

A Framework for Assessing the Effectiveness of the Delivery of Education Aid in Fragile States¹

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This paper presents a framework for assessing the effectiveness of education aid in fragile states which is derived from three key aspects of aid effectiveness identified in the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States - coordination, state building, and 'do no harm'. The framework is then used to examine four approaches to delivering education aid (sector-wide approaches, trust funds, social funds, UN-led approaches). The paper analyses how these have impacted on education sector outcomes in particular fragile states contexts, and identifies what can be learned about the effective delivery of education aid from each of these examples. In addition, the FTI approach to supporting education in fragile states is examined through this lens in order to draw lessons. The paper concludes by identifying key issues that relate to achieving coordination, state building and do no harm objectives when investing in education in fragile states

1.0 Background and limitations

Fragile states are defined here as those low income countries where there is a lack of political commitment and/or weak capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies. The nearest to an agreed list of fragile states is one produced by the Department for International Development (DFID – UK development agency) for a recent policy paper focusing on this issue (DFID, 2005). The list is used in this paper for the purposes of drawing examples and comparisons.

The impetus to support education in fragile states has assumed greater momentum since 9/11, and the case has progressively been made for increases in funding and attention to the sector in these contexts (Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003; Sperling, 2006; Save the Children, 2007). Drawing on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States, three aspects of effective aid are examined. They were selected on the basis of their particular relevance to the education sector, and relate to coordination, state building and do no harm (OECD DAC, April 2007). The principles are used to develop a framework for assessing the effectiveness of different approaches to delivering education aid in particular fragile state contexts.

The literature reviewed here is mainly drawn from analytic work conducted by international aid organisations, and is beset by methodological challenges that relate to definitional issues and lack of country case study comparability. Despite its limitations, there is enough available, particularly derived from recent OECD DAC sponsored work (Rose and Greeley, 2006; OECD DAC Fragile States Group, 2006), to merit this research exercise. This paper does not claim to be exhaustive as there are other approaches, including general budget support, forms of project support, and humanitarian aid, which are not specifically dealt with here. The examples reviewed are also in most cases derived from a limited literature base. Finally, as OECD DAC principle 6 reminds us,

¹ The literature has moved on somewhat since this paper was written, but the underlying methodology applied to the cases examined here remains valid.

important though a focus on the education sector might be in fragile states, it cannot stand alone and needs to be looked at within a wider mix of development, diplomatic and security responses.

2.0 What are the obstacles to the effective delivery of education aid in fragile states?

This section of the paper takes each of the aspects of effectiveness identified above, defines them, and examines what some of the obstacles are to achieving them when investing in the education sector. Research questions are then developed on the basis of this analysis.

2.1 Coordination

DAC Principle 7 is to agree practical coordination mechanisms between international actors. It further suggests that where possible, international actors should work together with reformers in government and civil society to develop shared analysis and priorities. All aid to fragile states faces coordination challenges (Overseas Development Institute, December 2004) and aid to education is no exception to this picture (Sommers, 2004). In southern Sudan, for example, the failure of international actors to coordinate their efforts during the civil war left a legacy of disconnected systems, with different curricula and different pay scales for teachers. The reasons for these difficulties in coordination of stakeholders in the education sector include weak host government leadership, projectised donor interventions that bypass government systems and fail to build local accountability structures, lack of agreed standards, and International NGOs which resist coordination by the UN. To what extent can key stakeholders be brought together in support of a joint planning framework for the education sector?

2.2 State building

DAC principle 3 is to focus on state building as a central objective, including improving governance and capacity in core service delivery functions. In the education sector, one of the most challenging issues relates to the supply of teachers, especially at the primary level where government is usually the main provider. In many fragile states, government revenues dry up, so teacher wages (usually representing a large proportion of public expenditure on public services) may either not be paid at all or may be paid erratically. Teachers start to leak out of the system, or take second jobs to make ends meet so the quality of the system seriously suffers (Rose and Greeley, 2006). To what extent can state capacity and governance be developed to enable teachers to be paid, trained, and deployed across the school system?

