

Education and Fragility: A New Framework¹

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The author describes the evolution of USAID's education framework for programming in fragile and conflict countries. Developed in 2006, it casts education in the forefront of programming priorities as a response to the risks or the reality of conflict in countries affected by potential or actual unrest. The framework revolves around three main questions: How does education contribute to fragility? How does fragility affect education? How can education mitigate fragility and promote stability?

The Education and Fragility Framework positions education at the center of four key areas of influence related to economic, governance, security and social domains. Education is viewed within the context of specific root causes of fragility or conflict such as organized violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Each of these issues can be addressed through education. In all cases, the premise is that if education can contribute to a given driver of fragility, it can also contribute to finding its remedy and thus to promoting stability.

Introduction

In 2002 the United States President's National Security Strategy elevated development to the "third pillar" of US foreign policy—on a par with defense and diplomacy. The strategy recognizes that a root of the national security threat to the United States and the broader international community is the lack of development, which cannot be addressed by military or diplomatic means alone. In countries that lack the ability, or will, to provide basic services or protection, new strategies need to be developed and business can no longer be conducted as usual. In 2005, USAID formulated a fragile states strategy, which called for, developing priorities that can respond to the realities on the ground, focusing programs on the sources of fragility, providing strong monitoring and analysis, and streamlining operational procedures to support rapid and effective response. Both strategies made clear that achieving success in fragile states requires a clear understanding of the vulnerabilities of a state and of the drivers of fragility and conflict so that both development and peace and security programs may focus on the causes of the fragility rather than the symptoms of conflict.

The purpose of this paper is to present a new education framework for programming in fragile and conflict countries. Developed in 2006, the framework casts education in the forefront of programming priorities as a response to the risks or the reality of conflict in countries affected by potential or real unrest. The framework revolves around three main questions: How does education contribute to fragility? How does fragility affect education? How can education mitigate fragility and promote stability?

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Concepts, Definitions and Principles

1.1 What is a “Fragile State”?

The concept of “fragile states” was recently developed to capture the needs for better programming in states that have been directly or indirectly linked to international security issues. The designation of “fragile state” has stirred controversy and is still being debated as an appropriate characterization. Yet, since 2004, donors have rallied around the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee (OECD/ DAC) definition, which purports that states are fragile “when governments and state structures lack capacity and/or political will to deliver safety and security, good governance, and poverty reduction to their citizens”. The OECD/ DAC has been leading the policy discussions since 2005, generating seminal guidance. Specifically, a “Policy Commitment” and a set of “Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations” were endorsed by the OECD/ DAC Development Ministers and Heads of Agencies.

The Principles of Engagement in Fragile States recognize that: 1) fragile states confront particularly severe development challenges such as weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crisis, persistent social tensions, violence or the legacy of civil war; 2) a durable exit from poverty and insecurity for the world’s most fragile states will need to be driven by their own leadership and people; and 3) although international engagement will not by itself put an end to state fragility, the adoption of the shared principles can help maximize the positive impact of engagement and minimize unintentional harm. The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to help national reformers build legitimate, effective and resilient state institutions. The Principles, therefore, emphasize the need to: focus on state-building as the central objective; to prioritize prevention; to recognize the links between political, security and development objectives; to promote non discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies; to align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts; and to avoid pockets of exclusion.

While there are various definitions, interpretations and adaptations of the concept underlying the characterization of “fragile states”, the OECD’s guidance is currently considered foundational.

Which are the fragile states? In reality, there is no agreed list of fragile states since states typically move in and out of fragility. Yet, a range of definitions and criteria have been used to identify fragile states, including the World Bank’s Low Income Countries under Stress (LICUS) and its Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), which are sometimes used as a proxies for fragile states; Low Income Poorly Performing States (LIPPS); and the Human Development Report categorization. Efforts to track and measure fragile states’ trajectories have resulted in the development of several indexes and indicators. The most recent is the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World (February 2008), which ranks developing nations according to their performance in four spheres: economic, political, security and social welfare.

