.

The program managers and school administrators knew that JRS/Caritas Nepal and the BREPs were facing increased pressures associated with donor agency expectations for high levels of student achievement.

Donor agencies needed to promote the academic quality of the school's programming to benefactors, but they knew that the previously high levels of academic achievement were no longer sustainable. Dorji pulled out a large, dusty, ledger-style accounting book from behind his desk, opened it, and pointed at the grade records he had kept over the years:

> The level of student achievement on Grade 10 results has decreased over the past ten years. The students today are not as well prepared by teachers who themselves are not as well prepared. But, we know that our funders are still looking at the Level 10 exam results to see if we are doing a good job.

The school managers were, therefore, left to try to prepare relatively un- or underprepared adults to become teachers in the face of dwindling resources to prepare them. These new teachers, who had limited preparation to teach, would increasingly come face to face with students who were disengaged from learning and did not want to study. They too lived in limbo, and were simply waiting for their turn to be resettled.

A recurring challenge in refugee school contexts is the persistent challenge of diminishing human and financial resources (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2011; Ring & West, 2015). Research suggests that there is an important inverse relationship between teacher turnover rates and student achievement results (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). In

other words, as the level of teacher turnover increases, the level of student achievement decreases.

A frequent reality facing any refugee camp school is the scarcity of adults qualified and/or prepared to teach (INEE, 2011). In many post-conflict emergency and refugee contexts, un- or under-qualified adults are put into classrooms, and many of them do not last long (Ring & West, 2015). The disruptive effect of relying on so many marginally qualified teachers, combined with the high rate of attrition of the limited number of teachers who are professionally prepared, and truly committed to teach, not only negatively impacts the students, but also negatively affects those teachers who remain in the camps (Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

The lack of motivation displayed by the students intensified the already challenging work that the teachers had to be prepared to face each day. Sister Lourda Mary added:

> As more families were resettled, the refugees left behind—children and parents—are less motivated for school and studies. This teaching has become more of a struggle.

Loknath offered his assessment of what was happening in the camps and schools:

> The teachers are facing students who are not motivated to study. They are just waiting to be notified they are leaving the camp. Some of the teachers are not motivated either, for the same reason. Many families left in the camps have extended family that have already been resettled. They send money transfers back to the camps. Having access to money in the camp without having to earn it has caused apathy.

As reported in other research on education in refugee and displacement contexts (INEE, 2009; Ring & West, 2015; Sesnan et al., 2013), many of the individuals noted that, in refugee camp settings, the limits put on the existing financial incentive programs for teachers might work against teacher recruitment and retention efforts.

Brown (2001) noted that, with respect to the Bhutanese refugees' abilities to land teaching jobs outside the camps, "the educational standards of the teachers are relatively high and so the private-school head teachers and parents are normally happy to accept them" (p. 126). Thinking about the financial incentive program for teachers, Dorji commented:

> When we first started the BREPs the teachers were very happy to be paid a small cash incentive to teach. It was not much, but it was something. Now the cash incentive means very little to them.

Based on research conducted in African refugee camps, Crisp (2003) suggested that there is ample evidence that refugees, caught in protracted situations of uncertainty, become increasingly reliant on money remitted to them by family members who have succeeded in leaving the camp and resettling, and earning money themselves. While a fundamental principle of operating and staffing refugee camp schools is to recruit, train, and retain a cadre of qualified teachers drawn from the refugee population (Brown, 2001), the reality is that "refugees, like anyone else, are rationally motivated by the availability of income" (Sesnan, 2012, p. 88).

As if it had not been clear enough from the materials that I had read prior to arriving, this visit laid bare how the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining a qualified teaching workforce become more pronounced in late-stage refugee camp situations. Impending closure means that there are fewer and fewer incentives available to entice, motivate, and persuade the remaining adult refugee population to serve as teachers. Later on, in another conversation, Loknath stated with an air of despair:

> We have seen an increase in suicide, mental health issues, and depression among the younger adults and youth population still remaining in the camps. I would describe our current students and teachers as: distracted, demotivated, and disturbed.

In the case of the BREPs, the progression of resettlement accelerated the loss of the literate and numerate adults, specifically those who had been recruited and trained to become teachers, and their children. As has been noted in other research on refugee resettlement (see MacLaren, 2014; Takizawa, 2015), it is common for the "best and brightest" to be the first to be resettled. This process creates an atmosphere of fear in refugee communities that, as resettlement progresses, they will lose the benefit of having qualified teachers, social workers, and community leaders drawn from their own kin (MacLaren, 2014; Takizawa, 2015).

