

DECOLONIZING UNESCO'S POST-2015 EDUCATION AGENDA: GLOBAL SOCIAL JUSTICE AND A VIEW FROM UNDRIP

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ABSTRACT As education actors gather to review the failure of the 1990 – 2015 global Education for All (EFA) agendas to achieve their goals of universal delivery and access to education, there are few new ideas being submitted on how to change directions. This study brings together the two worlds of UNESCO's Post-2015 Education Agenda and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights on Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in a policy encounter that not only highlights the colonial legacies present in global education policy but suggests how renewed efforts for EFA might be a decolonizing contribution if UNDRIP was taken as a starting place for policy development. It is my objective, in this article, to provide a de-colonial and anti-colonial lens on the processes, objectives, and aims of Post-2015 EFA, as well as to propose some alternatives that could enhance global education goals of equity and enhanced citizenship and democracy.

KEYWORDS Global, decolonizing, anticolonial, UNESCO, UNDRIP, Indigenous

Introduction: The Two Worlds of UNDRIP and UNESCO's Education For All (EFA)

With the failure of the global Education for All (EFA) agenda to achieve its goals for universal access to education (UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2000), it is interesting to watch as global and local education actors assemble to construct the next version, the Post-2015 Education Agenda (Post-2015 EA), as it is being called. While there are some noticeable changes **including**, for example, the much more visible participation by countries like

the Republic of Korea (host of a 2015 Global Education Conference, as well as a 2013 Technical Consultation on Global Citizenship Education) and Lithuania (President of the Council of the European Union), the key processes of coming to a “global” agenda reflect many of the same actors and ideas as with other EFA goal-setting attempts. After 25 years of EFA goals, it is time to try something new, if the potential of education as a path of freedom and wellbeing for communities and citizens is to be realized.

While many people who have analyzed EFA over that period have concluded that its real agenda was to shift national policies to fit neoliberal ideologies and open a massive market to eager transnational corporations (see for example, Shultz, 2010; 2013) and that the agenda, as well as the whole system of decision-making and education provision, is colonial (see for example Abdi, 2012; Abdi & Shultz, 2008), there are also important justice reasons for advancing a global understanding of education that will provide a platform for decolonizing education goals, policies, and implementation. It is my objective, in this article, to provide a decolonial and anticolonial lens on the processes, objectives, and aims of Post-2015 EA, as well as to propose some alternatives that could enhance global education goals of equity and enhanced citizenship and democracy.

I will do this by bringing together two global policies and in the second part of the article, describing the subsequent policy encounter as read through a decolonizing theoretical framework. The analysis is informed by Fanon’s description of the anticolonialism required to divest our lives of the racism of colonialism and how it placed goodness as only possible in the realm of whiteness (1967). Walter D. Mignolo (2000; 2009) along with other decolonial writers like Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) and Catherine Odora Hoppers and Richard Howard (2011) describe the deep onto-epistemic divide created by colonialism as an *abyssal line*, where knowledge of any significance to humanity was seen to exist only in the “western” mind. What is needed is a decolonizing of the global landscape of knowledges to *decentre* western thinking to make visible those epistemologies hidden by colonialism. In this process, it is an anticolonial politics that acknowledges the racism and sexism of colonialism and the violence done to

uphold the colonial project that is required to decolonize any encounter that claims to be *global*.

The two policies, UNESCO's "*Concept note on the Post-2015 education agenda*"¹ and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (UNDRIP, 2007)², exist as if in two different worlds. UNDRIP was adopted in 2007 after nearly two decades of negotiation. The focus of the declaration is on the development of international standards, as well as national legislation for the protection and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights, an agenda motivated by interests in improving the almost universal economic peril with which indigenous people live; the need to challenge structural racism and discrimination that work against indigenous people throughout the world; and the impact that a lack of autonomy has in keeping indigenous people marginalized economically, politically, and socially. UNDRIP proposed a significant shift in understanding human rights, what Evans (2008) described as the next generation of deepening human rights, to include collective rights, cultural rights, and rights to self-determination.

Of course, as negotiations and ratification of UNDRIP proceeded, there were compromises made to bring the many disparate actors together. Some of the controversy was about the idea of self-determination. The African Union (AU) worried that any new movements of indigenous self-determination would lead to a more fragmented continent and the loss of any post-colonial gains in independence from colonial powers. Tribal conflicts in African countries have been used to further many local and global/ internal and external agendas of oppression, so the AU pressed for a definition of self-determination that did not mean a right to statehood.

