Education and Fragility: A Synthesis of the Literature[1]

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The purpose of this paper is to provide a synthesis of the emerging literature in the field of education and fragility. We examine the various attempts to capture the contexts of fragility in a pragmatic manner, from both an operational and a policy-making perspective. We review the macro, state-centric definitions of fragility, which highlight the importance of the state and its institutions in driving fragility and as a partner for change, but also look at the limitations of this perspective. We then turn to more micro-level approaches to capturing the contexts of fragility, showing its difference from conflict, and looking in particular at more cross-sectoral and societal characteristics of fragility. Ultimately, we conclude this paper by acknowledging that, in practical terms, practitioners and donors are using both perspectives to guide their work in education and fragility.
Key Words: *Fragile States, Education, Research*

Introduction

Fragility is a high priority for international policy-makers, yet defining fragility is contentious and complex (Tebbe, 2007). Fragility is a barrier to development: countries are characterized by stagnation, tension, high risk, sporadic violence, political turbulence, and similar factors that create continuous erosion of the means of progress (Wright, June 2007). Though not one single definition of "fragile states" or "fragility" exists, these concepts incorporate ideas that underline a government's weak capacity and inability to provide basic social services, such as education. Throughout this paper, we examine these common ideas of fragility while also offering other perspectives, such as the dynamic, fluid nature of fragility. We argue that more holistic views of fragility must be taken into account, especially when working in the education sector.

Education, and schools in particular, are often discussed in terms of their pastoral role in the lives of the young, in economic terms of human capital development, and in terms of social justice with access to education as a human right that can be life-saving and life-sustaining. Education can be all these things—providing much needed care and protection for children, preparing children for the workforce, developing life-skills, and offering a safe place and sense of future hope. However, Sobe (2007) posits that there are "political and cultural logics embedded in the roles and social purposes that education is being envisioned [by the international community] to play in emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction" (p.1). Education is neither neutral nor immune to the forces around

it, and while this recognition is not new, it is increasingly relevant to the work of education in fragile contexts. It is therefore pertinent to recognize that education is a process that socializes and has the potential to reproduce and/or reinvent societal norms. Education thus needs to be viewed holistically since it is not entirely known how education and fragility interact with one another. In this paper, we map out common explanations of their interactions while also suggesting the need for further study because of fragility's dynamic nature. Therefore, the purpose of our paper is not only to give an overview of the literature on fragility and education—attempting to document their complex, fluid, and emergent relationship— but also to surface important assumptions that must be taken into consideration for aid agencies, policy-makers, and practitioners.

Towards a Definition of Fragility

The 2007 Global Monitoring Report singled out fragile contexts as posing the greatest challenge for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Universal primary education is explicitly included in the MDGs; however, education is also an implicit theme in each of the other goals. For example, education is positively correlated with higher income rates—for every year of schooling, wages increase by an average of 10% (Save the Children, 2008), and education is also closely connected to better health outcomes in a population, particularly in lowering infant & maternal mortality rates (Save the Children, 2008). There is much debate within the field regarding the terms used to denote the multiple ways in which to characterize the varied barriers that hold some countries back from achieving their development and, more specific to our work, educational goals. A body of literature grew out of the dual needs in the development and humanitarian assistance worlds to achieve the MDGs, and the increased focus on global security issues after September 11, 2001. Various descriptors have been used—states are "weak," "failing," "failed," "collapsed," "at risk," "precarious," "vulnerable," "recovering," "turning around," or "Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS)." Regardless of which term was being used, each describes some type of "significant *state* failure or dysfunction" (Grono, January 2007, para. 3). Each term further generated significant controversy from the states being so defined, a controversy that remains today despite the attempts to use terminology that is more inclusive.