It is common for the recipient countries to apply some form of "ability to resettle" criteria to potential refugees (Takizawa, 2015). In turn, as the number of refugees who remain in the camp decreases, fewer of them are regarded as desirable to new host countries as their ability to resettle—oftentimes a combination of formal education, command of the host country's official language or languages, and verifiable work experience (Takizawa, 2015)—is considered to be much less likely.

Even though the school administrators and program managers described some of the teaching corps as being marginally literate and numerate, and also as somewhat disinterested in teaching, they were all who were available to teach the remaining students. Many of them were said to suffer from

serious issues related to their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. In the case of the Bhutanese refugees, by late 2015, the effectiveness of the resettlement program had reduced the camps' populations down to about fifteen percent of its historically high level, and had concomitantly depleted the teacher talent pool dramatically. It also depleted the overall capacity of the community members to care for each other because the educated adults who had backgrounds in social work and counseling had also been resettled.

In addition, the sheer scale of the humanitarian refugee crisis added to the uncertainty that already existed in the camps. Rachel, another office-based resource teacher from the Damak sub-office, but who had only been assigned to it for about a year, said:

> Many refugees are now worried about the announcements that the UNWFP United Nations World Food Program is going to shut down or decrease food rations. This is causing worry and fear. And, now we are seeing some of the refugees protest with sit-ins.

After visiting a number of the remaining BREP sites, we sat down for lunch in one of the few remaining family-run restaurants in the camps, which was really just a small, sheltered patio outside what looked like just another bamboo hut. During our conversation, Sister Lourda Mary commented:

> We know that the UNHCR is facing a big financial crisis. We are aware of the limited funding available. We are not sure what that means for the last year of our programs. Even once the UNHCR pulls out in December 2016, we expect that there will be a few thousand refugees still left here. But, then what? No one knows the answer. The UNWFP has told us that it plans to provide assistance to the remaining Bhutanese refugees until the camps reached a residual population—maybe around 3,000 to 5,000 people remaining in the camps. At that point, the responsibility for continued aid shifts fully over to the UNHCR.

After lunch, we drove by a group of a few dozen Bhutanese refugees who were quietly gathered around the UNWFP Distribution Centre, and I wondered if, given the scale of the humanitarian crisis the world was facing in late 2015, the commitment was attainable. As we continued on our way in the UNHCR Land Rover, I asked Sister Mary Lourda what was going on. She answered:

> Their food rations have been cut. Less rice. Less cooking oil. Just less. They are not happy and this is the local version of a protest. They are a peaceful bunch so they will simply sit in silence to make their point.

As a result, by December 2015, the BREPs were facing the harsh reality of losing their funding as the UNHCR and donor agencies shifted their

focus and financial commitments to address the overwhelming humanitarian crises emanating from Syria, Iraq, and many of the central African countries besieged by conflict. These sociopolitical factors, they believed, contributed to rendering the remaining Bhutanese refugees and their plight somewhat invisible in many public spheres.

A CONFLUENCE OF FACTORS

While chronic underfunding limits the abilities of humanitarian agencies to provide high-quality educational programs and services in refugee camp settings, so too do less obvious funding regimes that are tied to static measures of academic achievement—such measures are devoid of the contextual factors that exist in refugee camps (Brown, 2001; Ring & West, 2015; Sesnan et al., 2013). When the need to produce results becomes paramount to the continuous funding for school programs and initiatives, cracks will develop for each and every refugee student across the global contexts (Kamau & Fox, 2013). What might be unique to the Bhutanese refugees in late 2015, however, was the confluence of two factors, which were: (1) the fact that donor agency expectations were based on laudable, historically high levels of student achievement in the BREPs, but ones that were no longer achievable; and, (2) the intensification of the plight of refugees caused by the sheer magnitude of the refugee crises that had swept across the globe by late 2015.

With both the UNHCR's and UNWFP's budgets buckling under the historically high needs for humanitarian aid and greater pressures on humanitarian agencies than had ever before been experienced (Crisp, 2003), donor agencies were faced with the dilemma of where best to strategically invest their limited resources. In an era of demonstrable return-on-investment-style metrics, metrics that are commonplace in corporate and non-corporate board rooms alike, the BREPs' program managers and educators were uncertain about the ways in which they could continue to provide schooling for the remaining refugee population.

