

On Affordable Non-State Schools (Panel)

April 17 @ 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm



Group Submission Type: Formal Panel Session

Overview

Worldwide, there are an estimated 109 million children were living in countries affected by violent conflict or other crises. Nearly of quarter of these children were not attending school (UNICEF, 2016). Although there are a myriad of reasons why these children are out of school, one of the most significant is that there are no schools or places within schools to accommodate them. The opportunities for children and youth to attend school are often hampered by the limited public resources to build new schools or pay teachers. These limited resources are further strained in contexts coping with additional refugee and internally displaced children. In many countries of crisis and conflict, the government education system is broken or not fully functional. This provides fertile ground for the proliferation of non-state schools to meet the demand for education and provide opportunities to meet the shortfall in public supply. In places such as Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti, upwards of 90 percent are composed of non-state primary and secondary schools. While these schools, often supported by the community, can provide a safe learning environment and assist children and society to return to normalcy, the instability of the context can make it difficult for them to provide high-quality education.

In 2011, USAID commissioned a six-country study to assess the growth trends and needs of the private primary and secondary schools, debates surrounding the non-state schools, and recommendations with regard to the approach that national and international public agencies should take regarding this sector. The study concluded that in order to achieve Education for All goals, governments and donors need to seriously engage and further capitalize on the growing number of non-state schools instead of ignoring them. USAID's education strategy focuses on increased education equity and positive educational outcomes for crisis and conflict-affected children and youth. Toward that end, USAID decided to build on the 2011 study by performing a deeper analysis of the role of affordable non-state schools (ANSS) in contexts of conflict. Moreover, significant research has been performed on both non-state education

and education in crisis and conflict-affected countries, little has been written on their intersection. USAID commissioned a study with Education Center for Development and Results for Development that examines the role of affordable non-state schools in conflict and crisis settings, with a focus on primary and secondary schooling. This panel will share the findings from the literature review and a newly developed conceptual framework that marries the findings from the non-state schools and conflict literature. The conceptual framework organizes and demonstrates the relationships between various key ideas and concepts and outlines a process for understanding the contributions of ANSS to education in contexts of conflict. Two case studies will be looked at in Nigeria and in El Salvador. Cross-cutting findings from these two countries will be shared.

Presentation 1: Are ANSS a way forward in a conflict-affected contexts' journey to self-reliance? Why USAID commissioned this study? Key findings from the literature review.

USAID is transforming the way it approaches development it is prioritizing self-reliance and ending the need for U.S. foreign assistance. Given this focus, the role of non-state actors in conflict-affected countries can play a critical role in a country's pathway to development. In many conflict-affected countries, affordable non-state schools – religious, community, NGO, or private schools targeting low-income populations – compose the majority of schools and invariably, fill the financing and capacity gap of governments.

Education is not neutral. As affordable non-state schools have the potential to both mitigate and exacerbate the effects of conflict, it is vital for governments and donors to understand the scope of these schools, their potential contributions, and their strategies for addressing violence and insecurity. This analysis is foundational to determining the proper role for ANSS in school systems affected by conflict and crisis. The role for ANSS may not be large – but good policy decisions cannot be made in ignorance. As such, USAID commissioned this report to provide a solid base of evidence for policy-makers to formulate relevant policy positions, with respect to the potential role of affordable non-state schools in crisis and conflict settings. The goal of this study is to explore the positive and negative contributions non-state schools can have on education outcomes in these complex contexts.

This study had four phases: (1) literature review, (2) development of the conceptual framework, (3) two country case studies and (4) cross-cutting findings and recommendations for donors and governments.

During the literature review phase we learned that studies on both non-state schools and on education in conflict is abundant; however, little research exists on their intersection. The literature review found there were a variety of types of non-state schools and a variety of funding and management arrangements between non-state schools and with the government. The review also noted that there was mixed evidence regarding student achievement between government and non-state schools. The

studies in conflict in education, clearly identified the unique barriers to education that are commonplace in these context, such as government resource shortages, teacher shortages and attacks. The literature also indicated different approaches to bring about greater resiliency for these communities, particularly by mobilizing the commitment and resources from the local communities.

Presenter 2: An ANSS conceptual framework and the findings from Nigeria case study.