African indigenous struggles, as well as those in Latin America, centered on demands for decolonization that would lead to more autonomy, and economic and social justice.

For indigenous people in much of North America, who already identified as independent nations, their struggle was how to make human rights claims in societies operating as liberal democracies for non-indigenous people, but working as

¹http://en.unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2015/files/UNESCOConceptNotePost2015_ENG.pdf (Post-2015 EA),

² http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

colonial societies in relation to indigenous people. Overall, the demands in UNDRIP are both anti-colonial and liberal, asking for indigenous peoples' freedom to pursue economic, social and cultural development and resist any action by external actors to control their lands, resources, institutions, and livelihoods. While the struggle is not new, the hope is that a global framework might add policy legitimacy and solidarity to the anti-colonial work that indigenous people are doing around the world.

The Post-2015 EA is the result of several responses to the failure of the global Education for All initiatives. Since 2012, UNESCO has been the coordinating agency for Education for All activities and it now hosts the Post-2015 education policy and processes. It initiated several consultation processes, international and inter-sectoral, to respond to, if not develop, the framing of a global agenda to support planning and delivery of education.

Much of the framework is familiar territory with reference to *quality education, education for a culture of peace, lifelong learning for all, education for sustainable development*, all themes and strategies that emerged over the past 25 years of EFA. The Post-2015 EA suggests that the failure to achieve the 1990 and 2000 EFA goals should be linked to the lack of targets, indicators, measureable outcomes, and evaluation, as well as the problem of the too focused target of access to primary education (See Post-2015 Education Agenda, p. 4-5). "The new post-2015 education agenda should therefore be broad enough to encompass a holistic approach to education and mobilize all countries and stakeholders around a common education agenda that would be applicable and relevant to all countries" (p. 5).

The contradictions for implementation of the Post-2015 EA are significant. The contrast between calls for more targets and measurements at the same time as a call for a more holistic approach reflects the struggle to control this global agenda. That it is embedded in a neoliberal and liberal democratic framework is significant. Throughout the document, there are references to the importance of focusing education on *the individual*, the direct link of education to economic goals, and education as a tool to develop human capital, as it is referred to in neoliberal discourse (See Post-2015 EA, p 5 - 7). The fundamental assumptions of the

agenda are that, as a global agenda, all individuals and states will be assimilated into the institutionalizing of the Post-2015 education goals and their implementation. This agenda is liberalized through the apprehending of the idea of education as a universal human right. It is clearly not the same understanding of rights put forth in UNDRIP. Noticeable in their absence are references to the many efforts of educators contributing to anti-colonial cognitive justice, decolonized education policy (spaces, knowledges), or the recognition and rights of indigenous people.

When indigenous people are left out of policy, by excluding any authentic representation, recognition, or even visibility, it is impossible to view such policy as legitimate, particularly when it claims to be global. If the global community, assembled to address education, is serious about any of its statements about equity and the importance of education to solve the issues that face us on this planet, then surely, the inclusion of UNDRIP as a guide would be evident. How would this change a post-2015 education agenda? How might a global education agenda, informed by and affirming the rights of indigenous people in all parts of the world, enhance the wellbeing of people on this planet?

A Global Social Justice Framework as a Decolonizing Lens

One of the first places that an anti-colonial analysis makes its demands is in the acknowledgement of the location of the territory, people, conditions and analysis that people use. Having said this, it is important to highlight that what is *local* is not separate or disconnected from what is *global*. The overflowing of discursive arenas, sites of struggle, and exchange of ideas and materials, across boundaries of space and time are well documented. Even the legacies of European colonialism, that continue to structure international relations, serve to highlight the blurring of boundaries of global and local. Global policymaking creates the possibility of a decolonizing space for making visible the knowledge, experience, contributions, and demands of people cast to the periphery by powerful elites who enact their entitlements to declare what is universal and what is particular, without having any understanding of how others are made invisible by such declarations.

With the deep connections that globalization has brought, for better or for worse, there has been a turn toward *the decolonial* in globalization scholarship and global education. We see more emphasis on practice that troubles modern liberal constructions of equality and inclusion, and contributes to understanding how global policy knowledges, spaces, and actors continue to enact colonial patterns that are racist, imperialist, and paternalistic, all destructive to civilizations' wellbeing (See for example, Andreotti & de Sousa, 2012; Jefferes, 2012; Khoo, 2013; Odora Hoppers, 2009). These patterns are addressed differently in the *two different worlds* of the Post-2015 EA and UNDRIP.