The impetus for these state-centric definitions of fragility lies with donors and organizations committed to driving change by working alongside governments. The challenge for donors has been to create definitions that enable workable categories for donor principles and operational decision-making in troubled states where their own mission and programming strategies reflect state-building and governance priorities. According to Torres and Anderson (2004), terminology relating to fragility variously emphasize 'state fragility' (USAID, DFID), 'poor performance' (WB, ADB, UNDP, AusAID) and 'difficult partnerships' (OECD/DAC, EC). These definitions are built on a "policy-relevant typology" (Colenso, 2005) which emphasizes a *lack of political will* and/or *lack of capacity*[2] on the state level, specifically in regards to the provision of key services to its population. For example, the Department for International Development (DFID) defines fragile states as ones in which "the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to its people" (DFID website). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2005) refers to fragile states as "countries that lack the ability, or will, to provide basic services or protection" (p.v).

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[2] For a discussion of 'will' and 'capacity' please see Rose and Greeley 2006, pp. 5-7.

While there is overlap in the ideas of state commitment and capacity for offering basic services[3], key differences arise in the process by which the terms are used. For example, DFID takes a poverty-alleviation perspective to prioritize working in fragile states—MDGs cannot be reached without progress in fragile states where there is depressed growth. USAID prioritizes stability and national security issues in their definition (USAID, January 2005; Dubovyk, 2008), arguing that the underlying causes of instability point to the priorities in mitigating fragility. While the emphases may be on development in the first and security in the second, these two concepts are not only both key services that should be provided by the state, but they both clearly interact with each other: a lack of development with weak social indicators and economic decline often precedes political instability, and political instability often creates economic decline and diminishing social sector strength/cohesion. Furthermore, as Cream Wright of UNICEF cautioned in 2007, fragility can "ricochet" across borders, threatening the development and security of other states. Thus, here we see the donors' attempt to reconcile their 'operational missions' by utilizing a state-centric, pragmatic, response to fragility by addressing human development, security and economic ramifications while also trying to prevent spill-over effects into other nearby countries (Chauvet & Collier, 2004).

The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP, and AusAID, also emphasize the state and its institutional capacity/commitment in the delivery of key services to its populations in their definitions of fragility. The emphasis here, however, is in 'development partnerships,' and fragility is viewed as 'poor performance' on the state level. Furthermore, the World Bank recognizes an inherent link between economic factors and fragility, describing conflicts that impact the majority of fragile states as 'development in reverse' which has been preceded by significant economic stagnation or deterioration, thus linking the Bank's approach to working in fragility with the development aims of the MDGs. Each of the definitions emphasizes the importance of the state in working to provide basic services to their populations in order to mitigate fragility. In practical terms, this view attempts to support states (as partners) in addressing fragility by pointing out that states have the agency to act, improve policies, invest in sector services and work to improve their economies. Yet these concepts need to be examined in more depth. For example, in the education sector, simply providing schools in fragile contexts may not be enough. Without attention to, for example, school safety, issues of access in terms of school attendance and curricula, and so on, donors, practitioners and governments may miss opportunities to improve educational outcomes in fragile contexts and, related to this, potentially alleviate some of the threats to stability. Therefore, going beyond state service provision to ensure inclusion, participation, sense of worth and so on, is important in reducing fragility and does not explicitly appear in these definitions.

While there is "no common definition of fragile states" (Dubovyk, 2008, p.1), according to Miller-Grandvaux (2008), since 2004, practitioners and donors have increasingly referred to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) definition of fragile states which emphasizes 'difficult partnerships' caused by 'poor governance' as the defining characteristic. In these countries "there is a lack of political commitment and/or weak capacity to develop and implement pro-poor policies" (DAC website) and these states tend to experience violent conflict, or at the very least, have conditions that make development difficult (DAC Fragile States Group). In addition to recognizing the centrality of the state and its

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[3] In January 2005, the World Bank, OECD/DAC and European Commission's (EC) 'Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States' in January 2005 developed an explanation of what core functions/basic services should be provided by a state power: security, protection of property, economic management, and the provision of basic services such as education and health care (Colenso 2005) basic public services and essential infrastructure.

institutions as positively and negatively impacting fragility/stability, the OECD/DAC focus allows for designation of states as fragile using a range of criteria. In other words, the fluid and dynamic nature of fragility is recognized. The DAC framework categorizes fragile states as follows: (1) deterioration (conflict/risk of conflict; declining capacity and/or will; (2) arrested development (lack of will; moderate or high capacity); (3) post-conflict transformation (risk of conflict; low capacity; high or low will); (4) early recovery (may be post-conflict or not; high will but low capacity). Such characterizations offer a starting point for analyses in a particular context and help shape programmatic and policy strategy/content for fragile states (Meagher, November 2007).