THE FACE OF THE RESIDUAL CASES

I had read about the case of Shanti Ram Acharya, who, when he was seventeen years old, had crossed back over the Bhutan border after traveling from Nepal and across India's Darjeeling region to visit an uncle who lived in Bhutan. Acharya was apprehended by the Bhutanese government, accused of terrorism, and held in a detention center for eight years. Once released, he

returned to the Bhutanese refugee camp, but, with a terrorism-related charge on his record, he was ineligible to be resettled even though his immediate family had moved out of the camp and lived in the United States. When I asked Loknath if he knew Acharya, he said yes. And he added:

> It's been particularly hard on his mom. It's true he didn't have the proper papers, but all he did was visit his uncle in Bhutan. He's in his late twenties and is probably never going to be able to leave Nepal. It is one more tragedy that will be leaving many behind with nowhere to go.

This is what a "residual caseload" means, in human terms. What is unique to the context of refugee resettlement, however, is that the "residual caseloads"—that is, those individuals who remain stateless while other members of a specific refugee population have been resettled—has proven to be a vexing problem for humanitarian workers across refugee contexts for decades (Crisp, 2003).

HEADING OUT

The few buses that still traveled down the camps' gravel roads kicked up dust that filled the air before slowly settling down. After two and a half days of visiting with different staff at the school facilities in the two remaining camps and the office-based staff in Damak, I needed to take a walk. With my hosts from JRS/Caritas Nepal's permission, and a promise that I would be careful, and that I would meet them at the other side of the camp, I decided to take a walk through what was left of the Beldangi camp.

As I walked down the main street, I could see a few of the remaining money transfer agencies. But, there were only a few. They looked different from the pictures I had seen in some of the African refugee camps with their abundance of "Western Union" and "Money Transfer" signs hanging next to the "SIM card" billboards.

It is common to find a Western Union sign in a refugee camp, advertising its services as resettled family members and friends send money from time to time back to their loved ones who remain in the camp. But, as the population of the Bhutanese camps decreased, the camps' once busy market-places had disappeared. I made me think about how increased urbanization has drained many rural communities, towns, and even some smaller cities in North America of their best and brightest. The decade-long success of Bhutanese refugee resettlement had clearly led to an inevitable decline in the local economy. This became so obvious to me as I walked through the camp.

Just before I reached the far end of the camp, I saw rows of dozens of solar ovens the size of 1990s-era satellite dishes. They had once been used by families to cook their meals, but now they were arranged as surplus material to be discarded. While it seemed like a bit of an odd sight to see—a scrap heap of aluminum—I wondered if the surplus reselling business might provide some of the remaining Bhutanese refugees with some source of income. However, I did not ask Sr. Lourda Mary, as it had been a long three days, during which I had asked quite a few questions. I simply climbed into the white SUV, slumped back into the dark leather upholstered seats, and closed my eyes.

OPTIMISTICALLY PREPARING FOR THE NEXT CAMP CLOSURE

Teachers in many Developed World countries recognize that there is no shortage of challenges in school-based education, and some of the biggest challenges can appear frustratingly intractable. It is hard to ignore the cold, hard fact that money, especially when financial resources are limited, impacts educational outcomes for all students. Every country's future depends heavily on the quality of the educational opportunities it provides to its youth. While perhaps an imperfect relationship to mathematically quantify, increased financial support allows school systems to implement proven strategies such as attracting the best and brightest to teaching, and then providing them with ongoing professional development. It is also known that retaining excellent teachers matters a great deal with respect to student achievement. And, as is the case in many contexts around the globe, the program managers and administrators who work with Bhutanese Refugee Education Programs were keenly aware of these stark facts.

However, the financial pressures that the UNHCR is under are historically unprecedented given the sheer size of the current humanitarian tragedies that continue to unfold before our eyes as we prepare to enter the 2020s (Aiyar et al., 2016). This fiscal exigency has had a dramatic impact on the provision of educational programs and services in refugee camp settings across the world. It is clear that the program managers of the non-governmental organizations that partner with the UNHCR to support the refugee camp schools will be even more pressed to find durable solutions to educate a generation of refugee schoolchildren.

Long-term solutions to the challenges that face educators, administrators, and program managers in refugee schools should be a concern for all of us to consider. Even for those who think we need to invest more in our local

schools and less in international humanitarian aid, the truth cannot be avoided that, with globalization and increased migration, the plight of refugees who are un- or under-educated should warrant our attention. It is not a stretch of the imagination to consider that they might possibly become our neighbors, our colleagues, and our children's classmates. And even though many teachers have experienced the reality of teaching recently arrived refugee students, a majority of teachers have only a vague understanding of what school represented in a refugee camp context.

In a broader political context, it is regrettable that far too many governments in the Developed World have rather myopic and simplified understandings of how refugee resettlement should occur. In their narrow models, drawn up by policy wonks with limited understanding of life within a refugee camp, they first assume that the refugee and her (or his) dependents gratefully arrive in the host country. At the moment of the initial arrival, she and her family are taken under the care of local volunteer agencies, often referred to as "VolAgs," who have been approved to work with the refugees on behalf of various government entities. Second, the refugee is given, on average, a sufficient number of months of free or drastically subsidized housing and some food vouchers not in a city of their choosing, but rather, one chosen for them.