1.2 USAID’s Fragile States approach

Since 2005 USAID has distinguished fragile states that are vulnerable, i.e. where services, security, and legitimacy are tenuous, from those already in crisis, and where violent conflict is a reality or a great risk. The USAID Fragile States Strategy specifies that “not all fragile states are beset by conflict, but many are”. It also recognizes that violent conflict threatens U.S. national security and produces serious development and humanitarian costs.

In mid 2006 this “Fragile States” characterization was superseded by the United States Foreign Assistance Reform and its new Foreign Assistance framework. They offered a new categorization of the states that receive U.S. aid. Fragile states were subsumed under the categories of “Rebuilding Countries”, i.e. countries emerging from or rebuilding after internal or external conflict and of “Developing Countries”, i.e. low or lower-middle income countries -below \$3,256 per capita- that are either not yet meeting Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) performance criteria, including selection criteria such as poor performance in the corruption or political rights arenas². Thus, the designation of “fragile states” could no longer be applied to USAID programming. However, the concepts of fragility and conflict have been used to respond to the programming and funding needs of weak and failed states, which the US National Security Strategy sees as high policy priority: Consequently, USAID sectoral bureaus and offices subsequently developed their own sector specific frameworks and approaches to address fragility and conflict and a number of missions have in fact anchored their programming around the objectives of mitigating conflict and promoting stability.

1. 3 The concept of fragility

Fragility is essentially a “dynamic process” (Vallings 2005). States may not always demonstrate signs of fragility and elements of fragility will be more obvious at some times than at others. There is no simple causal process and each case is the unique outcome of a set of complex chains of events and interactions. While each context is different and each vulnerability distinctive, research points to a set of common and interrelated factors that cause and sustain fragility. These include:

- Weak political institutions that lack legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness
- Economic decline or the inability or lack of will of the state to foster an environment conducive to equitable growth
- Poverty or the lack of will or inability to meet basic human needs, and to secure citizens from violent conflict and control of their territories³
- A state’s geography and history
- Global interactions and regional influences

In the continuum of a conflict sequence, the concept of fragility encompasses the pre-conflict and the post-conflict phases. One illustration of a conflict phase is found in Figure 1. The key phases in the evolution of a violent conflict are the escalation of conflict, the violent events and the cessation of violence. These may be interrupted by periods of stability but fragility pervades all phases.

The Education and Fragility Framework

2. 1 How has the global education sector addressed fragility?

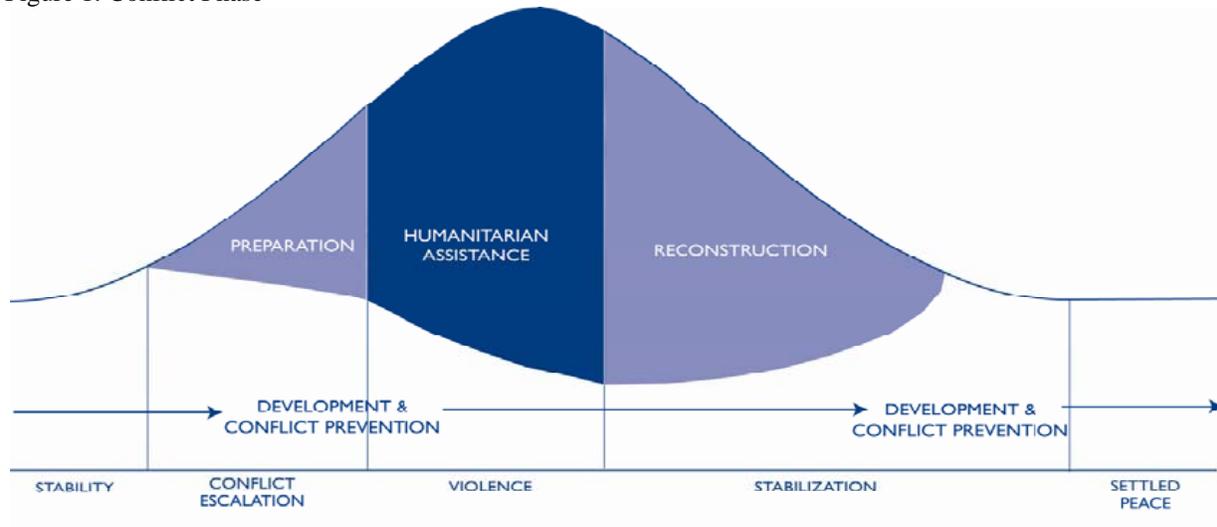
Since 1990 the broader education mandate adopted by donors and recipient countries has been defined by the Education For All (EFA) goals. While the EFA goals were comprehensive in their inception, the emphasis was put on basic education, achieving universal primary education and focusing on access and quality of education services: “There is a tendency for the discourse on basic