The frame of global social justice provides conceptual and communicative categories to use to understand complex contexts, structures, and relations of injustice. Fraser (1996; 2007) suggests that justice must be understood through more than distributive considerations or how benefits and burdens are shared within a society. Rather, an analysis that nests together the conditions of (re)distribution, recognition, and representation provides us with a way to frame situations of injustice.

In what Fraser (2007) describes as abnormal justice conditions, "the decentering of the distributive 'what' renders visible, and criticizable, non-economic harms of misrecognition and misrepresentation. Likewise, the denormalization of the Westphalian 'who' makes conceivable a hitherto obscure type of meta-injustice, call it 'misframing'" (p. 57). While an equitable access to education is the "what" in this discussion of justice, it is the invisibility, a profound form of misrecognition, and the enduring assumption that the elite can speak for indigenous people (cast as a marginalized, anonymous *they*), a profound form of misrepresentation, that informs the questions about injustice and the misframing of the claims of indigenous people in this study.

If participative parity (Fraser, 2007; 2014) is one demand of justice, it will be important to note that in 2009-2010, UNESCO rather quietly removed references to *democracy* from its goals and themes. While democracy is always a site of contestation and struggle, from a global social justice frame, the removal of democracy signals a significant shift in the "who" (recognition) and the "how" (representation) of the initiative. How could a global policy for the provision of

education deal with the expanded contestation and necessary democratization needed to achieve equitable access to education?

One way this has been resolved in the Post-2015 EA is to make the individual the focus of the policy suggesting that it will be the educated and empowered individual who will succeed in the global system. This highly neoliberal view of society, education, and what is needed in the world, highlights how the misframing in this policy marginalizes the rights of indigenous people. Missing also is the role that education plays in social development through citizenship education and the myriad of relations held within the concept and practice of *citizen and citizenship* (Coulthard, 2014; Dryzek, 2002; 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2008), including among states, publics, fellow citizens, and with all living beings on the planet.

In *Red Skin, White Masks*, Greg Coulthard (2014) challenges liberal readings of the role of the state and that the state is in a legitimate position to categorize and *recognize* indigenous people. Instead, he draws on Fanon (1963; 1965; 1967) to reject liberalism's recognition that supposes the dominant group (dominating the democratic state) creates the categories to which the marginalized/ colonized person or group must react (see also Weber Pillwax, 2008). Instead, categories and acts of existence and relations must be founded on processes of self-affirmation, "critical individual and collective self-recognition" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 131). Categories of citizenship, as defined by current governments, exist within colonial histories, structures, and the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2000). "In situations where colonial rule does not depend on the exercise of state violence, its reproduction, instead, rests on the ability to entice Indigenous peoples to identify, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly asymmetrical and non-reciprocal forms of recognition either imposed or granted to them (Coulthard, 2014, p. 25).

Policy Study by Creating an Ethical Space for a Decolonizing Policy Encounter

An encounter in the space between UNDRIP and Post-2015 EA, each with its own macro-actors and local actors,

highlights how both policies work. In fact, the distance between the peoples' demands expressed in the two policies highlight the dual nature of colonialism: the objective and subjective (Abdi, 2008; Fanon, 2008; Coulthard, 2014). Stability in the global system of capitalist colonialism created subjects of colonial rule through categories that worked control the people encountered in the colonized places. The construction of categories of racist (mis)recognition were used to turn the colonized populations into less-than humans, invisible in the equations of equality championed by the liberalism of the colonial powers.

Both UNDRIP and Post-2015 EA have their own statements about their agenda for justice. Again, these statements stand as if in two different worlds. Ermine (2007) describes an ethical space that can exist between two disparate worldviews when they are poised to engage each other. It is this space *between* that is the location of the dynamics that make the change toward justice possible. The space between global actors and local actors is not a rigid space but one that is dynamic and constantly being remade. Actors also shift from locations of *betweenness* and *withinness* as difficult knowledge is encountered, subjectivities recognized, or retreat becomes necessary. The image Ermine uses to describe an ethical space comes from Poole (1972). In a photo of a Czech peasant and a Russian soldier sitting on a public bench during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, Poole identifies that the story is in the space between these two actors. They have a shared history but it is the space between them that holds what might be their future. Such is the case with the worlds presented in the two policies in this study, and it opens our thinking to what might be possible when we bring them together to understand how the policies work as colonizing and decolonizing what is possible in education.

