

**WILLS KALISHA**  
Norwegian Teachers Academy, Norway

**“WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR? OR DOES IT MATTER WHAT IT IS FOR? EXPLORING THE MEANING OF EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE GIRLS IN DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**

**Abstract:**

The priority for people displaced during war and crises is to find safety, food and shelter. Once these have been achieved, they look at the future of their children, a process that births diverse educational programs. Education then, becomes a futuristic endeavor by adults towards children. The question being asked by researchers and humanitarian organizations in emergency contexts is “should an emergency education focus on short-term and immediate relief, or be conceived as a long-term objective”? (Kagawa cited in Wright, 2011, p. 29) Should education mitigate or exacerbate the conflict? What is education for, especially for refugees in protracted conflict situations where there are no clear signs or hopes of ever returning home? Moreover, what is it not for? There seems to be a tension between what education should be for and what it is yet to be. That is, to culture and adapt students into the pre-existing orders of society (sociological function) and the acquisition of skills and knowledge that helps students to qualify for jobs or enter the job market, (qualification function); and what education is not yet, that is what it will deliver in the future. The futuristic view seems to be more plausible because of the promises it hopes to deliver. What is missing in these constructions is a correlation of functions and purposes of education in building up a student to become a unique individual capable of being a holistic person. The discussions of what should be or not be the function of education seem to avoid experiences of students going through the same education. I will endeavor to discuss the purposes of education as distinct as they are, that is sociological, qualification and subjectification as proposed by Biesta, (2010), (the process of becoming a unique subject), and while at the same time trying to provide a middle ground of what education is in the tension between the functions. This middle ground shall be explored through a hermeneutic phenomenological study methodology by use of fieldwork interview material and other literature.

**Keywords:**

Education, Pedagogy, Refugee, education, Hermeneutic phenomenology

**JEL Classification:** I29

## Introduction

Education in emergencies is often taken as a second priority after basic needs or as “a fourth pillar of humanitarian response” (Zeus, 2011, p. 258). In protracted situations, many humanitarian organizations campaign for all children to be educated in order to fulfill the Education for All (EFA) goal especially at basic levels (Wright, 2011). Therefore education is seen as a right<sup>i</sup> that every child should be given especially basic education without discrimination (OCHA, 1989; Wright, 2011; Zeus, 2011). As a right, it is to be given to every child in order to develop “the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (OCHA cited in Wright, 2011, p. 29). The emphasis is on psychosocial development of children, putting them in school ‘to secure’ them from being recruited as child soldiers, to give them an opportunity to interact “with peers and trusted adults with opportunities to be creative and to share concerns and issues in different ways” (Kirk & Winthrop 2005, p. 715). All children need a secure environment to feel loved and appreciated and to be able to study. But once in school, the good concerns of seeing this troubled child in her own uniqueness shifts to an emphasis on what school should be able to offer to them. Though the children are not paying for their schooling, they are made to feel how it would have been to pay for this education and that education is costly for what it offers to them in the future. The language of well-being and psychosocial development is replaced by a managerial approach that insists on outcomes and fulfilling preset goals and objectives. This language socializes students into the already existing educational programs without consideration of their local realities, which (INEE, 2010, p. 5) calls a “nuanced approach”. At Dadaab Camp, which hosts refugees mainly from Somalia, children are neither taught their culture nor the Somali educational curriculum at secondary school level; they are taught a Kenyan curriculum. This is an 8.4.4 system which requires 8 years at primary school level, 4 years at secondary school and another 4 years at university or middle level colleges. At secondary school level, it is centered on educating Kenyan students to deal with Kenyan realities; appreciating the cultural diversity of the Kenyan society; equipping young ones with relevant skills useful beyond this level of learning; developing an appreciation for other nations, a critical inquiry and problem solving abilities (Eshiwani, 1993). The experiences of girls are very important in explaining what education should be for them before theorizing and analyzing what we think it should be for. It is in these experiences that I take my point of departure.

I ask phenomenologically, what is the experience of being educated like for these girls? Do they see any meaningful purpose in education in such tough circumstances? The phenomenology that I am adopting is one that is oriented towards practice, one that thrives in the lived experience of students and teachers as they interact with students (Van Manen, 1990; Sævi, 2005). I am concerned with a phenomenology that is attuned to keeping the unspoken situations in education open for questioning, which

varies significantly from other methodologies that seek to offer solutions to research questions. Therefore,

[T]he phenomenological approach to education... includes an understanding of research exactly as a reflexive understanding beyond the research activity as such in order to maintain the phenomenological lived quality of the particular educational situation and to acknowledge a personal and cultural remembrance of what it means to be a child and young person. The relation between phenomenology and education requires a responsible remembering of the character of educational situations and an awareness of the logic of educational practices as being self-sustaining and therefore only partly researchable (Sævi, 2014).

I explore in a reflective manner how education is experienced at school, home and informal settings by the participants and allow the meanings from their experiences to emerge. The participants (8 girls and 6 teachers) in this research were drawn from three secondary schools in Dadaab refugee camp located in Kenya, about one hundred kilometers from the Somalia border. The participants were chosen for who they are-girls who have studied for more than two years in the refugee schools and teachers who have taught for more than two years in refugee schools.

I have categorized this paper into three sections; I introduce the paper with a discussion on the meaning of education as a qualifier for job markets or from the refugee camps into 'a better' life elsewhere. I wonder on the issue of elsewhere, and how this elsewhere is coined to be better than the here which matters most if education was to be of any significance and how it influences the schooling process. On the second part, I attempt to discuss the question of socialization by re-thinking the myth of identity and belonging that is associated with socializing students into the already existing structures. Finally, I discuss subjectification as a possibility for seeing children as unique and distinct as we educate them. I propose that education is a weak subject (Biesta, 2013) that needs to be seen from its weakness, for in seeing it thus, we are able to allow it to ask it's own questions without being influenced by other disciplines.