² The Millennium Challenge Corporation has identified a number of selection criteria to qualify as eligible for an MCC assistance program: the country must demonstrate a commitment to policies that promote political and economic freedom, investments in education and health, the sustainable use of natural resources, control of corruption, and respect for civil liberties and the rule of law.

³ Brookings Institute, “Weak and Failed States.”.

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index/02_weak_states_index.pdf>

Figure 1: Conflict Phase



education (e.g. the EFA literature and the MDGs) to focus on primary education” (Hayman 2007). Indeed the EFA framework is based on the principle that education inputs yield education outputs and education outcomes. While the concept of “fragile states” did not exist as such when the EFA goals were promoted, the specific needs of weak and failed states, as well as conflict affected states, were not expressly taken into consideration.

Education in fragile states suffers from the same litany of troubles as developing countries but their vulnerabilities dig deeper into the social fabric of the country or may be fundamentally different. Main patterns of fragility as manifested in education include⁴:

- The inability of states to fund either capital or recurrent education expenditure
- a weak or non-existent management of service delivery marked by corruption, rent seeking and lack of transparency
- Discrimination and exclusion of specific groups in school have led to blatant inequities
- Stifled public engagement and schools that are no longer supported by government or parents
- Government authorities are no longer seen as useful, trustworthy or legitimate by the people
- The chronic or post-conflict shortages of qualified teachers who have fled or been killed, or who remain or return but cannot or do not want to teach
- Violence against educators as evidenced by abductions, torture, and murders of education staff, teachers, officials and students (O’Malley 2007)
- Violence taking the place of negotiations in problem solving processes whether in schools or in education policy arenas
- The large numbers of war-affected youth, demobilized soldiers and young people who have not had access to or have not completed basic education
- School fees or bribes or sexual exploitation used in exchange for access, retention and performance of students
- Serious under-funding of skills training for youth although it may prevent recruitment into military or criminal activity

⁴ Buckland, Peter, The Forced Migration Review. <<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/EducationSupplement/full.pdf>>.

- The weak interface between education development and humanitarian assistance
- The neglect of secondary and tertiary education
- The need for adult education programs and accelerated learning opportunities
- Poor or non-existent reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons into mainstream national education systems.

These patterns of fragility clearly affect or are affected by the delivery of education. Yet, the understanding of the role that education can play to confront the factors that may lead to or have led to conflict is still emerging. To what extent can provision of quality education mitigate fragility and contribute to peace building, peace dividends, state building, the resilience of institutions and state stabilization? Recent evidence from a study on education and fragility (Barakat 2008) shows that:

- State educational provision is a necessary condition for overcoming fragility
- Education can enhance stability by contributing to social cohesion.
- Secondary education is an effective contribution to overcoming state fragility
- Education can measurably reduce the risk of civil unrest and violent conflict
- The perception of inadequate educational service often becomes a grievance that exacerbates state fragility
- Education systems can be a prime site of corruption and a suitable place to establish transparency
- Political manipulation of educational provision and content may increase state fragility
- Education is highly desired by populations affected by state fragility
- Peace education can have positive effects on students' attitudes

All research points to the need for programs “to be conflict sensitive in a way that programs designed in other developing countries are not”(USAID 2007) .

2.2 USAID’s Education and Fragility framework

In 2005-2006 USAID developed an Education and Fragility Framework to address education assessment and programming needs in fragile states⁵. The education and fragility framework is built around three areas of investigation: How does education contribute to fragility? How does fragility affect education? How can education mitigate fragility and promote stability?

The Education and Fragility Framework questions

- How does education contribute to fragility?
- How does fragility affect education?
- How can education mitigate fragility and promote stability?