2.3 Do no harm

DAC principle 8 states that the international community should seek to avoid activities which undermine national institution building (The principle actually focuses on bypassing national budgets, but this has been adapted slightly here for the education sector). Education has been identified as an important positive force with respect to promoting social cohesion (Tawil and Harley, 2004), but there are also instances of the state using the education system for political or ideological ends and this may result in the opposite effect (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Smith and Vaux, 2003; World Bank, 2005). This can happen if curriculum content or access to education is skewed in ways that privilege one group over another. Examples include the roots of the Sri Lankan conflict, which partly lay in a change in the medium of instruction in schools, the use of ethnic quotas in pre-genocide Rwanda, and education provision skewed along ethnic lines in Burundi as a driver of the conflict (World Bank, 2005; Obura, 2003; Jackson, 2000). While tools exist for analysing the sector from this perspective (DFID, 2002; USAID, 2006), they are not always jointly

deployed. To what extent can the state be supported to promote equitable access to education services and to implement policies that tackle exclusion at school level?

3.0 Can these principles be applied in practice?

This section describes four different approaches to delivering aid in fragile states (Leader and Colenso, 2005), summarises the impact of each approach on the education sector, and uses independent evaluation material to analyse what has been learned from each example with respect to the three research questions posed above. The approaches and country examples are summarised in Insert 1 below. The extent to which an approach is located within a government-led framework has been included as an important context variable. The selection of the four country examples was guided by what the wider literature says about effective approaches in different types of fragile state contexts, and the existence of independent evaluation of how an approach impacted on the education sector in a particular context.

Insert 1: Approaches to, and Examples of, Education Aid in Fragile States	
Approach	Example
SWAp (Working within a government-led framework)	Nepal EFA
Trust Fund (Working towards a government-led framework)	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust fund
Social Fund (Working alongside a government-led framework)	Yemen Social Fund for development
UN-led joint approach (Working outside a government led framework)	UNICEF in Somalia

3.1 Sector-wide approach (Working within a government framework) – Education for All (EFA) in Nepal

One approach to delivering aid in fragile states is to channel external funding through government systems using sector budget support which finances that sector within a broader government-led framework (subject to donor preconditions being met). It has been suggested that sector budget support may be more attractive to donors in fragile states than, for example, general budget support because it can be used even if overall policy, budgetary and institutional frameworks are sub-optimal (Leader and Colenso, 2005). Forms of education sector budget support are currently being employed in several fragile states.

The case of EFA in Nepal illustrates how a sub-sector education programme can be developed and implemented with government officials even in the midst of serious armed conflict between government forces and Maoists. At the time the programme was agreed in 2004, only between 10-20% of Nepal's territory was within government control (Berry et al, 2004). The programme focuses on pre-primary, primary education and adult literacy. Funding is pooled by several partners, including Finland (FINIDA), Denmark (DANIDA), Norway (NORAD), the UK (DFID), and World Bank. Approximately 25% of the government's annual sub-sector budget is provided from this fund – typically in the region of \$40 million per annum. The main indicators of progress in the sector that have been associated with this programme to date between 2004 and 2006 (DFID, 2006) are summarised below. While gains have been relatively modest, it is impressive that they have been achieved in the midst of armed conflict.

Insert 2: Nepal EFA and Education Progress

- Net primary school enrolment rate has risen from 84.2% to 86.8%
- Net primary enrolment for girls up from 78% to 83.4%
- Increase in number of trained teachers from 38% to 45%
- Increase in survival rate to grade 5 from 76.2% to 79.1%

Insert 3 analyses the main lessons that can be learned with respect to the three research questions outlined in section 2 of this paper. The data for the analysis is derived from a conflict sensitive review of the programme that was conducted by Vaux et al in 2006.

Insert 3: What can be learned about Effective Education Programming from the Nepal (Partial) SWAp?

Coordination: EFA provided a platform for bringing government and others together, but more needs to be done to encourage involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, especially civil society, in genuine consultation and review processes and to put government firmly in the lead on the EFA process

State building: Pooled donor funding was channelled through government systems and enabled the ministry to maintain teacher salaries whilst also investing in non-recurrent expenditure such as support for school management committees. However, deploying teachers to conflict affected areas was difficult and led to some schools employing facilitators locally. The Teachers union strongly resisted what they regarded as a challenge to the profession.

Do no harm: Approach helped to tackle exclusion and get resources down to the school and local level (a key driver of the conflict), but there was a need for more debate about long term strategies for tackling challenges to equity and inclusion notably overcrowding, allocation of teachers, examination failure and language of instruction

3.2 Trust Fund (Working towards a government-led framework) - The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)

Multi donor Trust funds (MDTFs) are funds established to support development-related activities or programs, frequently with administration by the World Bank, but sometimes by the UN, and with one or more donors also contributing. MDTFs behave in a similar way to budget support and can achieve similar objectives, but there is greater fiduciary protection. MDTFs are a common financing modality in post conflict reconstruction and, in a recent major review of experience, are reported to have generated positive externalities related to aid effectiveness and state capacity building (Scanteam/Norway, February 2007).