### **Measuring what we value or valuing what we measure – Qualification and education**

The leader of the majority in the Kenyan Parliament, commenting on the poor performance in his Garissa County where Dadaab refugee camp is located said: "Our Kenyan children are working hard and performing at their best in both KCPE and KCSE. But our mean grades in our schools are being pulled down by schools in the refugee camps which perform dismally," (Jubat, 2014).

Zinabu, a student in my inquiry reflects on the complexity of what it takes to become whom she wants to become and reach where she wants to be;

The effort we apply here is what will get us the scholarships. If I don't get a scholarship, it's like I am nothing, a failure and a loser in life. I will be a big shame to my teachers, parents and society. They will look at me and wonder why I wasted my time in school. None understands what we girls go through to attain the needed grades. Even if an agency was to employ me here, in the camps, they will only pay me 5,000 Kenyan Shillings; they can't pay me more because I don't have the right papers. I am a refugee! Such money is nothing in such hard economic times. But with the scholarship, I am able to go to America or Canada or Australia and study and gain a better education. I know one day I will leave this camp; Yes, I want to. My marks at the moment are worrying, but I have to, in order to live a better life. Like I have a neighbour whose daughter got a scholarship, they were very poor here in the camps, they used to have neither goats nor camels. When she went to Canada, she finished her school and started working. She sends them money, and they have so many camels and goats and are living a good life. When I finish my secondary school, I want to pass exams, get a scholarship, go to Canada and make my family better<sup>ii</sup>.

What disturbs and unsettles the desire to live the camp in Zinabu, is the fact that she needs to perform and get good grades. The passage out of suffering, poverty, risk of rape and death is hinged on the ability to be educated. What if education was not available in this camp, would she still come out? Is education only seen to produce what is relevant for the market or to be consumed? The idea of education as a passage of skills and knowledge relevant for success in life or a successful life has permeated all spheres of schooling thanks to UNESCO, UNHCR and the Anglo-American conception of education. In this perception, education is seen to be a means to a desired end (Biesta, 2010). That end must be a good life; how good the life is or should be is defined by getting out of poverty through a better job after going to an institution of higher learning and learning a skill or a trade or a profession. In this kind of thinking, students are seen as by-products of education, which is a commodity to be bought, and therefore parents need to be given value for their money (Ibid). This means, therefore, that education conceived this way is not seen in totality but as a place where teaching and learning occurs, where learning is seen as an "attempt to liberate the learner – first and foremost from the teacher but also from the wider educational system" (Biesta, 2010, p. 541). Biesta sees in this kind of language an insufficient problem, where the learner is defined in terms of "a lack". Which is like a label to them, that they are not yet there, not yet where they are needed to be. Children must learn, teachers must instruct learners! In his recent writings, Biesta, (2013) continues to lament over this language of learning. He says that it "obscures crucial dimensions of educational processes and practices – that is, aspects of content, purpose and relationships" (Biesta, 2013, p. 64). Education is a risky affair. It involves teachers who do not know who the student that has come to learn is. Standing before these students to teach them involves being tactful to know when to say what and how to say that which the teacher wants to say. To expect that what we

are teaching will be taken seriously and applied is a risk. No one knows how the information taught will be used and whether it will be understood in the first place. But if education is seen as learning, then its content is obscured, that is it is seen in terms of what benefits it will give to this student, other than how relevant it is to their being and becoming. Thus, the content will be learned for purposes of answering specific questions asked in the examinations. The purposes of coming to school ceases to be one of upbringing and child-rearing to that of what will happen at the end of education (outcomes). The worry and anxiety of how the students will perform is transferred from the teacher to the student. The teacher worries because if the students do not pass then her teaching is put to question; the student worries because she does not want to be seen as a failure and therefore a shame to her parents.

How do we impart skills and knowledge needed for students to gain their self-worth when our concern is their marketability? In a typical day at school, most of the girls travel for about forty minutes to school. They pass through thickets and dusty roads which are dangerous inhabited by desert wild animals and equally a haven for rapists. Most have witnessed the brutal death of their parents or siblings during war; have walked long distances from Somalia to Kenya for safety and throughout the journey suffered starvation and lost their relatives and close family members to death. They suffer hunger and humiliation and are branded as lazy people who cannot work on their own yet at the same time they live in a desert, a place unsuitable for any form of farming. They cannot work and fend for themselves in the refugee camps, and if they try, they are restricted by Kenyan laws that recognize them as refugees who cannot acquire a working permit. So the least they can be paid as they work is approximately 60 dollars a month which is insufficient for their needs. While in school, they are expected to come early irrespective of where they are travelling from and what their hardship lifestyle; everything in school is timetabled; they are supposed to pass exams and at the same time attend to domestic chores. They rarely find time for school work yet they are supposed to perform well in the exams. As teenagers, they are at a ripe age of being married culturally. They are bombarded by very difficult choices from every angle of their life. If they reject school, they choose marriage not by desire but by force. If they choose school, they have to pass and hope to get a scholarship to a third country in order for them to be seen to have qualified in life. What choices are we leaving for them?