Not surprisingly, however, there are many objections to the label of 'fragile state.' Given the uncertainty of how to work in fragile contexts, the added label of 'fragile state' could further stigmatize a country. This could then make economic turnaround even more tenuous, further contributing to poverty, and then reinforcing the fragility status—since poverty is used as an indicator of fragility. However, some countries that have not faced conflict and where good relations with national governments are still possible—that is, where the government is able and willing—are labeled fragile because of their high rates of poverty, further highlighting the contentious and counterproductive nature of the label. The Gambia or Guinea-Bissau, for example, remains on the 2007 World Bank list of fragile states alongside Afghanistan, Chad, and Sudan, as countries heavily affected by conflict. Such groupings and categorizations confuse and send mixed messages to local governments. Some example 'lists of fragile countries' used include the World Bank's Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) which has now shifted to using the term fragile states and are based on a Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA), the Low Income Poorly Performing (LIPP) list, the Human Development Report (HDR) categorization and in February 2008 the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World. We might ask, how useful are such categorizations and multiple lists in aiding a country's recovery process or their efforts to reduce fragility?

Moving Towards 'Fragility'

The concept of *fragility* is increasingly being used by donors, practitioners and academics as a way to move beyond the emphasis on *governments* and their capacity or willingness to provide services or core functions. Focusing on the state level can lead to overlooking the temporal and spatial elements of fragility. Fragility is dynamic: as Miller-Grandvaux (2008) points out, "states may not always demonstrate signs of fragility; elements of fragility will be more obvious at some times than at others" (p.4), and states can move into fragility (e.g. Zimbabwe) and out of fragility (e.g. Rwanda) (Colenso, 2005). To contribute to long-term stability, and the attainment of MDGs, the lens of fragility needs to be broadened to enable consistency during the times when there is more stability, to prevent swinging back into fragility. This broadening must also allow the lens to reach beyond the country level, or government level, to incorporate the regional level, both within otherwise stable countries and across borders of stable countries. Overall, a country or state may be relatively stable, but may have regions of severe fragility and/or conflict that threaten the attainment of MDGs in pockets of the country, for example, northern Uganda and north-east Sri Lanka. In addition to pockets within states, it is useful in some areas to think of regions across states that may be fragile, for example, the Great Lakes region, and the Caucasus. The state-centric definition of fragility, according to Colenso (2005), is an ideological standpoint and thus cannot be assumed: "defining fragility as a lack of will to address poverty reduction or to enter into partnerships with external agencies, is to define fragility on donors' terms" (p.10).

Attempts to move beyond the state-centric view of fragility allow us to see beyond the cannot/will not dynamic. Vallings and Torres (2005) point out that weak institutions—such as education—are

the central driver of fragility, and that other factors associated with fragility include economic development, violent conflict, natural resources, external shocks and the international system. Poverty is a sufficient but not essential condition for fragility, but "fragility can occur when poverty or economic factors are *combined* with the presence of weak institutions that cannot manage the very real grievances caused by, for example, unequal distribution of resources or unequal access to formal institutions" such as schools (Vallings & Torres, 2005, p.7). Looking at other factors of fragility is helpful in two ways: first, it can provide insights into assessing the type and degree of fragility in different contexts, and related to this, it can provide a more holistic view of fragility. In the first instance, where there is a host state or state that has let a particular region become marginalized, one assesses the type and degree of fragility within these unique contexts differently. For example, in refugee or IDP camp settings that today may last on average eleven years, one is likely to find a different set of factors contributing to fragility than you may find in a state. Secondly, by viewing the characteristics of fragility, one can also focus on patterns which may include all or some combination of the following:

- weak, ineffective, illegitimate or collapsed governance or state;
- loss of territorial control or an insecurity or inability to control borders or rogue factions within the state;
- the presence of organized violence; neopatrimonial politics or elements of corruption or rent-seeking;
- horizontal inequity across population groups, including exclusion, elitism, and/or factionalism;
- low administrative capacity to provide basic services or generally meet the needs and expectations of the population;
- the stress of transitional dynamics from conflict to peace or between, political instability, conflict and regressive politics;
- and finally public disengagement in governance and services (Colenso, 2005; Tebbe, 2008; Save the Children UK, 2008; USAID, January 2005).