Processes of Encounter

The policies exist within a wider context and the stability of this context, for example, capitalist colonialism, appears to work as a unified structure but in fact, it requires constant remaking to give it stability. By studying the process of a *policy encounter* we can understand what Bruno Latour (2008;

2009) and Tor Hernes (2008) describe as durability in systems and how they are sustained and strengthened through multi-scalar processes of enrollment. “Internal actors [are] able to significantly influence the outcomes of a [case] by speaking with the voices of their chosen institutional macro-actors” (Latour, 2008, p. 74). Through processes of encounter and translation, particular policy knowledge is made legitimate. Of course, this is a heavily contested site of struggle where some local actors (having been enrolled as actors and legitimized by their macro-actor connections), point to the indisputability of macro-institutionalized logics and the actors who espouse these logics (who are in turn created and made legitimate by the local actors). Latour argues that “macro-actors tend to be perceived as facts in themselves, and this confers upon them a temporal stabilizing force. Therefore, although they are perpetually in the making, they are treated as ready-made entities with certain characteristics” (2008, p. 77).

Three areas of stability: assimilation, neoliberal capitalism, and representation, and how they work, are surfaced in this policy encounter.

Encounter 1: Assumption of Assimilation

UNDRIP is very clear in its framing of the rights of indigenous people within the histories and legacies of colonialism, a context that continues to create immense problems for all relations (settler, colonial, colonized). The declaration begins with statements affirming equity and the dignity of difference. The right to be self-affirming forms the foundation of this document that reflects years of discussion and negotiation among indigenous people and also with members of the UN system. Article 13 to 15 are important examples to use in a policy encounter with the UNESCO Post 2015 EA:

Article 13:

1. Indigenous people have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal, and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means. (p. 7)

Article 14:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language. (p. 7)

Article 15

Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. (p. 7).

Both the universalism and the liberal notion of assimilation that are at the foundation of the UNESCO policy keep UNDRIP invisible, even as the policy is designed to create education that includes indigenous children. In this policy, the categories of actors reflect the division between powerful decision-makers and the marginalized recipients of education while suggesting a universal education agenda (UNESCO2014; 2015). In the UNESCO policies, actors are created and cast into authority and obedience roles through the development and (future) implementation of the policy. The boundaries of local and global become blurred in the focus on universalism. While much in the Post-2015 EA speaks to important issues, for example, equitable access and good quality education,

what these mean in practice is really a matter of how the actors are positioned by and in the policy and its context.

By bringing these two policies together, I don't want to set up the UNDRIP as a post-colonial project that speaks back to or responds to the Post-2015 EA. This would require a return to the demand that indigenous people continue as the objects of the recognition of the non-indigenous. Instead, a decolonizing encounter *in the space between* can surface how a call for universalism shifts from the *intended* equity and inclusion focus to one of misrecognition and a demand for assimilation given the legacies of colonialism. This misrecognition makes it impossible for indigenous people to participate in the ongoing (re)making of the world or what Jean Luc Nancy names as *mondialisation* (2007). The injustice continues as we see how the non-participation becomes translated as deficiency of the indigenous individuals and communities rather than the context and policy. Indeed, indigenous people have a right to education of high quality but this can only take place if the context of this education is a decolonizing context where indigenous people are engaged as full participants based on their self-recognition and not on the categories created and applied by non-indigenous people.

Encounter 2: Neoliberalism and a Capitalist (Neo)Colonial Structure

The Post-2015 EA sees “a humanistic and holistic vision of education as fundamental to personal and socio-economic development” (p. 5). It aims to help people “meet their basic individual needs, fulfill their personal expectations and contribute to the achievement of their communities and countries’ socio-economic development objectives” (p. 6). The document continues with many references to individual empowerment and personal achievements but no reference to educational goals for communities and societies, for relations of justice, or for citizenship. There is little reference to knowledges that are beyond those for skilling a global mobile workforce. Too often, the education statements are taken only for their words and not the deeper meaning connected to their context. The Post-2015 EA goals speak to the level that neoliberalism is embedded in UNESCO. The very significant

