

Education as Enabling Right: The Need to Incorporate Data on Forcibly Displaced Women's
Access to Education in the GEM Reports

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Abstract

This paper argues for a change in policy regarding what is to be reported in the annual Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Using Datnow and Park's Co-Constructionist framework, the paper looks at the multiple, overlapping contexts within which the GEM Report is developed and notes the critical absence (policy of omission) of reporting on a significant underserved population; forcibly displaced women. It argues that the inclusion of reporting on this particular population will better enable UNESCO to achieve its educational goals.

Introduction

The 2016 release of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) represented both the result of 72 years of global education policy development and the first step towards obtaining a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (UNESCO, 2016a). This report is a policy document with international ramifications. The policies of what indicators to use, what data to collect and what “progress” should be measured impact educational quality and access around the world. This paper seeks to situate the current GEM Report within both the historical and contemporary contexts of global education policies and to recommend changes to future iterations; in particular the recommendation that the policy of ignoring a specific population (forcibly-displaced women) in the GEM Report be rectified to include acknowledgement of the unique education needs and promises of this group.

The analytical framework of policy co-construction will be used to unpack the multiple ways in which the construction of this accountability report is influenced. In understanding the ways in which this report is both a result of and creator of policy, it is hoped that the significance of particular gaps (a particular policy of omission) within the 2016 iteration will become clear. The paper ends with a recommendation to fill this reporting gap so that the stated goals of the greater policy agenda will become more attainable.

This paper will begin with a brief overview of the co-constructionist policy analysis perspective as illustrated by Datnow and colleagues. It will then provide a basic overview of the policy in question (the decision to not include accountability reporting data on a particularly underserved population – forcibly-displaced adult women). A (likewise brief) overview of the overlapping contexts and power structures surrounding the current state of this policy will shed light on both reasons why this particular policy decision was made as well as some reasons why it should be changed.

Context

Theoretical Framework

A Brief History. The work of policy analysis has a long history. According to Honig (2006), the academic study of educational policy implementation “emerged in the 1960s” (p. 5). Analysis at that time focused on the fidelity of policy implementation – how well were the policies from policymakers implemented by those charged with the implementation (the “top-down” approach). Once analysts realized that the implementation of policy was actually influenced by a host of on-the-ground (or “street-level” [e.g. Lipsky, 2010]) factors, analysts began to examine policy implementation with a reversed “bottom-up” approach (Honig, p. 6-7). The realization that both those at the “top” and those at the “bottom” influenced the ways in which policies were implemented led to analysts researching policy implementation from the perspective of “mutual adaptation” (p. 7; Datnow & Park, 2009, p. 349). The current state of analysis appreciates the “complexity” of the policy development and implementation process (Honig, p. 9-10). As Eppel (2009) eloquently states:

policy processes are understood as complex social systems in interaction with other complex social systems. These systems consist of large numbers of interdependent and self-referencing participants, interacting with each other in ways that are nonlinear, influenced by prior experiences, and unpredictable in any precise sense. (p. iii)

Datnow and Park (2009) further embrace a co-constructivist approach that elaborates “on the interconnections between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation” (p. 350).

Co-Construction Perspective. Policy analysis using Datnow and colleagues’ perspective accepts that reality is something that is constantly being socially constructed and re-constructed by participants (see Fairclough 1992, 1995, 2001, 2013; Saarinen, 2007, 2008). According to Datnow and Park (2009), the co-constructed perspective treats the direction of