Several tools exist to assess fragility and relate to programming, many with an education lens (for example, the Progressive Framework; USAID's Education and Fragility Assessment Tool). Furthermore, looking beyond the state or macro level is illuminating in terms of understanding the root causes and impacts of fragility, particularly when the fragile context is not necessarily defined by or limited to the state level. However, there is a current gap in this area of the literature.

Ultimately, despite there being no consensus upon a common definition, Dubovyk (2008) points out that "there are three general agreements" among the definitions: first, that fragile contexts are "unlikely to achieve MDGs, thus reducing the likelihood of the entire world to achieve MDGs; second, each context of fragility is different and unique with different and unique problems" and third, fragility increases the incidence and/or likelihood of armed conflict (p.2). Broadening the definition of fragility to move beyond the state level may not address all these concerns, or the stigmatizing impact of being labeled 'fragile,' but perhaps it does help address some of the questions about the appropriateness of the term in some contexts. The move towards 'fragility' allows practitioners to go beyond the state level, and this is vital: the stakes are too high for the young who are at risk from greatly heightened vulnerability should the pendulum be able to swing back to fragility or should their region be overlooked.

Revisiting the Relationship(s) Between Education and Fragility

In addition to its core task of educating a citizenry, schooling plays a unique role in socialization (Althusser ,1971; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Foucault, 1977; Willis, 1981). From a fragility perspective, schools must be recognized as playing a key role in creating a sense of shared identity, "a common understanding of identity in terms of what is imagined" (Waters &LeBlanc, 2005, p.129). Buckland (2005) points out that education has a critical role to play in the wider reconstruction of the society, from building peace and social cohesion to facilitating economic recovery and getting the country onto an accelerated development track. As an imagined community, a nation relies on schooling and education to socialize its young into the ideas, values and beliefs of its citizenry (Sinclair, 2002). Schools are therefore sites of "social interactions where meaning is constructed in a particular cultural context" (Adely, 2004, p.355) and thus "schools also serve to support existing power structures and to socialize young people" (ibid.) to their roles in these relations. Both the "coercive aspects of social reproduction and the creative forces of cultural production provide liminal spaces" (Mosselson, 2007, p.96) for the young to learn how to navigate cultures and societies. These aspects of education provide both challenges and opportunities to working in fragile contexts, and thus without some reflexivity about the role and function of education and fragility, work in the education sector runs the danger of reproducing the factors that contributed to fragility in the first place. Burde (2005) points out that "mass schooling is used to enhance the legitimacy of the nation-state, and that the fate of this schooling is inextricably connected to sovereignty and national boundaries" (p.76), thus educators must ask how might schooling function in the context of fragility?

Education is viewed as a responsibility of the state in most contexts (Rose & Greeley, 2006), and in the context of the MDG of Education For All (EFA), an expectation that there will be legislation to support universal basic education. Indeed, there is an implicit assumption that the management, and in most cases, delivery of basic education services is undertaken by the state. However, as discussed above, education does not take place in a vacuum, and it both impacts and is impacted by social forces in the environment. Education is a highly visible institution, affecting most people within a state and thus has important symbolic value in (re)establishing the legitimacy of the state.