Once landed in her new host country, it is expected that, as soon as is humanly possible, she—the refugee mother of five—will find some form of employment regardless of her English fluency. When there is space, additional English-language classes might be offered for a short period of time, but this depends on both space and availability. It also ends regardless of whether the refugee has achieved a basic level of language proficiency. Last, through the simplified expectation of *making it* and achieving *the* [insert host country name] *dream*, the refugee is celebrated for assimilating into her or his new country and is treated the same as the domestically born citizens, and the resettled refugee is eternally grateful to her host country for *saving her*.

This imagined scenario is the stuff of Hollywood movies. The refugee resettlement process is never this simple, nor obstacle free and, while many refugees, even within the Bhutanese community, have achieved a considerable degree of vertical mobility and economic success in less than a decade, there is still widespread doubt and fear about a lack of success. The root of the policy problem is the use of archaic theories on recently resettled refugees' behaviors, many of them extensions of an assimilationist approach to immigration. Refugees are not immigrants. No one chooses to be a refugee even though countless millions choose to immigrate each year.

Given the sheer scale of the humanitarian crisis the world is facing in the second decade of this millennium, it seems timely to re-orient approaches to the resettlement of recently arrived refugees, who are typically regarded

through a policy lens as if they were just another immigrant group and who undergo what Rumbaut and Portes (2001, p. 6) referred to as "a process of segmented assimilation in which outcomes vary across immigrant minorities."

Teachers know that it takes somewhere in the range of five to seven years for a student to become literate in English as an additional language if the student arrived *semi-literate* in her or his first language (Clifford, Rhodes & Paxton, 2014). The reality, though, for many refugee students is that they are pre-literate or non-literate, and have endured or witnessed tremendous suffering. For these students, it takes even longer to *become literate in English*. For their parents and guardians, learning English and securing decently paying, stable employment can be insurmountable.

What this ethnographic study suggests is that segmented and targeted approaches (Jamal, 2008) to the planning, funding, and operational aspects—ones that recognize that long-term refugee populations are not an undifferentiated mass of humanity and ones that differentiate the levels and types of educational programs and services accordingly based on the shifting needs of students and teachers—are essential to ensure the success of late-stage refugee camp schools. Consideration should be given to funding mechanisms for educational programs and services that are differentiated to match the challenges associated over the lifespan of a refugee camp. Such a lifespan funding regime might be generally framed as: (1) early-stage: characterized by the immediate need to establish schools in the camps; (2) midstage: characterized by the need for the ongoing physical maintenance and improvement of the schools, as well as refinement of their programs and services; and, (3) late-stage: characterized by the human and social capital resource depletion that occurs during the final stages of resettlement, making it difficult to maintain a high standard of quality for programs and services.

It is also important to consider political and policy approaches—both structural and financial—that might act as *bridges back* to the refugee camp communities for some of those who have left but might wish to return to serve as teachers, as well as in other much needed professional capacities that can serve the needs of those remaining in the camps. The current model of resettlement builds a one-way bridge out of the camps and away from the refugee communities. In essence, it drains the talent pool by removing the most capable from the camp. Yet, pathways are required during the late stages of refugee camp schools that can allow for talent—in the form of bright and committed resettled refugees—to flow back into the communities for a period of time to serve them when those talents are needed most.

These are seemingly simple yet impactful approaches that could be enacted, but only if the global community's long-term commitment is to provide refugee children with the semblance of a quality education. It must not

be a commitment simply made at the beginning of the establishment of the camps when the media broadcasts the plight of the refugees into people's living rooms, but it must continue throughout the camps' existence when the media moves on to the next story.

Attracting, developing, and retaining effective teachers is the most critically important policy lever related to the provision of a quality education (OECD, 2005). Such is the case across all educational contexts. In refugee camp schools, however, there is little research focused on the experiences of teachers, administrators, and program managers that might inform policy-makers about ways in which to improve teacher recruitment, professional development, and retention strategies beyond the initial stages of creating a refugee camp school, lasting until the aspirational goal of closing them down becomes realized because there is no longer a need for a specific refugee camp.

The factors identified in this case study are not the only ones that affect the quality of the educational programs and services available in refugee camp schools, nor are they necessarily the most impactful factors in all refugee camp school contexts. These factors do, however, act as an index to the extremely vexing challenges associated with providing a quality education in one late-stage refugee camp setting. It is my hope that this study might add to the limited available research and provide a useful starting point for greater discussion about the challenges that refugee students, their families, and their teachers face as they prepare for repatriation or resettlement.