change as multi-dimensional (p. 349; see also Alexiadou, 2014; Datnow, 2006; Mehan, Hubbard, & Datnow, 2010; Park & Datnow, 2017). Policy formation and implementation are seen as one interconnected process where the actors are constantly creating and re-creating the policy as it is enacted. A key component of this perspective is that intergovernmental and socio-political relationships are an inherent part of this process. Central to the analysis in this paper is the importance given to “political and cultural differences”, particularly in their relationship to power dynamics involved with policy (re)creation (p. 351). Datnow and Park also note that the “wider social and political dynamics existing *outside* the policy system” are of importance (*italics original*, p. 351). As will be noted throughout the analysis below, this perspective “views organizations as embedded within successively contextualized layers...or planes of interaction...but it extends the context to include the broader social system and political economy” (p. 351). Eppel (2009) explains that there is a complex interaction between knowledge, power and identity. The exercise of power is the end result of a process of knowledge formation in which certain social processes are legitimated” (p. 18). As will be illustrated here, the production of the GEM Report is an exercise in power as UNESCO (having been legitimated through various social processes) decides what knowledge counts as it presents its report on global education “progress.” The policies of what counts as progress as well as what data to include (and what data to ignore and/or exclude) are decided within complex and overlapping socio-political contexts.

The Policy under Consideration

A brief history. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created in 1945 (Milestones, n.d.). In 1948, the organization recommended free universal and compulsory primary education be introduced into its 20 member states around the world. Since then, the organization has been a prominent source of global education policy, empowered by its member states. An inaugural *Education for All (EFA)* conference was held in 1990. In 2000, UNESCO (with the rest of the United Nations) reaffirmed a commitment to the ideals of the EFA agenda. This agenda was complimented by the development of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals which included global goals for education. In 2002, the first Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report was produced by UNESCO to report on the progress towards the goals of the parallel EFA and MDG education agendas (UNESCO, 2016a, p. vi).

In 2015, the UN ratified a new set of global goals for education which were incorporated into its new international agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG #4 is to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, includes ten primary targets (see [Appendix A: SDG#4 Targets](#)), and is the basis for the 2016 GEM Report (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 6). In 2016, the first GEM Report of the new SDG “series” was published. This report tries to make it clear that, although these reports have historically served as policy documents to guide global education policy development, this new report is opening the dialogue up to input from around the world (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 12).

The GEM Report repeatedly mentions current gaps in the overall Sustainable Development agenda and frequently exhorts readers to engage in dialogue regarding ways to fill these gaps with additional research. For example, the report acknowledges that “[m]any important concepts in the 10 SDG 4 targets are not yet covered by any proposed indicator. Among those that are covered...details remain to be fixed in the indicators” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 170). The report further notes that “many, if not most, major issues in education are context-specific and difficult to generalize or compare” (pp. 175-176) and that “both national and international reporting need to adjust to enable monitoring of the growing diversity in student attendance, programme delivery and private provision patterns, which have implications on inequality in access” (p. 231). The argument of this paper is that the policy to not include a very specific population (forcibly-displaced women) should be reversed. As will be explained below,

the lack of acknowledgement (or policy of omission) of this particular underserved population should be rectified. This argument is in alignment with the desire for input expressed by the authors of the GEM Report.

Current Environment

The majority of literature reviewed for this paper was purposefully narrowed to research published between 2014 and the present. The switch from the MDGs to the SDGs in 2015 represents a particularly unique moment in global education policy. This moment is of interest as the UN made a concerted effort to include more voices in the discussion and development of its global development agenda (e.g. Sachs, 2012). As an organization, it actively sought feedback from those who had historically not been a part of the discussion (with varying degrees of success as evidenced by the literature reviewed below). The 2016 GEM Report is a reflection of this as it was published, in part, “to contribute to the initial building blocks of the sustainable development agenda” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 12) and asks readers throughout to contribute to the agenda through dialogue about ways to measure progress and suggest steps to achieve the SDGs.