In synthesizing the existing work on education and fragility, three main, overlapping, themes emerge that parallel discussions around definitions of fragility (Colenso, 2005). First, there is a rights-based imperative that came out of the 'education in emergencies' thrust. Here, education is referred to as a 'fourth pillar' (Machal, 1990) of humanitarian response, together with the more recognized three pillars of food, shelter and health (Midttun, 2000; Sinclair, 2002; Colenso, 2005), as well as being linked with longer-term development goals. Secondly, from the rise in ethnic warfare in the post-cold war era, the literature begins to focus on the 'two faces of education' (Bush & Salterelli, 2000). Finally, there is a focus on service delivery and aid effectiveness in discussions of working in fragile contexts, echoing the move towards a more micro-level orientation as well as a move towards broader sectoral horizons, as the fragility lens allows us to address issues of fragility and vulnerability as they relate to justice, rights, security and so on. While the literature demonstrates the growth of the field from education in emergencies to service delivery, it is important to note that each section remains highly relevant to working in education and fragility.

Education as a Human Rights-Based Imperative

In 2007, Cream Wright announced to DFID that "the need to deliver basic services like education…is a right that cannot be held hostage to any national situation" (n.p.). Schools can be safe havens for the young in situations of fragility, but they can also expose them to risks. Alongside these

factors, education, and schooling in particular, is widely seen as a priority when working in emergency contexts. Fragility here is linked to a broad definition of emergency contexts, from armed conflict and natural disasters (Aguilar & Retamal, 1998) to silent emergencies (Pigozzi, 1999) such as HIV/AIDS and/or poverty. These social forces have a direct impact on the education system with challenges to service delivery, policy coherence, aid allocation and so on, creating "crisis situations …which have destabilized or destroyed the education system" (Save the Children UK, 2008, p.3). The focus then is on education as a means both to enhance child welfare and to promote stability and redevelopment (Burde, 2004, 2005). Education is considered a 'core function' or 'basic service' which the state *should* provide, and as a site to prepare citizens who will presumably enable the state to have capacity and will to provide these services in the future. As both Rose and Greeley (2006), and Barakat, Karpinska and Paulson (2008) explain, because education is such a highly visible symbol of the government's commitment to its population, it may serve as a barometer of the state's commitment to and relationship with its people.

Save the Children UK provides an operational response to this perspective: prioritizing "education that protects the well-being, fosters learning opportunities, and nurtures the overall development (social, emotional, cognitive, physical) of children affected by conflict and other disasters" (in Sinclair, 2002, p.23). This relates to the notion that education should be a 'fourth pillar,' as mentioned earlier. From this work came an attempt to define a set of frameworks (Aguilar & Retamal, 1998; Triplehorn, 2001; USAID, 2006; World Bank), principles (OECD/DAC), or minimum standards (INEE).

The Complex Relationship of Education and Fragility

When coupled with the difficulties and challenges in working in fragile contexts in general, the complex interrelationships (Kirk, 2006) between education and fragility become apparent. Education can be seen as a contributing factor to, a result of, and a potential force to challenge state fragility (Kirk, 2006). If the state is unwilling or unable to work in the education sector, there is a big risk for donor investment. On the other hand, education can serve as a positive force for populations living in fragile environments. Education is particularly key given that it is the largest, most widespread and visible institution in the country, evident even in remote regions. Its size, as well as its cultural, social and economic dimensions make it one of the most difficult institutions to govern and manage, and are a challenge to state will and capacity. In this area of the literature, there is an attempt to "address education beyond humanitarian efforts to a broader development and understanding of best practices, to investigate ways in which education systems can contribute to building peace, and to look at the unfortunate ways in which education systems are often complicit in creating conflict" (Paulson & Rappleye, 2007, p.342). In many civil wars, the education system is a prime target since schools are seen as representing political systems and regimes, and also as symbols of peace (Obura, 2008).

The link between education and fragility is complex. Recently there has been analysis linking education and conflict, proposing a more subtle two-way understanding of the relationship between education and social unrest/conflict, and drawing on broader conflict analysis to show how education might be a part of the problem as well as part of the solution (Smith & Vaux, 2003; Davies, 2004). Fragility can disrupt educational services, the school place can be a target for conflict or unrest, and the opportunity cost of attending school can be greatly increased, to name just a few factors. For example, after the December 2007 elections in Kenya, violence erupted and many schools were burned, vandalized and had not re-opened by the end of the year, while other schools experienced massive influxes of internally displaced persons (IDPs). This demonstrates how conflict can immediately cause widespread disruption of educational services where schools are both targeted and

closed while other schools experience major obstacles to their normal functioning (INEE, 2008). Education has also been shown to fuel social tensions and contribute to conflict (O'Malley, 2007; Obura, 2003, 2008). Over the last few years, the ways in which education contributes to fragility has also been recognized, for example, through curricula that amplifies the social divisions that were a precipitating factor in the outbreak of political violence, .