HOPE EVEN AFTER THE SUN SETS

Even though one of the most impactful levers available to build a more peaceful future for refugees is through access to education, quality school programs are all too often limited and uneven across regions and settings of displacement caused by conflict (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Winthrop & Kirk, 2005). Clearly, there is a need to focus on a future that leads to repatriation, resettlement, and the transition from being stateless to an individual who belongs to a country, not only for the best and brightest, but for all who are left to linger in the refugee camps (Sinclair, 2001). Given the fact that, at the global level, historic numbers of refugees—parents and children—are facing resettlement that can take years if not decades in late-stage resettlement contexts, it is important to understand the complex sociopolitical factors that teachers, school administrators, and managers face as they work to provide an education in the shadow of what are the last vestiges of a refugee camp.

It is nearly impossible to calculate the social and economic costs that are incurred when refugees are deprived of a quality education. The UNHCR

(2001) has stated that the likelihood of a productive and prosperous future for a refugee who goes without a proper formal education is low. A refugee who is denied access to vocational training opportunities or sufficient academic preparation is more likely to become socially disengaged and be drawn into criminal activity, organized crime, or paramilitary groups.

Not only will a refugee who remains illiterate and innumerate be at a serious disadvantage personally, but she or he will be unlikely to be able to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It seems clear that providing a quality education to refugees—from the genesis of camp until the sun has set on it—should be a priority for the international community. If educators in the Developed World are truly obligated to the successful integration of refugee students and their families, they must be committed not just to the ones who are the first and easiest to be resettled but all refugees, including those who may never be resettled and are simply absorbed by their initial host country. We must do more to support them from the birth of a refugee camp throughout the resettlement process. This is important collective work for teachers.

Still, there is more that teachers can do at the individual level. They can themselves commit to become more interculturally competent. They need to learn how to better understand, evaluate, and relate to ambiguous and uncertain intercultural situations that do not have simple origins or endings. They need to be more critically aware of the relative validity and invalidity of their own frame of reference and the assumptive worldview that they hold. In response, they are better able to select and to use communication styles and/or behaviors to create a better fit between the specific local and intercultural context.

As a professional community of educators, a professional community that exists globally in various social and political contexts, some of which are very challenging, we grow as we come to better understand the educational experience of people in other contexts. We should aim not only to understand the experiences of the refugee students who arrive in our classrooms and schools, but we should also become more critically aware of the struggles that our colleagues have faced in educating them before they arrive.

Chapter Six

Looking Back

The ethnographic narratives that comprise "the stories" of the book open with my journey into the brickfields. I have tried to illustrate my experiences with the ambitious people committed to the Loreto (Sealdah) School's Resource Centre for Social Transformation, and the teachers who teach at two of the brickfield schools near Kolkata, India. In very real terms, this is where the journey that comprises the narratives of this book began. This is where the germ of an idea for a book grew, one that would focus attention on some of the challenging social contexts in which teachers work.

I gained so much from my three years of international fieldwork, and I have tried to convey what I experienced and learned about teachers, teaching, and the human condition to the readers of this book. I hope that I have illuminated at least some aspects of it well. In the course of meeting the people whose stories I have tried to represent in the book, I learned so much about the profession of education, a profession that I was fortunate enough to join in 1992. I am grateful that I am still continuing to work in this wonderful profession more than twenty-five years later.

I have learned that teachers are a hopeful lot. Even when surrounded by abject poverty and the trauma of surviving mass atrocity, and facing the uncertainty of what lies ahead through resettlement, teachers maintain a certain expectation that the future will be better for their students. The educators who consented to be interviewed for my studies always remained hopeful. They possessed not a glib sense of hope, but rather, one that was grounded in the realities they faced, even while they recognized that things could go wrong again. In fact, these realities proved to be something that I would come to better understand, to varying extents, as a result of each of the research fieldwork experiences described in this book.

However, the point of highlighting the sense of hope is not to overlook the significant challenges faced by the migrant worker families, or the committed group of educators who desperately cling to the faint possibility that a brickfield school can make a difference in the lives of some of the world's neediest children. And, the point is certainly not to exploit this sense of hope for my own, and our collective, comfort. These days, this type of exploitation is far too easy to accomplish simply by pitying the poor, and then remarking on how content we perceive them to be as they endure their circumstances. We love a good story of optimism because we believe that it carries people through seemingly impossible circumstances. It can be tempting to feel "okay" about doing nothing in particular when we see people mustering a smile while enduring the harshness of the social conditions they live in.