The Problem with the Current Policy of Omission

The potential power of this policy. Park and Datnow (2017) note that “[t]he use of data, especially accountability data, has led to both promising and problematic practices...[it] has been associated with improved outcomes [and] can be a powerful tool to push [policy changes]” (p. 283; see also Alexiadou, 2014; Faul, 2014; Hák, Janoušková, & Moldan, 2016; Kezar, 2013; Sachs, 2012). Each indicator, measurement, dataset and commentary about methodologies to promote progress towards SDG#4 represent specific policies of inclusion. The decision to include, or to not include a piece of data indicates the importance (or unimportance) of that piece of data. Saarinen’s work on persuasive presuppositions within policy documents (2007, 2008) is instructive. She notes that policy documents use presuppositions, which “set the assumed common ground, which in turn sets the frame of interpretation of texts” (2008, p. 341). This assumed common ground can be very persuasive as these texts can then “represent and construe competing views of the world as common sense and self-evident” (p. 344). In the case of the GEM Report, the decisions regarding which data to include vs. which data to exclude have significant ramifications. When those working towards achieving the various parts of the Sustainable Development Agenda see that many groups are represented through specific indicators, sets of data and conversations about how to improve access (e.g. refugee youth, young girls in poverty) the assumption is that these groups are important. A related assumption is that other groups (e.g. forcibly displaced adult women) do not matter; particularly if they are not even mentioned! As will be illustrated below, the various overlapping contexts that the policy decision to omit this group was made in are complex, multi-faceted and represent various structures of power; notably structures of power that this particular group are not generally a part of.

The potential power of including this population. Data throughout the 2016 GEM Report and supplementary *Gender Review* show that successes in achieving the majority of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are tied to the ability of women to access education. Women’s access to education “is important for female empowerment [that leads to] positive outcomes in health, nutrition, sanitation and energy, and between generations” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 13). The report notes that:

[i]n addition to educational opportunities, five other domains help frame the discussion of gender equality in education. These include gender norms, values and attitudes (many of which can be influenced through education); institutions outside the education system; laws and policies in education systems; resource distribution; and teaching and learning practices (p. 264).

While the GEM Report focuses at length on providing education to girls (e.g. Targets 4.1, 4.2), adult women are not specifically targeted.

An overlapping population that is highlighted in the GEM Report is that of forcibly displaced populations. The report notes that notes that “**Forcibly displaced** populations are among the most neglected” (bold original, p. 254) and that “forced displacement tends to lead to gross violations of the right to education” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 271). The report asks readers to consider ways in which to collect information “that identifies individuals as members of...vulnerable groups such as people...who are forcibly displaced or speak a language other than the language of instruction” (p. 256). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its 2016 report “Missing Out” noted that “[a]lthough some protracted refugee situations have lasted more than two decades, refugee education is largely financed from emergency funds, leaving little room for long-term planning. Traditionally, refugee education does not feature in national development plans or in education sector planning” (p. 5). This UNHCR report notes that only 1% of refugee youth access higher education (compared to 34% of youth around the world) (p. 31). It is notable that even in this document which focuses exclusively on refugees the focus is on youth in general. It does not disaggregate by gender. It leaves adult women out completely. Furthermore, the term “refugee” has a specific legal connotation and excludes millions of forcibly displaced individuals who have not obtained the legal designation of “refugee” (see [Appendix B: Definitions](#) for more information about this). The UNHCR (2016a) “Figures at a Glance” page notes that in 2015 there were 65.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide in comparison to only 21.3 million “refugees” (UNHCR, 2016a)¹.

This particular oversight is especially troubling given recent headlines about the increase in female-headed households among forcibly displaced populations (e.g. a 2014 report from UNHCR that over one quarter of refugee families from Syria are headed by females and 85% of these female-headed households were between the ages of 26 and 59; generally beyond the traditional age for higher education²). These women have assumed responsibility for the economic provision of their families; often without education background appropriate to the labor market (see Dryden-Peterson, 2016, 2017, and Talbot, 2013 for in-depth discussions of the challenges facing the provision of education for refugees; including the current lack of support globally to face these challenges).

Analysis

These monitoring reports are not created in a vacuum. As pointed out by Datnow and colleagues (albeit on a more local scale), education policies are developed and implemented in complex, interconnected contexts. This section will briefly describe some of these contexts with an eye towards highlighting some of the power structures that may influence policy decisions on what data to include or to omit. Kezar (2013) points out that there is often opposition to changes in policy due to the vested interest of current policy actors with maintaining the status quo (p. 161). As will be illustrated below, many actors have interests in the GEM Report focusing on some aspects of global education policy over others. Very few actors in these interconnected spheres of influence seem to have an interest in promoting educational access to forcibly-displaced women.