Findings from the literature review are used to present a conceptual framework that provides a theoretical basis for understanding the contributions of affordable non-state schools (ANSS) to education at the primary and secondary levels in contexts of conflict and crisis. The conceptual framework depicts the relationship between a number of concepts that underpin an understanding of ANSS in contexts of conflict and crisis. The framework outlines seven steps for exploring ANSS contributions to education at the primary and lower secondary levels in crisis and conflict-affected environments.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Unable to insert visual diagram). The framework poses 6 key questions and provides answers for them. The questions are: (1) What is the context in which state and non-state schools operate? (2) What barriers to education do conflict and crisis impose? (3) What approaches do ANSS use to overcome the effects of conflict and crisis? (4) What are the beneficial and harmful effects of affordable non-state schools? (5) How do environmental and institutional factors enable or inhibit the growth of affordable non-state schools? (6) How do ANSS positively or negatively effect education outcomes? (7) How do affordable non-state schools contribute to education goals in conflict and crisis?

Along with being based on findings from the literature review, the conceptual framework was developed iteratively with the study's case studies of Kaduna State, Nigeria and El Salvador.

The first case study explores the interaction between affordable non-state schools and the complex and multifaceted nature of conflict and violence in Kaduna. We found that education in Kaduna takes place within this complex state of conflict and as a representation of the cultural profile of the community, schools are at the center—or caught in the crossfire—of conflict. The immediate impact of conflict on education includes, but is not limited to, destruction or damage of school infrastructure, school closure, and the use of schools to accommodate IDPs. The long-term impact of violence on education includes migration of teachers to safer communities, increased school dropouts, and segregation of schooling along tribal and religious lines

We also found that although state authorities recognize the complementary role of non-state schools, our analysis found that they are largely unaware of the specific needs and conditions of non-state schools. State policies on registration, accreditation, and taxation of non-state schools are unclear and burdensome. ANSS are not profit-driven and are often not profitable. Financial sustainability is jeopardized by low and variable

revenue flows. However, non-state schools are deeply rooted in their local communities, with parents, teachers, and school head teachers extensively involved in ensuring the well-being of schools. Community donations, either financial or in-kind, are critical sources of support for non-state schools.

Reflecting the localized and faith-based nature of non-state schools, their student bodies are largely of the same religion or tribe. Enrollment in ANSS is driven not only by religion, but also by the perceived quality that a values-based education offers. Conflict can perpetuate the homogeneity of non-state schools as students, parents, and teachers of different religions or tribes relocate away from violent-torn locations. At the same time, non-state schools are somewhat insulated from conflict and can respond proactively to imminent violence because they are rooted in their community network.

Presenter 3: El Salvador Case Study and the Cross-Cutting Findings from Two Countries

The second case study examines the interaction between affordable non-state schools and gangs in El Salvador. The pervasive, territorial nature of gangs severely affects students, particularly when school boundaries are not aligned with gang boundaries—entering another gang’s territory to reach school can be deadly. Over a quarter of schools report that their internal security is compromised by gangs. The threat of violence leads to displacement, dropout, and a decreased quality of education within schools. Nationally, non-state schools account for 21 percent of basic and upper secondary enrollment, but in some conflict-affected urban municipalities, these schools account for 30 to 60 percent of enrollment.

We found that governments, donors, and NGOs are largely unaware of an affordable non-state school sector; the general perception is that non-state schools serve middle- and upper-class students, are profitable, and are profit-driven. As a consequence, schools rarely access NGO, donor, or government assistance. In actuality, a large number of non-state schools are driven by social missions and serve low-income households. Notwithstanding, non-state schools are seen as much safer than government schools, which can be attributed to investment in security infrastructure, smaller and better-controlled spaces, and exclusive entry requirements. Schools associated with congregations or faith-based organizations are also more respected by gangs than secular schools, affording them additional protection. Families are attracted to ANSS principally because they offer safe environments—in some cases, they are the only schools that children can reach without crossing gang lines.

Similar themes from the literature review and case studies in El Salvador and Kaduna State, Nigeria converge around several key findings regarding the status and role of affordable non-state schools in conflict-affected environments. Because they account for a large proportion of enrollment in many conflict- and crisis-affected countries, ANSS play an important role in education provision that governments and donors cannot afford to ignore. Nevertheless, governments frequently have misconceptions about the size and role of the ANSS sector in providing affordable schooling to marginalized groups.

Caregivers frequently choose non-state schools over government schools out of a concern for safety, as well as an interest in values, religion, and proximity. The religious alignment of many non-state schools may shield them from conflict, or expose it to greater risk of attack. Affordable non-state schools are primarily driven by social missions rather than profit, and the fees they charge are generally insufficient to cover operating costs. In spite of their low costs, fees and other entry requirements still may prevent low-income individuals from accessing these schools. Finally, conflict imposes additional costs on ANSS and leads to displacement, which lowers enrollment. However, conflict may increase demand for these schools – the net effect of conflict on enrollment in ANSS ultimately depends on the nature of the conflict.

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