As part of the inquiry process, the Education and Fragility Framework positions education at the center of four key areas of influence also referred to as “domains” (economic, governance, security

⁵ The design team was composed of USAID Washington education officers in collaboration with the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance and its office of Conflict, Management and Mitigation, and Democracy and Governance offices, the Office of Women in Development, and USAID Regional Bureaus developed the education and fragility framework. The initial draft was vetted with NGOs partners involved in education, emergency and conflict programming.

and social). Education is also viewed within the context of root causes of fragility or conflict such as organized violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Each of these is a root cause of fragility or conflict that can be addressed through education.

The Education and Fragility framework asserts that:

- Education can contribute to and mitigate the root causes of fragility
- Education can promote stability
- Education can extend to the delivery and quality of security, governance, livelihood, and protection services.
- Education can work across sectors to achieve stability goals
- Education can bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and sustainable development

An assessment tool was subsequently developed to assist USAID missions and bureaus identify and analyze the links between education and fragility in failing, failed or recovering countries, and inform education program policy and implementation. Specifically the assessment tool aims to: 1) better understand the root causes of fragility and their impact on education services 2) to identify how education can mitigate them and 3) to inform USAID missions' education strategies for stability interventions.

3. Mitigating Fragility and Promoting Stability through Education

The USAID framework has identified five main fragility factors: corruption and rent seeking; organized violence; exclusion and elitism; lack of capacity and will; public disengagement. These factors were selected from USAID's 2005 missions' reports that identified the main sources of fragility or conflict in their host country and programmed their portfolio against it. For instance in 2006, USAID Guinea identified corruption as the main source of fragility in the country and developed its education programming to address corruption within the education system rather than selecting education access and quality as ultimate goals.

The following section presents a detailed description of four patterns of fragility and how they relate to education. The literature findings are presented first and are followed by the implications for sectoral and cross-sectoral programming to address fragility. In all cases, the premise is that if education can contribute to mitigate a given driver of fragility, it can also contribute to finding its remedy and thus to promoting stability.

3.1 Education, the lack of security and organized violence

3.1.1 Findings

The invaluable study Education under Attack (O'Malley 2007) was the first attempt to gather data on violence against education staff and infrastructure and has challenged stakeholders to incorporate security issues into traditional education programming. It reported that "the number of reported assassinations, bombings and burnings of school and academic staff and buildings has risen dramatically in the past three years, reflecting the increasingly bloody nature of local conflicts around the world." The lack of security affects education delivery in different ways and includes:

- Multiple deaths of education workers, students and officials via bombings, remotely detonated explosions and sprayed gun fires
- Targeted assassinations of individual education staff, students and trade unionists by firearms, typically in the classroom or on the way to and from school
- Destruction of education buildings and resources via remotely detonated explosions, bombings, burnings, looting and ransacking
- Illegal detention, ‘disappearance’ or torture of teachers, academics and education trade unionists, usually by forces of the state or forces supported by the state, though sometimes by rebel groups
- Abduction of students, teachers and officials by armed forces for extortion or to spread terror; forced recruitment of child soldiers
- Abduction and/or rape of school girls and teachers by military forces

Research also demonstrates that gender-based violence in school escalates and occurs on a daily basis during periods of war, civil unrest and outbreaks of violence. The environment for girls in fragile contexts is relentlessly threatening for women and girls. Refugee women and girls are the most vulnerable victims of violent crimes. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees research shows that refugee women are subject to sexual violence and abduction at every step of their escape, from flight to border crossings to life in camps (1995). Evidence suggests that sexual violence does not necessarily end with the cessation of armed conflict. In fact, incidents of rape are reported to have increased sharply during ongoing insecurity in post-war Iraq (Ward 2006). Even when the threat of rape is gone, the stigma of the violation remains (Nordstrom 2004).

The repercussions of organized violence and the lack of security on the delivery of education are devastating and impede attendance, retention, completion and learning. Pupils and education staff cannot attend school for fear of attacks or abductions or forced recruitment; they flee the area or the country to protect their lives and undergo irreparable trauma and lose hope in their future.