Overview of Social and Political Dynamics outside the Policy System

Datnow and Park (2009) state that the “co-construction perspective...build[s] upon the importance of context in the mutual adaptation view by elaborating on the interconnections

¹ Dryden-Peterson (2017) states that “in 2014, in 33 protracted conflicts globally, the average length of exile was 25 years” (p. 15).

² The “traditional” age of those included in generally-available statistics (tertiary enrollment: 19-23, tertiary graduation: 25-29; UNESCO, 2016a, p. 230).

between actors and explaining just exactly how context has shaped policy implementation” (p. 350). The GEM Report is produced in a global context which is composed of multiple characteristics that are “outside”³ the core of the UN system. The neo-liberal perspective of education supported by a global education industry is one major aspect (e.g. Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). Demographic changes and protracted conflicts exacerbated by climate change and global inequities also influence the UN policy system (e.g. Talbot, 2013). Increased (often forced) migration and a history of colonialism exacerbate many of the issues that the SDG agenda seeks to overcome (Hirsch & Malylea, 2016; McCormick, 2014; UNHCR, 2016a, 2016b). Gender equality is a significant aspect of each of these parts of the larger context. These outside dynamics will each be touched on briefly. Throughout the rest of this section, it should be noted that much of the recent literature acknowledges the multiple, interconnected spheres of influence that have created the Sustainable Development Agenda and its related policies.

Neo-colonialism and Pressures to “Dialogue”

As noted above, the GEM Report is filled with requests for input and for dialogue. The process of designing the “post-2015 agenda” (transition from the MDGs to the SDGs) very consciously included many efforts on the part of the United Nations to seek input from around the world (Benavot, 2016; Sachs, 2012; UNESCO, 2016a). In addition to developing a global agenda for both developed and developing countries (as opposed to just developing countries), those involved with designing the SDGs went around the world to talk with those who might be impacted by the new agenda with mixed results (Faul, 2014; Holden, Linnerud, & Banister, 2016; Rugg, 2016; Sachs, 2012). A major criticism of earlier UN-related development goals (e.g. the MDGs) was that the global development agenda was designed by elites in developed countries to “help” undeveloped countries; often through providing expensive policy advice and provision of services⁴ (McCormick, 2014; Verger et al., 2016). Many saw the MDGs as a neo-colonial attempt to retain the previous colonial power relationships among and between countries (McCormick, 2014; Esser & Ha, 2015).

Neo-liberal Perspective of Education

Education throughout the SDGs is often portrayed as a means to an economic end. Verger et al. (2016) point out that “the rhetoric surrounding global education reform often conflates individual and collective economic benefits of schooling” (p. 7; see also Sachs, 2012). This is exacerbated by what Verger et al. (2016) call the Global Education Industry (GEI). This industry is

a structured social space with its specific institutions, forms of agency and power practices; in this space, different actors struggle for the expansion, transformation and/or reproduction of the field, as well as for having an advantageous or dominant position in it. Despite being open to the participation and involvement of a broad range of actors, a field is far from a flat terrain but a three-dimensional space. Not all the actors have the same power and capacity to mobilize the different types of capital (social, economic, symbolic, etc.) that are necessary to achieve their objectives within the field in question. (p. 11)

³ Eppel (2009) reminds us that “[a]ttempts to explain policy processes more holistically come from a methodological base that recognizes the permeability and arbitrariness of boundaries and the multicausality of policy processes and an array of elements needed to understand them” (p. 31). Thus, even though these aspects are “outside” of the UN policy system, they are also a part of the system in many ways.

⁴ In one example, “the majority of the 30 per cent of [funding] allocations from development partners are in the areas of high quality policy advice” (McCormick, 2014, p. 178).