In Afghanistan, after the international community intervened to oust the Taliban in 2001, it was clear that large scale assistance would be needed to address the physical damage and the years of neglect that the country had suffered (Scanteam, 2007). The ARTF was set up in March 2002 to serve as a coordinated financing mechanism for the transitional government's recurrent budget (the Recurrent Cost Window) and priority reconstruction programmes and projects identified by Government (the Investment Window). Since commencing operation, the ARTF has successfully mobilised US \$1.45 billion in grant contributions from 25 donors. It is the primary instrument for

external financing of the civilian operating budget. Insert 4 summarises progress on some key educational indicators associated with the ARTF (World Bank, April 2007).

Insert 4: Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund and Education Progress

- Pays for salaries of approximately 100,000 teachers – equivalent to US\$109 million per annum
- Enrolment of children in Grades 1-12 increased across the country from 3.1 million in 2002 to just over 5 million in 2006
- Enrolment of girls more than doubled over same period (from 839,000 to 1.75 million)

While gains in enrolment have been impressive, there are still as many as 2.5 million school-age children out of school and many more of these are girls than boys. There has also been much more success at getting children back into primary education than other levels.

Insert 5 below summarises some of the main lessons with respect to coordination, state building and do no harm in the education sector. These are based on recent evaluations of aid conducted in Afghanistan (DANIDA, October 2005; OXFAM, November, 2006).

Insert 5: What can be learned about Effective Education Programming from the ARTF?

Coordination: Within the overarching framework for coordination provided by the Trust Fund, it was important to mobilise stakeholders around a national sector strategy – weak ministry capacity to take a lead meant that aid agencies had to take a lead themselves, with much support of the core budget.

State building: Prioritising recurrent salary expenditure and systems for paying teacher salaries was a crucial underpinning of efforts to rebuild service delivery systems and was a key strength of the Trust Fund approach to supporting the Transitional government

Do no harm: Demand for education was far higher than anticipated when the government launched its back to school campaign in 2002. There remains great disparity in enrolment between boys and girls and there are significant regional disparities. In Kabul, the rate of enrolment is 81% of all girls of primary school age, whereas in other provinces (especially the south) it can be as low as 15%. Getting a solid information base on progress is a major challenge.

3.3 Social funds (Working alongside a government-led framework) - The Yemen Social Fund for Development

Social funds are generally multi-sectoral programs that provide financing (usually grants) for small-scale public investments targeted at meeting the needs of communities, and at contributing to social capital and development at the local level. They are usually implemented through community based approaches, which involve beneficiaries in their identification, design and/or management. Social funds have been employed in a range of fragile state settings and it has been claimed that they can bridge the gap between humanitarian and development responses (Slaymaker and Christiansen, February 2005).

Yemen is one of the lowest ranked countries on the Human Development Index and suffers from institutional weaknesses that limit its capacity to guarantee effective, efficient and equitable delivery of social services (Consultores Internacional/Environmental Resources Management, April 2007) The Yemen Social Fund for Development (YSFD), which was established in 1997, was designed to improve access to basic social services for low income groups, and also to provide an example of an

effective, efficient, and transparent institutional mechanism for providing social services in Yemen. The third phase of the SFD (2005 – 2008) is supported by 15 donor agencies who contribute a total of US\$300 million. In addition, IDA provides US\$60 million; borrower contributes US\$40 million. Over 50% of the investment to date has been absorbed by the primary education sub-sector. Progress in primary school access associated with the SFD has been generally positive as Insert 6 below shows (Consultores Internacional/ Environmental Resources Management, April 2007).

Insert 6: Yemen SFD and Education Progress

- Contributed to building 12,978 classrooms since 1997
- Number of students enrolled associated with SFD investments has increased by 38%
- Increase in enrolment of girls in rural areas particularly impressive – up by 122% in rural areas since 1997
- Drop out rates relatively low (2% for males and 3% for females)
- Pupil/teacher ratio has increased from 29 to 50 between 2003 - 2006

A recent multi-donor evaluation of the performance of the YSFD gives some insights into its impacts on coordination, state building and do no harm (Consultores Internacional/Environmental Resources Management, April 2007; Jennings, 2006). Analysis based on those two documents is presented in Insert 7 below. The main messages are that the YSFD was an excellent vehicle for piloting innovative approaches, and for stimulating demand for education services, but it has been less successful at joining up the demand side with the supply side.