3.1.2 Implications for programming education to mitigate insecurity and violence

Providing security to teachers and children is the priority. Education workers can mitigate violence and insecurity through interventions that:

- Develop and implement programs to protect threatened students, teachers, and academics
- Provide continuous and safe alternative education services, such as school outreach centers, home schooling, distance education or radio instruction, shelters and child-friendly spaces
- Address issues of gender based violence in all programming
- Provide psycho-social support to the school community, i.e. parents, teachers, students
- Offer complementary conflict mitigation and resolution strategies as well as peace education modules in and out of the classroom
- Identify and remove discriminatory hate and violence messages from educational materials
- Adopt multi-sectoral approaches to eliminate gender-based violence through the provision of services across health and social services, and the legal and security sectors
- Work across sectors to identify ways for youth, while being educated, to survive economically, rebuild a future and avoid forced recruitment into militias
- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration with the justice and security sectors when possible to protect the schools, sanction predators and restore some sense of justice and protection in the school community

- Include disaster risk reduction and preparedness programs in schools

3. 2 Education and Corruption

3.2.1 Findings

Corruption is generally defined as the “systematic use of public office for private gains”⁶. There is quite a fair amount of literature on the linkages between corruption and conflict as well as on corruption in education. We know that “corruption within public institutions hinders conflict transformation efforts because it triggers mistrust” (Mirimanova 2006). When left unaddressed mistrust becomes the social norm and “conflict transformation is impossible in societies in which corruption is rife, as properly functioning public institutions are crucial to the process” (Mirimanova 2006). Furthermore corruption can be at the heart of fragility as it may “create a sense of stability by filling the gaps created by poorly functioning public institutions, even providing a surrogate rule of law where the judicial system or law enforcement is impaired” (Mirimanova 2006). Inequities and disparities in the provision of public goods and services such as education erode state effectiveness and legitimacy.

The link between education and corruption within a fragile or conflict arena has not been clearly analyzed. Indeed, poor governance and lack of transparency and accountability are the main characteristics of fragile states as well as failed and failing institutions. Education systems, as public institutions, operate on a corrupt foundation when the following practices are present:

- Inequities in the distribution of education resources generate economic, ethnic or geographic favoritism and dominance
- Teachers’ and administrative staff’s salaries, and other expenditures of public schools are paid for by financial contributions (or “school fees”) from parents on unofficial or semi official grounds
- Academic grades and promotion from one grade to another grade are exchanged for sex cash and/or work
- Flawed testing administration and lax accountability standards that allow exam questions to be sold in advance, grades to be changed for pay, and students from specific identity groups to fail
- Teacher recruitment and postings are influenced by bribes or sexual favors, and teaching certificates and licenses obtained on false grounds via corrupt means
- Children from certain communities are granted free admission while others are subjected to extra payments⁷
- Education funds are misused at the national, regional or local levels and diverted to other official or non-official uses, including individual rent seeking

These corruption factors constitute dangerous drivers of fragility and conflict. They render the education system “susceptible to adverse political, religious and ethnic influence”⁸, and exacerbate the inequality of treatment between rich and poor or cultivate favoritism of specific identity or

⁶ Hallack, Jacques, and Muriel Poisson. *Corrupt Schools, Corrupt Universities, What Can Be Done?*. UNESCO. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNESCO/ UNPAN025403.pdf>.

⁷ "Corruption in the Education Sector." *U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre*. <<http://www.u4.no>>.

⁸ Id.

geographic groups over others. Corruption isolates specific communities or identity groups and gives rise to disengagement by citizens and triggers discontent and protests, rebellion and conflict.

3.2.2 Implications for programming education to mitigate corruption

Most recommendations to address corruption in non-fragile contexts call for establishing transparent regulations and procedures. Some specific measures include establishing a policy framework for the allocation and use of education resources; and for improving the capacity of governments and civil society organizations to manage and monitor resources; and providing information to stakeholders. In fragile contexts, however, the institutional stability may not immediately lend itself to this model.