Within the GEI, for-profit and related entities such as Pearson Education, Laureate Education, the International Finance Corporation and others partner with organizations such as UNESCO to obtain legitimacy and access to markets. Such partnerships provide UNESCO and member states with global sources of funding and technical advice. In return, these organizations obtain access to global markets and an important veneer of charitability (Verger et al., 2016; see also McCormick, 2014; Mundy, & Menashy, 2014; Mundy & Verger, 2015).

However, there is also a strain of dialogue discussing the ways in which education can provide more than just economic benefits⁵ (e.g. Guinée, 2014; Stromquist, 2015; UNESCO, 2016a, UNHCR, 2016b) and even arguing that having a focus on economic development in and of itself is counterproductive (Holden et al., 2016; McGrath & Powell, 2016; Sayed & Ahmed, 2014).

Demographic Changes

The 2016 GEM Report was produced in the midst of significant demographic changes around the world. Many lower-income states are experiencing a “youth bulge” where significant members of their populations are very young (and often unemployed). As with the Arab Spring in 2011, this particular population dynamic can lead to civil unrest (Talbot, 2013; UNESCO, 2016a). In contrast, many developed states are experiencing significant greying of their populations which puts extra strains on social welfare and support services. In many of these states; particularly in the European Union, this is leading to civil unrest as well (UNESCO, 2016a). The increase of migrants and forcibly-displaced persons are both a result of these demographic shifts and causes of further civil unrest as these populations move into areas already burdened by demographic challenges (ibid.).

Role of States

The UN is composed of “member states” – countries that have legal partnerships with the organization, and thus with each other to further the goals of the institution that, in theory, have been jointly agreed upon through a complex series of negotiations and agreements. The majority of methods for achieving (and measuring progress towards achieving) the SDGs are based on the roles that member states play in developing and achieving the global education goals. At the global level, states are encouraged to provide access for their citizens. Data is then collected and progress is often measured at the level of the state. However, given both the increase in stateless people and the historical legacy of colonialism, this particular aspect of the policy context is problematic (McCormick, 2014; UNHCR, 2016a). In addition, the lack of binding commitments by states weakens the overall impact of the agenda (Biermann, Kanie, & Kim, 2017). The GEM Report includes an entire chapter on *Partnerships: enabling conditions to achieve SDG 4 and the other SDGs*. This chapter (Chapter 6) focuses on civil society and the private sector with a large focus on finance.

Why this Policy May be Harmful

Although composed of 535 pages of dense text, graphs and statistics, the 2016 GEM Report is remarkably incomplete. While it provides the outward appearance of a coherent and well-researched policy document, its continual exhortation for further dialogue is recognition that without more input, the SDGs will not be met by 2030 (see also Winthrop, Anderson, & Cruzalegui, 2015). The continued focus on access to education for females (including the development of the *Gender Supplement*) reiterates that without more input into this component the SDGs will be even harder to reach. The lack of data (or even acknowledgement) on the access of forcibly-displaced women to education is a significant oversight, with the

⁵ See Akua-Sakyiwah, 2015 for a good illustration of the ways in which education can empower refugee and migrant women through the provision of important cultural capital.

consequences growing as the number of these women increases (and as they increasingly find themselves as the heads of displaced households responsible for the economic and social well-being of their families for many years (Dryden-Peterson, 2016, 2017; UNHCR, 2016b).

Recommendation

Suggested Change to Policy

The suggested change is simply to include data reporting on the access of forcibly-displaced adult women to (primarily higher) education, regardless of their country of origin. Although much reporting and funding is done at the level of the state, the often stateless situation of these women does not abrogate the duty of the global community to provide for their access to relevant and high-quality education. Although there may not be immediate profit to be made by the Global Education Industry, the long-term effects will lead to increased markets for education services as their children are more prepared to enter the formal education sector. The GEM Report notes that “education is both a fundamental human right and an enabling right, i.e. it enables other human rights” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 8) which are essential to the success of the rest of the goals.