Far too often, those of us who have been, by chance, born and raised in the privilege of the Developed World find ourselves feeling helpless and powerless to actually aid in alleviating the plight of those who have been, also by chance, born and raised in abject poverty.

We sometimes seek to satisfy our need for a sense of justice with the idea that if hope can still be found, even in small doses, then the lives of the poor, oppressed, and marginalized cannot really be all that bad. Look, we tell ourselves, they are still able to smile.

Almost self-indulgently, we want to believe, or maybe convince ourselves, that if we listen carefully and take in someone else's story, then we have contributed to their betterment, and the world's, by simply paying attention, listening, and then celebrating their resilience. Comforting sentiments such as these ring hollow in terms of social change.

No, this is not why we should take note of their residual hope. The reality is that we directly reap benefits from the devastation forced on the people and lands of the Developing World. As such, we can never do all that we should do to help. But, despite that reality, we should never stop trying to change ourselves and aiming to improve the odds for those who desperately need better ones in order to succeed. We must not give up the hope that we can do better, and, in fact, be better. What the migrant workers and the teachers in the brickfield schools hoped for was the promise of everything that a good education could bring for children. We need to work together toward solutions that will ensure that their hopes do not prove to be in vain.

Furthermore, teachers in North American contexts need to learn from those hopes in order to connect empathically with people across the world, people who have experienced vastly different educational situations. They should ensure that their own teaching practice is informed by a knowledge that students in their own classrooms may face barriers that do not immediately, or clearly, present themselves. This is certainly true for some of our domestic

students, but it is also true for students who have migrated from far and wide. Increasingly, teachers in North America interact with children whose families immigrated by choice as well as children whose families were displaced by war or other forms of violent discrimination.

Statistics are impersonal. Listening to them repeated over and over again on the news will not change that fact. The apparent light speed of the news cycle makes it difficult to comprehend the magnitude of the current humanitarian crises. And, the vastness of the numbers of people who are suffering can be mind-numbing. They also at times serve as a barrier. The human heart cannot connect with vast swaths of unknown individuals. The human mind cannot compute the extent of the misery.

But they can connect deeply with narratives that expose the realities of particular individuals. That is what the recounting of my fieldwork was intended to do.

The migrant families who toiled in the brickfield school were burdened by the manual labor that their own survival required them to do. The adults' bodies ached every day as they labored, but they continued to believe that, somehow, their children might fare better than they had in life. And yet, even amid a scene that made clear to me the misery of descending into the brickfields' pits to mold and cart wagonloads of bricks day after day, children still laughed and played in the "schoolyard" before and after their own work duties. Their parents, illiterate and innumerate themselves, were deeply grateful for the possibility of a better future for their children. It is nearly impossible to witness the daily living of such a community and not to have it nurture a deep sense of empathy and a desire to do more to ensure that the children do, in fact, access a better life for themselves.

In my experience interviewing members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective, I learned that peace education is a particularly complicated endeavor when it is informed by teachers' own experiences with being stripped of a sense of common humanity. I am at a loss when I think of what it might mean to stand and face, let alone teach, the children and grandchildren of people who tried to exterminate my family, my children, and me.

What these teachers have committed to is an awe-inspiring endeavor, to be sure, and one that is driven by their desire to prevent future generations from experiencing the same profound suffering that they did. But my experience in Rwanda also left me with a haunting feeling that I am not sure will ever dissipate, nor should it. My experience of meeting the Rwandan teachers, each a survivor of genocide, and of visiting the genocide memorial, haunted me quite profoundly for months after I returned home in the spring of 2014.

The fact that the teachers, as children, had their core identities attacked as worthless and had witnessed horrific violence against their own family

members, meant that their teaching was driven by a need to prevent history from ever repeating itself. Many of the teachers experienced profound interruptions in their childhood and their schooling due to both what they needed to do to survive as well as to the emotional impact of the trauma they had experienced. In a more external sense, there was also simply a lack of facilities available for schooling purposes. Becoming teachers as adults has allowed them to contribute to, as well as turn on its head, the system that failed them as children, in order to ensure a better, more unified future for today's Rwandan children. Often, the schools that these teachers had themselves attended were vehicles of racially based hatred. That is something they are determined to combat as adults and as members of the global profession of teachers.