Teachers on the other hand are burdened by heavy workloads. In as much as they would want to care and be concerned about who this child is and shall be, they are supposed to deliver an already pre-set and benchmarked curriculum. Failure to achieve a certain target set by the school boards means they have failed themselves, their students and the school. They have to set behavioural objectives to be achieved while teaching. For example a maths teacher is supposed to have such like an objective: "Presented with 10 exercises of the sort  $\frac{2}{5} + \frac{1}{3} =$ , students will add fractions with different denominations up to 24, give the answer in lowest terms, and get at least eight of the ten correct" (Noddings, 2005, p. 4). The insistence is on the

measurability and specificity of the objective. What this implies is that, teachers will yearn to craft as careful as they can, objectives but never achieve them since class situations are unpredictable and hard to measure. How can we measure such when the teacher is the only one who has a text book, instead of using the time to teach, s/he uses the time to write everything on the board for students to copy?

Bollnow, quoted in (Wivestad, 2008, p. 320) says, "In education a free human being [...] approaches another free being in a challenging way". On one hand, there are expectations by the institutions that the teacher represents, on the other, there are personal expectations and intentions that the teacher has on him/herself and his/her students. He meets students who are not pre-determined, not pre-set but those who are incomplete (also not those to be fixed), and sometimes ambiguous. Some students come not with a mind-set to learn, but to be there in school, while others want to learn. Some need motivation, others are self-motivated, others need to feel secure and ready to do whatever task the teacher gives. What ought the teacher to do?

For Zinabu, "when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing" (as quoted in Henriksson, 2008, p. 24). She sees in herself a failure, when the world of success is the only one that is created by teachers and those in authority. Her being a refugee is in itself a hindrance to any opportunity she might want to get. She is seen as a Somali, even a possible suspect of terrorism by Kenyan authorities if she moves from the camp to Kenyan cities. She is seen to "embody the violence that created them. *Refugees* are feared and Othered as though they were that violence itself" (Kumsa, 2006, p. 241). Could their encounter in class with the teacher be a possibility for a pedagogical relationship? The teacher encounters difficulty both in trying to teach such a girl whose mind is set on a hope of passing exams despite the odds. The difficulty involved in trying to understand who this child is in her uniqueness and foreignness provides us a safe, ethical ground for a pedagogical relationship. It calls for a responsive, thoughtful sensitivity to the foreignness that appears and veils itself at the same time from our view. Sometimes our lived childhood, which exists in the past (Sævi, 2011), appears in our relating and dealings with children. Knowing that this relationship naturally ceases to exist could put constraints to what life holds for the future of the child. The teacher's role then is to help the student "define his or her life purpose" (Sævi, 2005, p. 241), and inspire a pedagogical hope that is attuned to waiting (Marcel, 1967, p. 280). What remains for her is to hope that she will pass and one day be out of the camp. But hope, a pedagogical hope, that Zinabu should be inspired to dwell in by the teacher is one that is attuned to waiting (Marcel, 1967, p. 280). Here Marcel distinguishes desire from hope, by suggesting that desire rests in the domain of 'having', which is neither patient nor attuned to time. Hope on the other hand waits even when there is "no exit" (pp. 181-280), or where the exits are not clear. There's a desire to be elsewhere other than the refugee camp. One would understand. But who has made *elsewhere* better than

where they are now? When this elsewhere is made, why is education included? Is it included to make elsewhere better that is in the job market and third countries or this elsewhere is already better before being made? Desire as a “having without having” (Marcel, 1949, p, 162), exists to Zinabu and other girls in similar circumstances as a tension between what is ‘interior’- (that is their being) to what is ‘exterior’- (that which ought to be possessed, claimed and is independent of them), (Kalisha, 2013, p. 128, emphasis in the original). This tension is important in identity formation and in responsive pedagogical being with children as teachers.

What is to be possessed or had, like a good job, a better city than Dadaab where there is peace and security and parents are out of poverty; where they can work and be productive, has been inflated in their minds to be the only best option and what they are lacking to make life better. To be educated means to get this that they lack regardless of what it takes even if it is tough and difficult. Yet on the other hand, their being is “mysterious and cannot be reduced to manageable terms” (Sævi, 2005, p. 239) nor can it be seen as an outcome of the educational process but it is part of it. What is to be had is problematic and needs to be solved. Yet the solution available (education), is like a balloon with hot air. As it bulges out, the air becomes hotter and hotter and it bursts leaving behind only traces of what it is made of, tiny pieces of rubber that cannot be recollected to remake it. Who will re-assure them when they fail that their being is not shattered, that their lives are still meaningful when society views them as failures? Yet the school has created all circumstances to be ripe for them to blow-up? Levinas, (1998, p. 3), says “To understand our situation in reality is not to define it, but to be in an affective state. To understand being is to exist”. Will the teacher exist together with this girl irrespective of what her goal is and see her for who she is?

### **To socialize into education system or society? Socialization and education**

How do we encounter children as adults and teachers? What are our intentions in this encounter especially in school settings? In this section I wish to look at socialization from an ontological view, for what it is and as it is and possibly suggest that the weakness inherent in it provides the reason to either think of it as good enough to educational thought and child upbringing or to continue appreciating it for what it is without looking beyond.