The ability to address corruption through education and to mitigate potential or real sources of fragility requires action on the following governance issues:

- Identifying the scope and impact of corruption within and around the education system
- Redressing or eliminating inequitable treatment across geographic or identity groups
- Assuring that management information systems focus on:
 - Accountability and transparency of financial management, especially on teachers' compensation, recruitment, deployment and qualifications
 - Transparency on the administration of exams and on student promotions within the system
 - Discrimination and exclusionary practices that determine access and retention of teachers and students
- Addressing teacher compensation issues and their consequences as quickly as possible, preferably in the early recovery phases of a conflict
- Establishing local and national legal frameworks and codes of conduct that sanction perpetrators and protect victims of corruption and fraud
- Building the capacity of school parents' associations and civil society to advocate for fair practices and to ensure accountability and transparency
- Strengthening the capacity of the government authorities to dialogue with youth and the capacity of youth to dialogue with government
- Offering and delivering literacy, numeracy and financial management training for elected officials and/or assuring that elected officials have the skills and knowledge to effectively carry out their responsibilities
- Promoting cross-sectoral collaboration with the justice sector as soon as possible to protect the victims of and from fraud and corruption, sanction predators and restore a sense of justice and protection within the school community

3.3 Education and Exclusion

3.3.1 Findings

Exclusion from education is a powerful trigger for instability, especially in a fragile context. The spectrum of exclusion practices may be wide but they may also be difficult to identify. Research shows that:

- Inequalities in education are a reflection of inequalities in society, which can perpetuate or intensify existing social and economic inequalities, which increase the grievances that lead to civil wars (Thyne 2006)
- Increased secondary level enrollments, especially for males, and higher literacy rates decrease the probability of civil war; education raises the costs of rebels recruitment (Thyne).
- Systemic inequality is a common cause of civil conflict. Selecting geographic areas for interventions (whether selected by governments or donors) that favor one zone over another can fuel ethnic and class tensions, causing widespread discontent and possible violence (Sommers 2005)
- Adolescents with no possibility to attend school receive vocational training programs or to earn a livelihood opportunity are a latent force for instability (Kirk 2007)
- Radical ideologies are often spread in education institutions, including universities, religious and public schools
- Students who have received alternative non-formal education services (officially recognized or not) that alienate them from their culture or their country tend to pursue other goals that can exacerbate their alienation
- The exclusion of youth and secondary and tertiary school-aged populations from education opportunities is also a factor of instability

In fact the exclusion of youth who find themselves unable to access education services raises the question of whether universal primary education should be a priority in fragile states. The issue has been raised and some research findings raise alarming concerns:

“Education systems that have come of age over this period have been pressured by the international Education for All campaign to focus on basic education to primary school children. Secondary schools have been neglected (...)It is becoming evident to some that this focus has been shortsighted in several ways: the alarm over out-of-school youth, who cannot attend secondary school; the shortage of teachers, due to inadequate secondary education; and the bottleneck at the entry of middle school” (Moulton 2006).

3.3.2 Implications for education programming to mitigate exclusion

Traditional responses to exclusion have been to increase demand for and supply of education services for all; however, when exclusion is a source of conflict, as with security and corruption, different interventions are needed. Options include:

- Assess the scope and nature of the exclusion (discrimination or favoritism)
- Increase access to education for neglected identity groups and geographic zones in order to mitigate geographic and identity favoritism. While the financial cost of reaching out to neglected areas is often high, the social and security costs of not doing so are higher and counterproductive
- Support the expansion of secondary schools, especially boarding schools for girls
- Promote accelerated learning programs for out of school youth and over-aged youth who have never attended or completed primary school
- Increase the availability of non- formal education programs for youth and ex-combatants
- Provide psycho-social and trauma-healing support to victims of war, torture, and rape.
- Develop programs for girls who have been victims of rape and torture

- Support school feeding projects and safe boarding facilities when necessary
- Develop training grants and business development programs for youth that are linked to literacy and skills training to ensure their engagement and/or reintegration into society
- Include youth in the decision making about programs that affect their development; provide education programs in age and experience-relevant modes
- Include youth in activities related to the reconstruction of their region
- Reintegrate child soldiers, even after the conflict is over, to establish socially relevant programs and education interventions that include conflict prevention, demobilization, and reintegration into society
- Mitigate radicalization of students by promoting alternative teaching and learning materials and methodologies, and by providing support to student conflict mitigation networks

3.4 Education and lack of capacity: a focus on teaching

The lack of capacity of a state or state institutions to provide education services threatens the stability of the state and its education system as a whole. The correlation between quality of teaching and student performance is well documented as is the litany of tribulations that affect the capacity of poor countries in general to produce and support qualified and competent teachers. However in emergency or conflict situations, the problem is infinitely more complex when it comes to teachers' compensation, working conditions and motivation. This section considers the capacity of the state to deliver teaching services.