Systemic barriers very often operate in opposition to goals of this kind, much like they have been operating in both the Rwandan schools and also in the Bhutanese refugee schools that I visited. In the case of the brickfield schools in Kolkata, the recruitment of fully qualified and talented teachers has been starkly limited by the impoverished, remotely located facilities. The truth is that masterful teachers do not tend to take up opportunities to teach in such harsh environments because, frankly, they have alternative options. While the alternatives to teaching may be limited and the tendency might be to suggest—what else could they do?—my experience is that the brickfield schools' teachers, members of the Rwandan Genocide Teachers' Collective, or the program managers and educators who work in the Bhutanese refugee camp schools could probably find work that is less emotionally and physically exhausting than teaching is.

It was heartbreaking for me to realize the degree to which, even in the midst of laudable United Nations intervention in Nepal, aid is given to those who, by hard work, yes, but also by the luck of their born situations and opportunities, are considered to be desirable to the societies providing asylum. There is something profoundly sad and unsettling about the fact that those who are the most disadvantaged to begin with are further disadvantaged when the tragedy of one of the world's largest humanitarian crises unfolds.

The very idea that receiving food, shelter, and access to a quality education are all things that must be doled out based on the attention of media outlets or how useful particular individuals prove themselves to be, politically and economically, is disheartening. It is, unfortunately, a fact that utility is traded for survival. It is not enough to simply be a human being.

For the last twenty thousand refugees remaining in the Bhutanese refugee camps, their futures and educational opportunities were being narrowed by the resettlement of many of the most talented teachers who had initially taken up posts in the camp, but who had also proven to be ideal candidates for early resettlement. By mid-December 2015, during the late stages of the

camps' existence, the point at which the last of the camps' inhabitants were being prepared to transition out, the only adults left were those who were both unqualified and unmotivated to teach.

However, with limited time and resources available to prepare potential teachers, the program managers and school administrators still prepared them to teach. Whether they taught out of either necessity or some sense of obligation, the program administrators of the BREPs resigned themselves to work with whomever was available and at least mildly interested. They preferred, whenever possible, to select those motivated to teach, but they were also forced to take those without much motivation. They would not give up hope for the children's futures.

The teachers, themselves refugees, represented a group of adults who had been passed over for earlier resettlement as they watched family members and others get resettled more quickly. Understandably, they missed their families and friends who had departed. They were emotionally exhausted and in limbo. Many of the remaining teachers were frustrated with a job that they were never fully prepared to perform, tending to children who were in similarly critical situations. They still taught as best they could.

There are two things that are important to keep in mind as you think back to the chapters that you have read. First, it is one thing to experience empathy, but quite another to exploit that empathy for self-satisfaction. You, quite likely, felt helpless at some points as you read. That was not unexpected. The world's problems are vast, and you may have been left feeling that you have limited means to help. It is, however, not a feeling with which you have to stay. It is too easy to feel paralyzed to act and then to simply wallow in despair as a way of alleviating that feeling of discomfort, believing that, as time passes, you will forget about the people that the stories represent. The stories, as well as the challenges that each one represents, are not going away any time soon. We have to do something in reaction to these stories.

A better reaction than paralysis is to couple the recognition of your limitations with an awareness of the individual power you have to make a difference. You can also open your eyes to recognize the collective power that you have as a worldwide profession—a collegium—of educators. You may not be able to go teach in a brickfield school in Kolkata, but you are able to greet the children in your classroom, arming yourself with knowledge about the importance of global citizenship, and a deeper understanding of the lives of migrants. You can find colleagues who share this commitment and work together to connect local school-based programs to support initiatives like the brickfield schools. The cost of educating a brickfield teacher through a two-day professional development workshop is about three dollars. This is little more than what is costs to buy a cup of coffee.

You do not need to have the courage to face the children and grandchildren of the génocidaires who savagely butchered your family as the Rwandan teachers I interviewed did. But, you do possess the ability to find the courage to forgive your students' parents and colleagues who may have said things that have deeply hurt you. You can reach across the differences that exist in our common humanity—political, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious—and commit yourself to teach in a way that acknowledges the inspiring words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who said: *all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly*.

And, while there is no doubt that the financial and human resources required to support an effective teaching and learning dynamic are limited and shrinking in the Developed World, you do possess the capacity to find innovative ways in which to collaborate with colleagues from across the world and to grow professionally and interculturally. What is most important is that you can lead the global profession by example. If you are one of countless teachers in an intercultural classroom, you can both support students by enacting empathy and a willingness to learn about those aspects of various cultures that are unfamiliar to you, and you can help your colleagues to learn to do the same. This is, in itself, a life calling.

The second thing to keep in mind is this: it is okay to notice the hope in these stories. Do not feel guilty that you found a sliver of light in the midst of darkness. Guilt is an anchor that holds us down and disables us. In fact, finding a glimmer of hope is essential to understanding the experiences of the educators I interviewed and the lives that the stories represent. Please let that hope inspire you. However, please make sure it does not leave you apathetic and inert because you have read about how unfair life can be. Do something to change the social realities that you see in front of you and that you have concluded are, in some distinct ways, simply unfair. Go out and do something to make a difference.