Langeveld (1983, p. 6), claims that we do not encounter “others, we encounter each other”. Our encounters with each other reveal partly who we are and what our expectations for each other would be. As adults, we live an already ordered life, one that we have already predetermined and set norms and rules that will govern behaviour to ensure normalcy. When children encounter *us* in school, we meet them as though they are foreign, which they are to us and us to them. Could it be that as teachers our encounters in class are with two children: “the concrete child before *us* and with the recollection of the child we once *were* – the repressed and damaged “inner child.” (Lipitz, 2007, p. 89, emphasis of quotation marks in the original). The

conflict that arises between these two children encountering each other lies in one who has recollection of his/her childhood ordering the encountered concrete child into an ordered life. As teachers it might be true that when we encounter children we live with them as a recollection of how our past was. Of importance to note is that this understanding is a projection of psychoanalysts who see in the teacher a child with revenge to the concrete child as s/he projects the evil done to her and repressed (Lipitz, 2007). In this projection of a repressed self, we perpetuate a generational order existent either in our family, school or society. Is it of importance to consider that the two may appear very foreign to each other? Does it only matter that we are propagating the generational troubles that we once experienced as children? Of course there are numerous examples of teachers who have projected on children what was repressed in them. But I will turn to this at the tail end of this discussion in showing how we can embrace the weakness inherent in socialization for educational purposes.

The child we encounter on the other hand appears twofold, as a student who has come to learn, and this is a “a foreign imposition to the child” and one that is filled with biographical experiences only meaningful to self” (ibid: 89). In a way these two strangers encounter each other in their strangeness, yet the teacher has to somehow forget his/her childhood and help this young as she grows. What is known to the teacher is what is partly revealed by the student in his/her concreteness, but the teacher in most circumstances has no idea of the biographical experiences of the child. Sometimes knowledge of the biographical experiences is important in child rearing, but it is rarely provided in the encounter with the child, it comes as we experience the child for who s/he is. In the process of helping within a school setting we end up socializing children into various orders of society. This is important because it is part of our existence as human beings, we are trained to enter into a certain mode of thinking, scientific world, discipline, punctuality, obedience, high academic performance, enculturing into a rhythm of how to be adults, and good mannerisms and other virtues acceptable by the society in school since schools have this responsibility. On the other hand, we might be homogenizing our children to accept what is already given. To be socialized seems to be an adults adventure in trying to make the young ones be part of a certain culture. As values and conventions practiced by different societies for various reasons, they are part of our “being and doing that over time have become incarnated in our body, senses and movements and thus have somehow come to reside outside our intentional actions.” (Sævi & Husevaag, 2009, p. 30).

At least at the beginning we socialize intentionally but over time, it becomes part of our fabric that never leaves us. It becomes interwoven in our conscience that we do not consciously or intentionally think about what this order means or would mean for a child, but rather we think of how we can make the child suit in the order. In some societies, this has layered the orders to be followed and adhered to until the society has become highly patriarchal making the teacher become authoritative in the sense of being the source of all knowledge and cannot be questioned. In most refugee



schools like the one in Kenya and Bhutan, students look at the teacher as they would look at the religious leader in the mosque (Brown, 2001). Teachers knowledge 'delivered' to students is external to him/herself, it needs to be appropriated as it is without question. Whatever forms of life that the teacher advocates for becomes final. What would socialization be then?

Biesta, (2010, p. 20) sees socialization as becoming "part of a particular social, cultural and political orders", (p. 20). It is a way of welcoming 'newcomers' into pre-existing orders of society. Orders have their "origin in the pre-predicated and pre-reflexive – an origin which cannot be comprehended in terms of order's own norms and rules" (Lipitz, 2007, p. 78). This means that orders appear to us without thought, we do not think or question about what they are, but endeavour to follow the order so that "continuity, regularity and dependability" (ibid:78) about them is upheld. Yet the same orders in their very nature are invisible and unstable. This invisibility and instability, though fluid, makes orders strong and gives them the ability not to be ossified as they are practiced (Lipitz, 2007), therefore making them dynamic and unconfined. This implies that in as much as we plan and prepare for them, they elude us yet demand of us to practice them in concrete situations with children. They cannot be reflected upon, they evade our intentions as we prepare for lessons and our interactions with students but keep on creeping in our discussions and interactions with these newcomers that we are socializing. At the moment of reflecting on them, they cease to be what they are and become objects of our reflection for action, and sometimes they control what we think and do with children. The student is a newcomer both to the school and to the teacher. This newcomer is a foreigner meeting a stranger in the teacher and both of them appearing strange to each other. The school is a strange phenomenon to the child. In fact children in more instances are forced to go to school because of the benefits that the parents accrue to schooling.

The teacher meets the student who in a way has started being cultured to a home life. She sees things that are unspoken at home as taboo yet in school they are normal and should be normalized. "What form of life do we want to pass on to children, and is this form of life really good for *these* children?" (Wivestad, 2008, p. 307, italics mine), Mollenhauer asks. What form of life should she emulate? If she follows the teachers order, school would be bearable but home would be uninhabitable to her. What form of life should we share with children? Is it only the teacher and parents who know what is going on and the child remains a silent listener to every conversation at both school and home? Should children's experiences be considered as we socialize them into the school orders and societal requirements? Here I branch into the concrete and look at an experience which Saida has been experiencing. She is reflecting on her being socialized into an adult life both at school and at home.

What is the joy of being a girl? Is it in your parents getting more camels and goats when you get married or is it in doing the numerous house chores without

rest and time to read? It is my duty as a girl to fetch water and firewood and not my brother. If my brother tries, he will be laughed at and my father will beat me up. During holidays and rest days when we are not in school, my brother goes either to a reading club or to a discussion group to revise and prepare for exams. But I can't because I need to help my mother. At school, there is hardly time for me to read and prepare adequately for exams or the teacher's questions. When do you get that time. Every day is planned and timetabled. The little time in the morning I would have used to prepare for classes, I use it to travel to school. If you come to school late, the teacher will close the gate and you cannot come in. At which moment if you go home it is the joy of your parents to see you around. Sometimes I wish someone could just see us and hear us out, feel what we are going through and give us a chance to be like other children, like boys. Again as a girl here in school, my culture does not allow me to see the teacher alone. I have to ask my friends so that we go as a group. Even if I had a question in class, I cannot ask in a loud voice, I have to lower my voice and ask. Some teachers do not care about it; they say you are shy in speaking. As girls, are we not supposed to be shy when talking especially to men?