focus on *the individual* and the primary connection of education to the global economy are ideas that gained dominance in the post-Washington Consensus era (after 1989) as the International Financial Institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization) became the dominant agenda setters for all national governments. Of importance, in this study and the policy encounter of Post-2015 EA and UNDRIP, is the fundamental difference in underlying values and how individuals and their communities are interconnected as their economic, social, environmental, and political needs are met. Given the universalism of the Post-2015 EA policy, we see that the policy encounter must once again begin by listening to indigenous peoples. There are several important UNDRIP Articles that provide a clear challenge to the universal, capitalist system for which the Post-2015 EA was designed. It is evident from the UNDRIP introduction onward, that the experiences of indigenous people with the global economic system have been re-colonizing. The policy articulates how indigenous people will approach relations of economy, coloniality (which here is mainly about territory, land rights, and decision-making), and the links among health, education, and wellbeing from indigenous perspectives. Neoliberal economic/ financial decisions that give corporations rights to access resources without consideration of environmental, social, or local economic impacts, will fail the indigenous people of the world, as will economic policy that requires a mobile global workforce or an education policy that strives to educate a global labour force.

UNDRIP acknowledges and seeks to transform the ongoing suffering of indigenous people due to dispossession of their territory and resources. A policy encounter between the UNDRIP and Post-2015 EA would provide the space to listen to indigenous people and redirect the education policy to reflect non-colonizing relations with particular attention to the following Articles of UNDRIP:

Article 20:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain their own political, economic, social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of

subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.

2. Indigenous peoples deprived of their means of subsistence and development are entitled to just and fair redress. (p. 8)

Article 23:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Article 26

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop, and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. (p. 10)

3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories, and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions, and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned. (p. 10)

Article 28

1. Indigenous people have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation for the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior, and informed consent. (p. 10)

Encounter 3: Invisibility, Silence, and Misrepresentation

One of the most basic conditions of global social justice and of global citizenship is representation or as Fraser (2014)

suggests, participative parity. This involves both inclusion (the *all affected have a right to be included* principle) and parity that refers to processes of equitable engagement, access to agenda setting and speaking (including being heard), and to the access and right to question others (p. 27-29). It is significant in this analysis that there is an absence of any reference in the Post-2015 EA to the participation of indigenous peoples in any policy processes or procedures. Even as the developers of the EA state their intentions of providing universal education to people who are marginalized, justice is not served if people remain the objects of someone else's efforts (even if these are well intended) in place of authentic participation and representation at decision-making tables. Indigenous people express clearly (in UNDRIP and a multitude of other venues) that all settler-indigenous relations must be based on the self-determination of indigenous people as equal agents of policy and change. This is particularly important in policies that have a global impact such as Post-2015 EA.

In addition to the problems of exclusion, policies that claim to be universal, particularly when this universalism is a statement from the centre in unbalanced *centre-periphery relations*, sustain indigenous peoples' invisibility in the policy processes (and certainly other aspects of the life viewed from a *centre of power*) when these policies reflect the values, principles, and conduct of the dominant class or group. Invisible groups are not included groups, even if they are deemed to be members of general categories (for example, the poor; the marginalized; the uneducated) when the dominant group has established these categories.

In this policy encounter, listening to indigenous peoples' calls for justice is the necessary beginning in an ethical encounter. While participation, representation, recognition, and distribution are all nested and interconnected in a justice perspective, understanding the need to transform exclusion and then *listening* deeply can open the possibility for new understandings of what justice will be.

The following UNDRIP Articles are a call for participation:

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions. (p. 8)

Article 19

States shall conduct and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adoption and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them. (p. 8)

Article 27

States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs, and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories, and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process. (p. 10).

Re-writing An Education Agenda as a Decolonizing Act of Global Citizenship

If we were to rewrite the Post-2015 EA after an ethical encounter with UNDRIP, what might emerge as new foci for a global education agenda? Perhaps as the most basic level, UNDRIP would be visible and take its position as a UN declaration to inform the working of not only UNESCO, but also the wider global education agenda. In this act, UNESCO would be refusing to perpetuate the invisibility of indigenous people and the silence of multilateral agencies. Recognizing the deep discrimination toward indigenous people put in place through colonialism, UNESCO stands to lead by including not only the knowledge of this history, but perhaps more profoundly significant, the knowledge that indigenous people

have about the world and how to live sustainably. Given the profound global environmental issues we face, this seems an urgent place to initiate a global education agenda.