We have learned lessons on the impact curriculum can have during violent uprisings and subsequent flight. Looking back to the genocide in Rwanda, Sommers (1998) explains,

> Left uncontrolled and uncoordinated, the many refugee-led schools in Eastern Zaire became sites for sinister teachings. An education expert described how, in Goma (the administrative center for the emergency response in Eastern Zaire), international humanitarian agency officials weren't interested in education, [so] the government-in-exile ran the schools (p.7).

Bush and Salterelli (2000) point to the 'two faces of education in ethnic conflict'—that education both contributes to and mitigates fragility—and these themes have been further developed by CIDA/INEE (2006), Smith and Vaux (2003), and UNESCO (2004). Davies (2004) goes even further than the two faces:

> Education indirectly does more to contribute to the underlying causes of conflict than it does to contribute to peace. This is through reproduction of economic inequality and the bifurcation of wealth/poverty; through the promotion of a particular version of hegemonic masculinity and gender segregation; and through magnifying ethnic and religious segregation or intolerance. Schools are adaptive, but they tend toward equilibrium rather than radical emergence; hence at best they do not challenge existing social patterns that are generative of conflict. At worst, they act as amplifying mechanisms (p.203).

Between group inequities, that is, horizontal inequalities, within a society are a trigger of significant resentment (Colenso, 2005), and are recognized to be much more of a risk factor of social unrest than vertical inequalities (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Stewart (2000) points out that "equality of access in education is particularly important" (p.257) as schooling is both highly symbolic indicator of equity as well as being concretely linked to income earning potential and thus the future ability to diminish inequalities.

In addition to school-system inequities, micro or individual-level ramifications can emerge, such as distrust, and ethnic, gendered or social segregation. This is exemplified in the Burundian education system, where Hutu minority students do not have the same opportunities and role models that Tutsi children have; therefore, creating an education system of institutionalized ethnocentricism (Obura, 2008). In an unpublished paper cited by Colenso (2005), Ritzen, Wang and Duhilleul (2002) point out that trust is a vital feature of social cohesion and that horizontal inequalities in educational access and educational outcomes threaten trust. Putnam (2004) argues that for any government to increase social cohesion "the education process is the single most important policy lever" (p.5, in Colenso 2005). Among the implications here are the importance of (1) inclusive structures of education governance; (2) equitable distribution of education resources and opportunities; (3) opportunities to break down ethnic, religious and gender divides in the classroom (Colenso, 2005). The approach to education in this context may be to consider the marginalized groups, pre-existing divisions, cultural practices and traditional ways a country may educate its population. Thus, using these insights to

inform how we turn around fragility issues, we can move beyond the rights-based imperatives, and consider individualized development needs. For example, reducing barriers of poverty to education by reducing fees for some, increasing HIV/AIDS awareness through education based on prevalence rates in certain areas, and decreasing horizontal inequities in access to education by having a better understanding of the pre-existing inequities that may exist within the educational system at both the macro, systemic, level and the micro, individual or community, level.

Education programming can also serve as a positive force in mitigating fragility by protecting children, seizing opportunities to strengthen systems of education, and reducing the risk of conflict breaking out in a country. While poorly documented through research, this positive role for education amidst conflict or disaster has gained some ground among practitioners' experience. For example, *schools as zones of peace* was initiated in Nepal, wherein advocacy for schooling was pursued under conditions of ongoing conflict and led to increased protection of students (Wedge, 2008). Congruently, the opportunity to strengthen and improve schooling facilities was harnessed and pursued following the Tsunami, leading to superior facilities compared with some pre-disaster standards (UNICEF, 2005). General levels of conflict may be reduced by children where "determinants of social cohesion found that in most (perhaps all) countries the best predictor of high social capital is simply years of formal education" (Putnam, 2004 quoted in Colenso). For states experiencing fragility, whether it be via protection, stronger education systems or reduction of potential for conflict, each of these results suggests positive consequences of education programming.