Langeveld (as quoted in (Lipitz, 2007, p. 77)), says,

The encounter with the other always means the encounter with the unknown. The unknown can be easily misperceived. As a result, the child can be systematically misunderstood, assimilated to the model of that which is known or familiar, and the unknown will consequently be reduced in terms of the grown-up or the cliché.

Langeveld sees the danger that teachers and child practitioners are in. They schematize and look at children as objects through the lens of sociological, psychological or other disciplines that they engage in. The systematization makes the child foreign, who in actual sense is beyond the categories and systems we see her. This kind of seeing makes education as a discipline to be a tradition in which we insert our subjects into. The students are taught a Kenyan curriculum that is foreign to them. The Kenyan curriculum in itself is still problematic since it borrows heavily from the managerial and client centered Anglo-American tradition. The later sees education as interdisciplinary with an object of study (education). Education is seen as a means to a desired end, therefore it is schooling and what happens in institutions of learning. The idea of the totality of life, of child-rearing (van Manen, 1991) or leading children as an ongoing process from home, school and other places is replaced with a language of managerial and product-oriented thinking, and what goes on in schools. This language emphasizes more on the conditions of getting the desired outcomes, which is skewed towards psychological techniques that influence educational practice such as "techniques of instructions, inducement, and (re)enforcement (Friesen & Sævi, 2010, p. 126). If education is seen thus, we miss the point of allowing us to see the

significance of education in the human, cultural and existential upbringing of children. Rather, in this light, we aim at seeing education in its economic sense, control and success (Kalisha, 2013). This is a view that most Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have adopted in their management in order to get donor funds for continuation of their programs. Can education be defined in a way that it explains what it means to bring up children in such a way that what held cultures and societies can still be kept intact in this process? The way education is explained in the Anglo-American tradition seems to apprehend its meaning, and deposit it in instrumental and scientific laden language. Moreover, in a way we culture and socialize these children into such a tradition and other educational traditions.

Mollenhauer (in Press) asks a classic question, "Why do we want to have children?" Is it as Saida (the girl in the anecdote above) suggests to have wealth (camels and goats as bride price), or is it for work (helping their parents at home). Both of these suggestions by Saida might be true, but the intrinsic call we have as parents or guardians is to show our way of life to children we are bringing up. "But what way of life do we need to show to our children?" Mollenhauer asks. Remember as Langeveld (1983, p.6), adds, that these children "did not ask for this life and therefore they are our task and our life". In the anecdote above, Saida seems to be in an experiential dilemma on what form of life to assume. She even seems to regret being a girl in such an environment where her sense of self is categorized and made foreign. In the sight of onlookers at least for Saida, every eye seems trained on her movements. Her body has become strange and other both to herself and to those othering it. Since most teachers in her school are foreign to her culture and belief, she is acting strangely by lowering her voice in class. But why is she and other girls lowering their voices while boys are allowed to speak as loud as they can? She is supposed to show "a sense of shame and modesty"<sup>iii</sup> (Bokore, 2013, p. 99) while talking to male teachers and those in authority and worse still not to appear before them alone.

### **Identity in socialization**

I ask like Sævi and Husevaag (2007, p. 31), "How does the adult listen, or rather, is the voice of the child 'audible' to the adult, who is somehow experientially ensnared in the conventional atmosphere of the situation?" Is it enough that the child is still asking the 'unthinkable' that makes our bodies shy to respond in the moment of asking? How do we unveil the lid that covers the inaudible sounds in the concealed almost unspoken social convention meant to order them in the already ordered life? The body is shamed; in a lived sense meaning categorized and left out of possible human categorizations. Remember, internationally this girl is categorized as a refugee, one that has been uprooted and cast into the league of nations because of war and persecutions (Kumsa, 2006). Yet this categorization does not fit to her for who she really is. But her being as a self that is described and categorized includes her as a refugee and excludes the other and defines his otherness in terms of what is left out

(Kebede, 2010; Kumsa, 2006). This that is left out could be more superior to who she is, yet they dwell together, live together, but do they belong together? What she is, that which is categorized, becomes foreign, “doesn't fit into available structures, and that even tears through the warp and woof of the textures of the everyday. In doing so, it leaves behind fibers, fragments or traces of the contingent and arbitrary” (Lippitz, 2007, p. 78). In categorizing them as refugees, we exclude them from what is normal such as other citizens who have a country, while them, they are stateless and placeless, ‘constant wanderers in the league of nations. Also in this refugee-ness, we ascribe to them a certain temporal being, one that should be shunned and avoided, lived temporally in anticipation for a better one. Yet we at the same time desire as we socialize them that they should belong to the orders they are ordered to be in.