Insert 7: What can be learned about Effective Education Programming from the Yemen SFD?

Coordination: YSFD was very successful at responding to community level demands for projects (the majority in the education sector) but evaluation points to a need to focus on fewer agreed policy development outcomes rather than on a range of inputs and to limit the tendency of donors to earmark financing for particular sectors or sub-sectors

State building: Sustainability of YSFD inputs was an issue as can be seen in the rise in the pupil/teacher ratio. This is due to constraints at the central level, in relation to financial flows to decentralised levels, weak public financial management, and a lack of civil service reform. Capacity building in Ministry of Education is essential to remedy these deficiencies and to match supply of inputs, particularly teachers to demand for education services.

Do no harm: YSFD has been an excellent vehicle for piloting policies, such as those targeting girl's education and building local structures of accountability at community level through the establishment of parent councils. A challenge going forward is for Ministry of Education and YSFD to jointly identify how the benefits of the pilots can be adapted for adoption on a nation-wide basis.

3.4 UN-led joint approach (Working outside of a government framework) – UNICEF in Somalia

The previous approaches depend on at least some government capacity and willingness to provide a framework for coordination and delivery of sectoral inputs. What about situations where there is either no central government with which to work (either because its capacity has been destroyed, or because the aid relationship has broken down entirely)? In the education sector, UNICEF is increasingly regarded by many donors as a preferred partner in these situations and there are ongoing

efforts to enhance the capacity of UNICEF to play these roles more systematically (DFID, April 2007).

There has been no effective functioning government since the fall of Siad Barre in 1991 and civil unrest is a major obstacle to development in Somalia. As Insert 8 shows, progress in the education sector to date has been modest, although from an initially very low base (UNICEF, April 2005).

Insert 8: Education progress in Somalia – from 2005 baseline report

- 13% of school-age girls enrolled in primary schools and 20% of boys
- 1,172 operational primary schools in Somalia, up from 600 at the start of the civil war. There has been an average increase of 28% in primary school enrolment over the past three years (2003/4 data).

UNICEF has been active in Somalia since 1992 and has a presence in each of the three zones - North West, North East and Central Southern (UNICEF, April 2005). UNICEF focuses on primary education (both formal and alternative), with a particular remit for girls' education. A number of other actors are also working in the education sector, including UNESCO, WFP, UNHCR, the European Commission, the World Bank, USAID, and a range of non-governmental organisations. Stakeholders are generally part of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB). The analysis in Insert 9 draws mainly on an evaluation of UNICEF's work in Somalia conducted by Sen et al in 2002.

Insert 9: What can be learned about effectiveness from the UNICEF programme in Somalia?

Coordination: UNICEF was a key player in the education group of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB). This consisted of some of the main stakeholders in the sector. It coordinated programmes, facilitated the sharing of information, and formulated guidelines for programming. However, its location in Kenya led to only limited coordination on the ground. The absence of Somali organisations from the SACB also decreased its relevance.

State building: UNICEF took a strategic view and was instrumental in the training of 6,500 primary school teachers across all three zones and the development of primary textbooks written in the Somali language. In Somaliland, a system of community managed, government aided primary schools provided for teacher salaries through a mixture of community and government funding. However, short term funding cycles made it difficult for UNICEF to support its partners in institution building.

Do no harm: UNICEF, because of its size and reach, was reported to be one of the most successful international agencies working in Somalia when it came to understanding the socio-political nuances of working effectively and minimising the risk of creating unintended consequences. Cost sharing was found to be potentially undermining equity goals, and UNICEF was advised to develop social targeting mechanisms in the context of efforts to achieve universal coverage.

4.0 Applying the framework to the Fast Track Initiative

The Fast Track Initiative (FTI) provides a global framework for the coordination of international inputs into the education sector. The initiative, including a fund, is managed by the World Bank. It is designed to channel additional financing through the catalytic fund to those countries which have a satisfactory plan but which are deemed under-funded by in-country partners (FTI Status Report,

2006). Eligible countries need to have a sector plan, which is endorsed by donors in country, and that is judged in relation to eligibility criteria set out in the FTI's indicative framework which defines benchmarks for inputs, outputs and policies (FTI, 2004). The Education Programme Development Fund (EPDF) is designed to build planning capacity in advance of catalytic funding. Although the FTI already supports some fragile states, it is generally oriented towards 'good performers'. This section uses the framework to assess the extent to which the FTI approach can contribute to more effective aid to education in fragile states².