Benefit(s) to the Education System

The UN was created “[t]o save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind...And for these ends:...to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples” (United Nations, 1945). The link between access to relevant, high-quality education and peace is enormous. Given the importance of education in achieving the SDGs, it seems extremely short-sighted to neglect a population that has the potential to be particularly impactful. If UNESCO changes its policy in regards to providing data on this unique population, a number of beneficial outcomes may occur. The first is that this population will be seen as important. The persuasive presupposition will become that this underserved group of people matters; that their access to education is of value and is, perhaps, even necessary in order for the rest of the Sustainable Development Agenda to be met. This visibility (and increased importance) will make it easier for those throughout all of the interconnected systems to include this population in their work. The next, very important, result would be that data could begin to be collected. This could have the effect of helping to guide more of these women to register and qualify for refugee status. This would help their children access schooling and their families to access financial services, healthcare and additional legal protections. Colleges, universities and even vocational programs would recognize that this population exists, needs access to their services, and could provide unique educational programs. This means that Pearson Education (for example) could develop assessments and trainings for a whole new market. Entities such as the IFC, donor nations and even the UNHCR could redirect some of their resources in ways that are better-integrated across sectors. The end result would be that the children of these women would be more likely to access high-quality schooling themselves; an important goal within the overall Sustainable Development Agenda.

Conclusion

Education “emerged as the top priority among the more than 7 million people who contributed to the United Nations’ MY World survey of 2015” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 172). The creation and implementation of policies simultaneously describe the world, create and recreate the world, foreground problems (which narrows “the space for alternative views”) and thus “perpetuate some political views of social reality” (Saarinen, 2007, p. 18). The decision to include data (or even just recognition of this unique group) will perpetuate a different political view of social reality. The GEM Report reminds us that “education is both a fundamental human right and an enabling right, i.e. it enables other human rights; that it is a public good and a shared social endeavor, which implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and

implementation; and that gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education for all (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 8). This right goes beyond both the individual and social economic benefits. It includes the right to a world where children have mothers who are educated and have access to labor markets, where they have access healthcare and socio-cultural capital so that their children can live healthier and longer lives, gain access to high-quality education, and fulfil the promise of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals so that "all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment" (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 65).

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Appendix A: SDG#4 Targets

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.8 Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- 4.9 By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.10 By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

Appendix B: Definitions

Definition of Terms

As this research seeks to provide guidance to those involved with the GEM Report, the terminology used in this paper follows the definitions used by this report where appropriate.

Education Levels

Education levels in the GEM Report follow “the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which is the classification system designed to serve as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics of education both within countries and internationally” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 493). To avoid confusion, this paper will refer to ISCED levels 4-8 as “higher education” in general as is common throughout much of the literature. This will be done, in large part, as one of the goals of this research is to inform the dialogue about access for women to tertiary education *including* post-secondary education opportunities (level 4).

Education levels according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which is the classification system designed to serve as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics of education both within countries and internationally. The system, introduced in 1976, was revised in 1997 and 2011.

- Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4). It provides learning experiences building on secondary education, preparing for labour market entry as well as tertiary education.
- Tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-8): It builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. It comprises:
 - Level 5: Short-cycle tertiary education, often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. It is practically based, occupationally-specific and prepares students to enter the labour market.
 - Level 6: Bachelor’s, often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification.
 - Level 7: Master’s or equivalent level, often designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification.
 - Level 8: Doctoral or equivalent level, designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification.

Source: UNESCO, 2016a, pp. 493-494.

Forcibly Displaced Individual

The UN provides very distinct definitions for terms such as migrant, refugee and forcibly displaced individual with legal implications for each term. According to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution.” This is in contrast to migrants who “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons” (UNHCR, 2016). The GEM Report does not talk about adult women migrant or refugee access to tertiary education. When referring to applicants who have provided evidence of refugee status, the term “refugee” will be used. When referring to applicants who have simply indicated that they have moved in order to pursue their educational goals, the term “migrant” will be employed. When in doubt, the term migrant or

“forcibly displaced individual” will be used, depending on the reasons provided for their relocation.