Since she is a stranger to another stranger in the teacher, she is socialized into being a student, punished for being late and when she goes home, the mother is happy, she will do the household chores. When children ask us why we do what we do, the simple answer we give to them is, “because that is how things are done”. We do not see them as capable of coming up with other alternative ways of being and doing things differently. Do we have any other alternative of doing things differently? Which alternative would be good to the child? If as teachers we can be true to our self and to the being of the child, then we would dwell with them phenomenologically and ask ourselves, what is this situation like for this particular child? What are the possible ways that this situation can become meaningful to the child? But on the other hand, we have handed socialization over to identity and belonging. But who knows the identity of a girl like Saida, who is she and what shall she become? For Saida, being seen in an equal manner like the way boys are seen is a dream of who she desires to be. The knowledge of who she really is and wants to become is marred with “difficulties, instabilities, anticipations, indifferences and possibilities” (Kalisha, 2013, p. 130). Mollenhauer says, “My self-projection and the relationship to it – as well as the projection I make in response to the projections others make about me – pose a problem for me in terms of what I can potentially become” (Mollenhauer, in press, p. 166<sup>iv</sup>). On the other hand, Yuval-Davis, (2010), sees identity not as a fixity. Therefore, who one is becomes a mystery, a challenge and a problem to self. It is riddled in myths and fiction, sometimes hiding itself, other times seeing it only in dreams of the possible self. It lingers on in ones secret moment that separates him/her from the perception of who s/he is to others. Can we ever resolve the problem of identity? Identity is a challenge because, there can be the moment of self-alienation, fantasy or imagination (Yuval-Davis, 2010, p. 272), whose potency of self-destruction or creation of a sense of belonging hangs in the balance depending on how it is dealt with, and how the person appreciates it. Arendt, (1958), argues that it is impossible for man to reflect on his birth (beginning) and death (end). This implies an impossibility to ever create an identity that is complete about a self. But it is possible for one to act on his or her beginnings. What that implies is that our identity develops upon reacting on the challenges presented to us upon starting (Friesen & Sævi, 2010). For young people

growing up, the challenges presented upon self, might be enormous to surmount alone. Realizing that human beings are in a state of formation puts the teacher on the front line. In a way s/he is not to look at identity as a psychological or cultural issue, (though it is part of it), but rather as a pedagogical “problem and/or challenge” (Friesen & Sævi, 2010, p. 16) of growing up, a condition that demands that we try to open up possibilities for identity formation for the teenagers. The implication for teaching especially vulnerable children is that the teacher recognizes him/herself as incomplete, but firmly and gently guides relationally the young ones towards self-growth and awareness. The paradox for the teacher lies in seeing both the child as a being in itself on one end, and a child with potential of becoming on the other (Kalisha, 2013).

### **How then should we see Socialization Educationally?**

Biesta, 2007, suggests that we see the idea of Immanuel Kant (enlightenment period scholar) of education as something that is beyond tradition, post tradition other than straightforwardly seeing it as part of tradition the way it is seen in socialization. Yet its existence transcends any tradition but still is part of tradition. Such seeing does not exempt us from the traditions available, but keeps us in the predicament. We are able in this way to see both the strengths and the weaknesses of socialization as an educational purpose. As discussed above, the idea of socialization is marred with problems since it suggests an insertion into preexisting traditions, a desire to belong and be identified with a social, political, cultural or religious group. The very reason that created the traditions as discussed was that of forming rational beings, to borrow Kant’s notion. Kantian idea of rational autonomy already socializes the individual into a specific way of being and acting. Thus, it secludes those who are incapable of thinking, sees them as outsiders, rejects or newcomers who need socialization, and in here, children are included. This way of seeing has resulted in anarchy in many countries, where some people perceive themselves to be more human than others and has led to the problem of mass killings and deportation of people hence refugees. Nevertheless, if education were to be beyond tradition, what would we see? Biesta suggests that we see not what is in the tradition but what or who is coming to us from the future (Biesta, 2007). This way of seeing places education in the hands of freedom and removes it from the idea of socialization. Here, freedom should not be perceived just as seeing new comers who are capable of bringing something new. Because, in seeing them that way, we might attempt to make them human or rather rational beings through controlled, preset goals and aims, thus seeing them in the future other than from the future. Freedom here implies that which is “undefined” (Ibid: 31). That which is undefined makes us to come to it *again and again*, wanting to realize it more and more. It is precisely in doing so that the interest of education ceases to be a desire to make human by controlling the outcomes through preset goals and aims, but allowing the newcomer to be human, one that we can live with yet not be like them, be different but still appreciate our uniqueness.

This poses a danger to those who would want to control the outcome of children, determine who they will become before they even know who they are. This in a way continues the generational troubles that exist. However, could we ever have a discontinuity in the generation that is still responsible but allows a new generation to be who they are and what they can be? This generational discontinuity is what Levinas calls fecundity (Lipitz, 2007). "Discontinuity in the generations ensures that history does not forcibly repeat itself. Instead, it ensures that the unpredictable can happen"(p. 90). The child is allowed to be him/herself, bring something that is new and not a repetition of what has already been there. Parents and teachers take a "responsibility *that is without knowledge*" (Biesta, 2006, p. 30). (Emphasis mine). We have no idea about what might actually come, and therefore should not believe that we know so much about the child we have or we meet or what our responsibility will mean for this student before we become responsible (Kalisha, 2013). Neither are we leaving children to be responsible for themselves. In other words, we are ready to risk who we are as teachers and what we have (curriculum content and societal expectations), intentions, who we represent for the sake of who is coming to us from the future.

At this point, I now turn to the last purpose of education, which takes a point of departure from the one discussed above.

### **Coming into the world, uniqueness and difference – Subjectification and education**

I would like to introduce this section with a story told by Beritia<sup>v</sup> one of my participants in the main research:

I know Zimani has a child; she has gone through a lot of trauma the last two years. When I noticed her absence from class, I developed friendship with her and discovered her husband had just divorced her. She has to take care of the child alone. She told me, the food ration she was receiving was only meant for her. She could not give her child the same food during weaning. Therefore, she had to find other ways of getting food for her child. Still, be able to come to school and be educated. Her parents who married her off are very poor, the daily portions they receive from UNHCR are not sufficient. She barter her food with the local community for other substances useful for her baby. I have been told of stories of other girls in this school who are doing all manner of things to make ends meet for their children and themselves while remaining in school.