The FTI commissioned a Task Team in 2006 to look at whether and how the FTI should increase its support for education in fragile states (FTI Inter-agency Task Force on Fragile States, November 2005). The report indicated that the FTI could potentially add further value in three areas: coordination of donor efforts, capacity building for development of plans, and increased funding. However, significant changes would need to be made to its approach if it was to make a difference in fragile states where government systems cannot be used. The EPDF was recommended as the channel for financing to fragile states and several pilots were subsequently proposed. More recently, the FTI Fragile States Task team has been developing a 'progressive framework' to help guide prioritisation of education support in fragile states (Fragile States May 2007 Bonn presentation³). While the impact of the FTI has not been specifically evaluated in a fragile state, some tentative conclusions can be drawn from a combination of the above material and personal communication.

Insert 10: Can the FTI be a vehicle for promoting more effective education aid in fragile states?

Coordination: There is little appetite amongst FTI partners for revisiting the indicative framework to orient it towards fragile states. The proposed 'progressive' framework has the potential to focus the efforts of FTI partners on aspects of state building in different fragility contexts. The FTI ultimately depends on coordination of functioning national level processes.

State building: Increasing finance for programming through the catalytic fund would require significant additional funds for education to be mobilised from the international community. It is unclear what level of political commitment there is for this or for making the funding available over a longer time period, which would be needed to support teacher salaries.

Do no harm: The EPDF could potentially add value in terms of capacity building and developing approaches that address the root causes of conflict and reduce inequity and exclusion. However, the rules would need to be changed to allow proposals to be made by agencies which are present on the ground rather than by the World Bank only which is currently the case.

5.0 Conclusions: To what extent can education aid be delivered more effectively in fragile states?

The analysis presented in this paper shows how wide the range of fragile states is, and consequently how difficult it is to generalise across these diverse development settings. A one size fits all approach will not work and each of the approaches reviewed has both strengths and weaknesses. The Fragile States principle relating to the mix and sequencing of aid instruments is therefore relevant here (principle 9), and as already pointed out, the possible range of options goes beyond those analysed here. The main conclusions with respect to each of the three research questions posed in section 3 of this paper are as follows.

² A recent draft paper (Dom, 2008) updates some of the information presented here, particularly with respect to progress made on developing more flexible financing for fragile states.

³ See http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org/library/Bonn_FSTTpresentation.pdf

To what extent can key stakeholders be brought together in support of a joint planning framework for the education sector?

Getting stakeholders behind a joint planning process is probably the area over which donors have the most control, but even so there are only partial examples of success. The cases above show the importance of government ownership of the planning process even if this can only be achieved at sub-national levels. When working with and through government structures, complementary efforts to build human resource and systems capacity are crucial. The need for planning structures which include a wide range of stakeholders is also essential, particularly since in many fragile state contexts, non state actors are likely to be much more prominent in service delivery. The Fast Track Initiative could help to bring partners together behind a joint planning process through the progressive framework.

To what extent can state capacity and governance be developed to enable teachers to be paid, trained, and deployed across the school system?

One clear message from these examples is that it is possible to mobilise long term predictable financing in fragile states in order to support the payment of teacher salaries at scale. Trust funds and partial SWAps have both been used with reasonable success to deliver aid that supports recurrent costs. Community based approaches can also be an effective way to support teachers if there are complementary efforts to help government on the supply side. An interesting innovation in Somalia was empowering community schools to hire and pay teachers. This may be one option for increasing the supply of teachers in remote or difficult areas, but quality control is likely to be an issue in the medium term.

To what extent can the state be supported to promote equitable access to education services and to implement policies that tackle exclusion at school level?

Equitable access to education services and inclusive policies at the school level are crucial to long term efforts to build social cohesion in fragile states. The cases reviewed here show that a combination of weak government capacity, limited geographical access, and contended curriculum, makes it extremely challenging to tackle these issues in the education sector. One of the examples reviewed indicates that pilot projects can be successful at the local level, but stakeholders need to work hard to get these pilot approaches integrated into government policy. The examples also indicate the importance of robust dialogue processes that allow for the development of long term strategies to tackle equity issues and a solid information base to monitor progress, together with ongoing efforts to understand the relationship between education and fragility. The FTI's Education Programme Fund is potentially an important source of financing for analysis and capacity building of equity and inclusion issues in advance of broader efforts to support the sector.

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