From here, alternative economic strategies will develop, some that are already reflected in global policies, but also alternatives such as those referred to as *green economy*, *gift economy*, or an economy based on *common wealth* (Evans & Reid, 2014; Lewis & Conary, 2012; Maathai, 2010; Odora Hoppers & Richards, 2012; Smith & Max-Neef, 2011;), all challenges to the idea that (colonial) capitalism is the only legitimate way to frame economic relations.

In the introductory sections of Post-2015 EA, the Status of the EFA Agenda is discussed. If the UNDRIP were taken seriously, commitments to decolonize the global agenda would become a thread throughout the document. Drawing on the UNDRIP Annex (p. 1-4), there could be several important principles that would lead global education policy efforts. As a starting point, the recognition of a fundamental interconnectedness and the necessity of diversity for life on the planet that winds its way through UNDRIP will help locate discussions of education for economy and skill development into a much more holistic idea of the role of education.

The need for education to play a key role in decolonizing can be brought into a global education policy and have a profound effect on countering the enduring racism and discrimination that non-European people continue to experience as part of the legacy of colonialism. UNDRIP provides the foundation for this: “Affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust” (p. 2). Not only will this open the way for education based on a global cognitive justice (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Souza Santos, 2007), but it will also support a radical recognition of the knowledges that exist and have always existed in non-European locations. This changes the content of education, and also demands a reconstruction of educational foundations, policies, and systems.

Of course, one of the key ideas to be challenged is who are legitimate education policy actors and knowledge holders.

The whole of the EFA process will be understood differently through a decolonial commitment that “[recognizes] the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic, and social structures, and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories, and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources” (UNDRIP, p. 2). It is important to note here that UNDRIP is not calling for what Walter Mignolo (2000; 2009; Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012) describe as *dewesternization*, a process where the global system is kept the same but the players are moved around, with non-western actors (state and private) moving into the dominant positions. Instead, a decolonial commitment recognizes indigenous knowledge as that which can contribute to practices of “equitable development and proper management of the environment” (UNDRIP, p. 3). A global education policy that takes such ideas seriously stands to contribute to the transformation of many of the world’s relations that sustain the vast social and economic inequality and environmental destruction that frame our future on the planet.

Conclusion: Decolonizing global policies and global social justice

This study has attempted to bring together the *two worlds* of UNDRIP and Post-2015 EA to provide a conceptualization of how a more sustainable and just global education policy might emerge from such an encounter. The two frames for this encounter-- decolonialism and global social justice-- suggest the Education for All efforts will be better focused when they are based on the recognition that local communities know how to solve their problems and the global community can support this by ensuring that global policies reflect and protect the diversity of people and their livelihoods in all parts of the world. This must include support for indigenous communities in their move towards self-determination by working collectively to remove structures of oppression and racism that continue to impede the wellbeing of indigenous and poor people around the world.

Global policy can support indigenous people in their national drive to negotiate a place at the table and in building

a more inclusive process. This will also include other marginalized voices left out of the mainstream of a globalized/globalizing economy (for example, small farmers, women, and small business owners).

A global education policy can provide an important foundation for a decolonial future, based on pluriversalism rather than universalism (Mignolo, 2000; 2009). The principles of global justice, including environmental, social and economic justice, should begin with a recognition of the territory, location of knowledge, and the impact that the history of colonialism has had on understandings of what is legitimate knowledge, wellbeing, and sustainable livelihoods on a finite planet. Any global policy should ensure that there is an agreement with indigenous people as the original knowledge holders and landholders. Of course, here, it is important to recognize that a naïve approach to these relations is also problematic. Indigenous / non-indigenous relations are at a particular point in time when, while more people recognize the legacies of colonialism, they must also recognize that indigenous people are not a homogenous *group*, to be categorized once again by outside actors.

As with all people who are marginalized in the frantic drive of the globalized economy, consensus is not the starting place for engagement. All global policy must at all times, be facilitated and held by processes that ensure participative parity. While some argue this is inefficient in terms of time when urgent agendas are being explored, surely a look at the failure of the EFA from 1990 to 2015 will suggest that a more inclusive policy, although demanding new participatory designs and methods that locate power in new arenas and bodies, is certainly worth the effort.

One of the most significant contributions of a new global education agenda could be the emergence of a new process for authentic engagement, based on the ethics and principles of global social justice. The possibility of a global education policy that draws on UNDRIP might prepare people much more able to ensure that life is sustained on the planet, that the important knowledge held by indigenous people is not lost to a capitalist knowledge economy that desires only technology and consumerism focused ideas, and that education contributes to the total wellbeing on and of the planet.

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