How do we exist in the world with others? Does our existence as human beings (subjects) become a problem for the existence to others? What does this mean to us as pedagogues? How should we see children in their uniqueness and as human subjects capable of their own being? Being is a state that is irreducible to any human thoughts or theorizations. Bachelard, (1964, p. 215) says "being does not see itself". However, is being, as the one of a refugee, a real being or is it a creation of our own

human imaginations; one that we can look at, be with and yearn to make better? In this section with the help of scholars like Biesta and Arendt, I wish to offer a case for education that is concerned or attuned to human subjectivity, especially one that is familiar (for lack of a better word) crisis and difficulty.

How could another teacher have treated Zimani? Would it have been different? What was it that Miss Beritia saw in her that moved her? Is it the suffering Zimani experiences as a student that moved her? In our humanness, we sometimes are moved to act whenever we see children suffering. This girl is a teenager. Some village elders who saw a wife in her rather than a child in need of help and encouragement in the present crisis here robbed her of her childhood.

The idea of subjectivity in education has its roots in the writings of Emanuel Kant, (Biesta, 2010). Kant's idea of a subject was one who is able to be educated and has an "inherent potential to become self-motivated and self-directing" (p. 76). For Kant, as Biesta shows, his idea of education is that it helps in releasing the potential hidden in man to become a thinking being, that is a rational being, consequently becoming a free being. As stated earlier<sup>vi</sup> this kind of subjectifying, excludes those that cannot be able to think. It defines a human subject in terms of the "*what it is*"... than the "*who it is*" (Osberg & Biesta, 2008, p. 321, emphasis in the original). The *what it is*, is the common way in which we tend to describe the *who it is*. Phenomenologically speaking, the moment we want to describe something the way we know it as it is, language betrays us; the thing we are describing evades our grasp and we end up *representing* 'what' that which we are describing is than 'who' it really is. It is like what Arendt, (1958) says, "the moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is [...] we begin to describe a type or "character" [...] with the result that his uniqueness escapes us" (p. 181). A dilemma here is that the *who it is* as noted sublimates and becomes the *what it is*, in our attempt to describe it. To Arendt, the question of *who* someone is, is a question of uniqueness. That is what makes me *me*. The *what it is* as Osberg & Biesta, (2008), see it, closes up all possibilities of ever seeing the subject for who s/he is. In living the question of human subjectivity open, we need to move from *what it is* to *who it is*. By so doing we should endeavor to know the *who* without any prior knowledge, plan or desire to control who s/he should/might be like, which is quite insecure for a control oriented society.

Still, we have not resolved the dilemma of the continuous sublimation of *who it is* into *what it is*. Nancy (quoted in Osberg & Biesta, 2008, p. 332), suggests one way of coming out of this dilemma is "to understand *who* a subject is in terms of *where* it 'comes into presence'" (emphasis in the original). This *who* that is coming into presence, comes to us in an event that is real and unique. S/he who comes "into presence, in other words, only has a 'shape' *in terms of* the space where it comes into presence. It only has a 'shape' in terms of what it *is not*, i.e. in terms of the space itself. Because no two spaces can be the same, the one who 'comes' must also be

completely unique (in the same sense as two spaces are unique)” (p. 332, emphasis in the original). If this *who* has to be understood as a *who* without forcing him/her into the *what*, we must understand that the space s/he is occupying does not fit our categorization of a spatial or temporal space, it is a *worldly-space*, a space that invites us into a responsible-ethical relationship. This *who* comes, is a unique *who*, one, in Arendt's words, is a beginner, a beginner who according to Arendt's notion of action begins when s/he is born. According to Arendt, (1958), this *who*, who is a beginner, must act (by being born) in a public realm where other beginners are present. Our beginning happens simultaneously or concurrently with other peoples' beginning. By so doing we interrupt each others beginning, frustrating each other in that moment. My acting, that is revealing partly *who* I am to others interferes their revealing of *who* they are at the same time. The trouble here is not to try and figure out why the other is not conforming or is unlike us, but to see the other in his/her otherness, that is to remain in the trouble and frustration of the others entrance. This frustration is the very possibility of uniqueness since the contamination of each others beginnings, (Osberg & Biesta, 2008) has the effect of making each and every beginner unique and distinct. Every moment of action is new and distinct, we do not show a uniqueness that has pre-existed before (Arendt, 1958).

We are never the sole author or producer of our beginnings and therefore also not the sole author of the 'who' that we reveal through these beginnings. As Arendt... comments, 'Nobody knows whom he reveals when he discloses himself in deed or word'. The 'who' that we reveal is always radically contingent on other 'who's' with whom we live" (Osberg & Biesta, 2008, p. 322)

The frustrating moment of dwelling with others, seeing ourselves and others act and reveal partly who we are and as we see each other is the only possibility of understanding subjectivity as a *who* than a *what*. For the girl in the anecdote at the beginning of this section, she is in a frustrating moment, a moment where even the institutions that created her being refugee (UNHCR) have no regard for who she is, a teenage mother. They see her as a *what*, a repetition of teenage mothers they have seen before. This seeing frustrates her to the point of becoming other, that is normalizing her being so that it is manageable in the present moment by selling her food even though it is usually written NOT FOR RESALE! Her experiences are unique to her, she lives her being refugee as a possible being for the moment, hiding what is to be hidden (being a mother) to the teachers and revealing what is to be revealed (being a student) to the teachers even though in tough times.