3.4.1 Findings

Teachers in conflict settings are beset by myriad obstacles that undermine the capacity of a state to recruit, train and maintain the number of teachers needed to support education in fragile states. The following are some characteristics of this particular capacity gap:

- The teaching corps tends to be disparate, particularly in post conflict phases. Teachers may include civil servants who have remained in place, refugee teachers from neighboring countries or returning refugees; internally displaced persons from different areas and different linguistic origins, unqualified teachers with non-accredited teaching certificates; para-teachers, school leavers or literate volunteers who have been recruited to fill in for absent teachers. Often good teachers have been recruited by NGOs for non-teaching duties
- In post conflict settings, communities are still mobile and teachers cannot be expected to remain where they are found
- Teachers' identification, records of qualifications and degrees may be lost, destroyed or they may have been bought
- Teachers are not paid or are poorly compensated and thus have incentives to collect bribery fees; they can also be victims of such practices themselves
- Non-payment of salaries can contribute to social unrest, and to learning situations in which children are vulnerable to exploitation (Inter-Agency 2008)
- Teacher training institutions are dysfunctional, lacking appropriate teachers' curriculum; and learning and teaching materials are not available and probably never were. Teacher trainers suffer from the same losses, restrictions and challenges as the teachers
- No regulations exist on the content of what individual teachers may or may not teach, which, in some well-documented cases, has include hatred and intolerance and radical ideologies

3.4.2 Implications for programming education to mitigate insufficient capacity to deliver teaching services

Traditional responses to the need to rebuild teaching capacity have included the provision of short or medium-term teacher training workshops sponsored by different partners, offering various methodologies, approaches and materials depending on the donor or provider. The methodology tends to be a cascade training model supplied by qualified or unqualified teacher trainers. Teaching curricula are developed promptly while infrastructure is being rehabilitated. However some crucial factors in rebuilding teaching capacity must be considered a priority. They include:

- Rebuilding the teacher corps either before or while providing direct teacher training. This includes identifying teachers, recruiting them, assessing their qualifications, experience and motivation, providing documentation and re-certifications, and deploying them where it is safe to do so
- Assessing the validity of a “one size fits all” approach to formal teacher training
- Developing incremental teacher training programs by targeting specific teaching groups and including a support structure to facilitate coaching and mentoring amongst the teachers
- Developing Education Management Information Systems and databases that include qualifications and records data, recruitment and deployment data, teacher qualification, and certification
- Providing protection and safety measures to teachers and schools
- Including psycho-social support, ethical and professional behavior standards as part of all teacher training programs
- Addressing the management and financial aspects of teacher compensation concurrently with teacher training
- Outlining donor and governments’ policies on teacher compensation in post-conflict settings

Conclusion

Education interventions to mitigate fragility and promote stability require a different understanding of the characteristics of each potential or real conflict and thus new assessments and operational guidance methodologies. The implications mentioned here are not exhaustive and different contexts will call for different interventions. However, while still in its infancy, research calls into question the validity of following access-for-all models and prompts decision makers to adopt different and non-traditional approaches. Such approaches should weigh trade offs and establish education priorities. The trade-offs might involve carefully choosing between the provision of formal or non-formal education services, deciding which school age populations to serve; carefully selecting geographic zones and identifying groups for education interventions; favoring interventions for youth over young children if needed for stability; prioritizing safety for students and staff; prioritizing the mitigation of exclusion by targeting the excluded rather than the more easily reached majority.

As more research is conducted on education’s role in fragile contexts, planners and policy makers will have a better understanding of the priorities and their implications for stabilization. The hope is this will enable stakeholders to make the right choices for sustained development, stability and peace.

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