All of these things that I have outlined as goals for teaching, I wrestle with myself. Becoming globally and interculturally competent has not been an easy journey. I have made mistakes, more than I wish to acknowledge. You are bound to do the same. Accept it, and try anyway. If you feel exhausted by the work involved, take a break. Rest a little while and catch your breath. But then, as soon as is humanly possible, get back at it. Education is an incredibly powerful force for good when it is used as such. But, teaching interculturally requires effort and commitment. Do not forget that fact. Recognizing the potential for marginalization and oppression in xenophobic forms of teaching is key to ensuring that our apathy does not allow hatred to come in through the back door of our classroom practice.

It may sound insincere to thank you for reading this book, but I do want to thank you—and I mean it. I am in a privileged situation, being a researcher who can fly all across the world to visit various educational contexts, gather data, and then come back home to my own comfort and write about my experiences. I feel that my work would be in vain if I did not try to share it as widely as possible. For the sake of all those teachers who are in difficult educational contexts and could not otherwise reach you, thank you for taking the time to hear their stories, as filtered through my own experience as they might be. And please, let your experiences with their stories encourage you to combat the social and political divisions that exist in your own educational contexts and in the communities in which you work. Work hard to find ways in which to reconcile the broken social relationships that exist in our diverse world. Find unity without requiring uniformity from everyone. Accept that narrow definitions of social uniformity are undesirable and harmful. Allow for the diversity in a large global family of human beings—the diversity of the teaching profession—to exist without descending into idiosyncratic fragmentation that shouts out: "We have nothing in common." The reality is that our shared humanity and decency are the bonds that bind us together.

Last, as teachers, fight for greater justice and peace. In your classroom, in your school, in your community, in your nation, and among nations. Make justice and peaceful coexistence a priority. Peace is always worth fighting for. And, while you might not change the world, I can guarantee that you will make a positive difference in someone's life. It might even be your own. Trust me.

Epilogue

As I think back to the time I committed to connecting with the dozens of educators that I was fortunate enough to meet and to work with on these research projects, and the years it took to bring their stories to this stage, it is obvious to me that aspects of the ethnographic fieldwork and the participants' stories are indistinguishable from the social fabric of my own life. In fact, this intertwined existence was both an asset and impediment to writing this book. On a few occasions, it caused me to wonder where my life as a *scholar-educator* and researcher ended and where my life as a *private citizen* began. I never did clearly delineate the two in my mind.

As I wrote the early drafts of this book, I recalled that I was once asked, after I gave an academic presentation about my work in Nepal to a group of colleagues that I worked with but who by most accounts knew very little about me and perhaps even less about my research program:

"Why do you travel across the world to spend time in and also live in some harsh locations and work under difficult conditions?" The professor honestly inquired.

The question seemed to be asked with tone of sincerity, but it also echoed with an air of serious skepticism about my self-interest and motivation in taking on this kind of work.

Before I could answer the interrogator added, "One of the things you said is that you became quite ill after each one of these trips. Why do it if it costs you so much?"

I struggled to find an intelligible answer. The question was clear and articulate. Admittedly, a simple response eluded me.

How do I, or should I, reply? I wondered.

The only answer that I could come up with was the one that I delivered awkwardly to an interested scholarly audience. I offered that people, especially people who have suffered from conflict or who are under forms of oppression, need allies who can help them to get their stories out into a wider sphere. They need people who are committed to bring their experiences and their stories, out of the shadows and into the light.

Admittedly though, any narrative, ethnographic account is also an interpretation of the social involvement of the researcher in the field of study. When I addressed my scholarly audience, I added to my response that I realized that I could neither capture the *fullness* nor the *exactitude* of a picture of the complex social lives that I was studying. All the same, I told them that I was committed to try and represent what I was able to offer. It's all I could offer. And, yes in doing so it cost me, a little.

I accept the limited effects of my work as imperfect illustrations of the complexity of human life. As Whyte (1964, pp. 3–4) stated, "the researcher, like his informants, is a social animal" and any "real explanation . . . of how the research was done necessarily involves a personal account of how the researcher lived during the period of study." It is clear to me that I sought out being and becoming involved in the lives of some of the world's oppressed and marginalized, and tried to oppose the notional temptation to pretend to maintain a convenient scholarly fiction that supposes a detachment between the research and the informants. These supposed *informants* are, in fact, *all my relations*.

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About the Author

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