Derrida says: "Once you relate to the other as the other then something incalculable comes on the scene, something which we cannot reduce to the law" (Derrida cited in Biesta, 2001, p. 49). How could Miss Beritia not do anything when this girl in her uniqueness appeared to her? Her presence has unsettled her being from the comfort of the status quo to what is frustrating, that which is beyond calculation, control and is in fact unplannable. It has disturbed her being taken for granted-ness of what a normal



school girl life should be (as she has witnessed in her previous postings down Kenya) and what the girl should be, to who this girl is. She is no longer asking like other teachers asked, “Why has she come to school late and not done her homework on time?” “She can’t even read and write?” “How did she manage to come to secondary school?” However, she has entered the frustrating moment, became responsible without being asked. By so doing, she might open up a “worldly space; a space of encounter with and exposure to otherness and difference” (Biesta, 2006, p. 105). This space is difficult to inhabit, for students as well as teachers. It is unpredictable and incalculable, and is one that makes it difficult to plan and control, like we so often give priority in educational settings. The worldly space where we can encounter others as fragile beginners does not give us room to anticipate it and prepare for it. It is a space that the teacher can only pedagogically dwell in with an ‘indefatigable’ hope (Marcel, 1967), by patiently waiting and patiently giving room for this unrevealed potentials to be revealed and come into presence. Could this be what education is all about? Being weak (Biesta, 2013) by refusing to be controlled and calculated? Is this what a subject of education should be like?

A key question that disturbs me as I reflect on subjectivity is its (im)possibility in such circumstances. I must emphasize that, I am pointing out this impossibility of subjectivity in areas of difficulty like refugee camps, not to justify its absence and inability but to show that in this impossibility and impasse, lies the potential for pedagogy. In areas of emergency and conflict, the people who dwell here are given a unique status by UNHCR either as refugees, or displaced persons in need of special care, especially women and children. The problem is that the “individuals who are recognized to possess subject status, and who are respected as unique, are nevertheless treated as if they had no objective worth” (Eg ea-Kuehne, 2009, p. 364). How comes the girls who are seen to be in need of special treatment (Jaji, 2011), are left on their own devices to be exploited and subjected to an adult life without help? They do not see themselves as “something desired, wanted, or useful at all, even as they retain their standing as human beings, though having a refugee status” (Eg ea-Kuehne, 2009, p. 364). Instead of becoming subjects, they become subjectified, objects of subjectification itself. In these contexts, the dominant group that includes teachers in schools, NGO workers and NGOs and other leaders and institutions that make the refugees refugees, do not see the uniqueness of each individual but treat them collectively. Teachers will be heard saying, “these Somali girls cannot do simple mathematics, they are dunder-heads! If I were down Kenya, such a simple sum would be done by a class one pupil”. Did all the Somali girls fail? While the individual’s identity is not seen in its individuality but as a group, the self image of the student as a unique person is disabled. In the very moment of continuous verbalizing of the teachers frustration with their performances and insistence on results at the expense of their unique experiences and environment, we make these girls feel like failures. The system of education vomits them back to society, where they are not seen as young girls but as women to be married even though they are children.

## Conclusion

When does it matter “that I am I, and that I cannot be replaced by anyone else?” (Biesta, 2009, p. 361). In the moment when I as a teacher and/ or student is seen not just to be like any other person, but *myself* (the who that I am) is assigned to be a self, that is, *singularized* then will education become more meaningful. In this paper I have advocated for an education that is responsible for seeing an individual for who they are. In this seeing, we become responsible for the who that is coming into presence. Our actions singularises this who, changes them knowingly or unknowingly and at the same time calls them to be who they are. Thus we see them to be irreplaceable and unique. Such seeing cannot be anticipated or controlled. It is in fact “beyond any of our curricula, our pedagogies, our activity plans” (ibid). It is one that we have to give room for in our plans. Can we in our planning for educational lessons give room for the unexpected, unanticipated newness of the newcomer to come forth beyond that which we have planned for and want to have? This argument goes in contradiction to an education that tries to remove all obstacles hindering the achievement of pre-planned and preset educational goals and objectives. This is a strong education that does not anticipate failure but seeks to remove failure by creating effective systems that can achieve effective results as quickly as possible. But a good education, one that will allow not for an enculturation into orders, but one that allows for failure and frustrations, gives room for coming into presence of something new, something we did not anticipate because as we go to teach, we have no idea what the students will respond, is a weak one. This is the weak education that should be upheld especially for the vulnerable children.

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<sup>i</sup> This is enshrined in such conventions as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949); UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951); UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959); Convention against Discrimination in Education (1962); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), for more details see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/> (OCHA, (1989)

<sup>ii</sup> This anecdote has been used elsewhere in the original thesis written after the field work. See Kalisha, 2013, p. 129

<sup>iii</sup> The shame and modesty comes from a Somali tradition of *hisaut* which prohibits women and girls from talking about anything to do with reproductive health and sexuality. A girl or woman should not speak before men and if so, she should speak ‘shyly’ without having face to face encounter- See Bokore, 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> I used a copy of the manuscript that was published in 2013. The pages may vary in the current book

<sup>v</sup> Beritia is a pseudonym of one of my participants (a teacher) from the main research that was conducted during the summer of 2012. This anecdote has been used before as part of my thesis, see Kalisha, 2013, p. 76

<sup>vi</sup> See the reflections on Socialization and rational autonomy by Kant above

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