There have been other practical attempts to address the complex relationship between education and fragility. A variety of assessment and program design tools exist which relate to education, conflict and to certain dimensions/aspects of state fragility. These tools can inform analysis and planning, although none fully capture the relationship between education and fragility. Kirk (2006, 2008) highlights that a critical challenge in education in fragile contexts is to link the micro, or local, level to the macro, or economic and political, level. She posits that there are 4 key sectors—social situation, security, economic situation, governance/political and institutional environment—in which to assess the relationship between education and fragility in order to ensure that education interventions are designed and implemented in order to shift away from fragility and towards stability and peace. Governments, agencies and individual education practitioners came together to agree and outline minimum standards in education work that can be pursued, also under contexts of fragility. Among these, are assessment methods, increasing access, sustaining quality, effective teaching, efficient school management, policy demands and coordination needs (INEE, 2004). Many of these efforts, be they tools, standards, or practitioners' experiences, show that education programs in fragile states can contribute negatively and positively, thus complicating the relationship of education and fragility.

<div align="center">Education Service Delivery and Aid Effectiveness</div>

That education is an integral part of the initial response as well as a key sector in later recovery and reconstruction is widely recognized and acknowledged (Wright, June 2007). This has led to the establishment of the UN Cluster for Education to take up its mandate in an emergency response and to support fragile states to move onto a regular development path. The key issues are: preparedness and capacity building to enhance regional stability; decreased risk of conflict spreading across borders; improved institutions and livelihoods; and financial accountability. There needs to be an emphasis on immediate education provision to sustain resilient learning communities so that communities whose educational systems are disrupted by fragility retain a sense of identity and a

pedagogical bond as a community of learners. To return to Wright (June 2007), educational interventions may therefore be pivotal not only for providing basic services but also for restoring normalcy in a timely manner and returning fragile states to normal development path.

While there are many imperatives for working in education and fragility, the plurality of objectives underscores the importance of aid provision and coordination in fragile contexts. Rose and Greeley (2006) summarize the objectives below:

Table 1: Agenda for support to education in Fragile Contexts

Agenda	Education focus
Security Agenda	negative and positive political use
	national identity formation
	disaffected youth
	religious schooling
	social cohesion
Humanitarian Agenda	community-based engagement
	schools as safe spaces
Education For All Agenda	rights-based approach
	addressing exclusion
	active citizenship, tolerance, and peace-building
Millennium Development Goals Agenda	national growth and poverty reduction; focus on primary education

Rose & Greeley, 2006, p. 2

Concern for aid effectiveness is reflected by a commitment to the MDGs on the international humanitarian and development arena, and fragility is documented as a fundamental barrier to achieving these goals, particularly in the areas of education. Furthermore, schooling is understood by many as playing a neoinstitutionalist role in the establishment of a modern political community, which would presumably address concerns about governmental capacity and intent, which are so central to definitions of fragility.

Achieving progress towards meeting education goals must be approached both cross-sectorally (e.g. through poverty-reduction strategies), holistically, and through a sector-wide approach (SWAP). Piciotto (2005) warns that by not working across sectors and with other partners, aid is wasted. There is evidence to show that, for example, increasing access to clean water has a strongly positive effect on school enrolment and attendance, particularly for girls, and that better rural transportation enables pupils to get to school more easily and reduces the private cost of attending school. There is also increasing interest in the potential of improved service delivery to act as a catalyst to restore confidence in the government, as, again, educational provision can be seen as a barometer of government commitment to and relationship with its population (Barakat, Karpinska & Paulson, 2008). To mitigate fragility and to promote stability, education should position itself at the center of four general domains of fragility: economic, governance, security, and social domains— as well as specific patterns of fragility such as organized or unexpected violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Each of these root causes of fragility can be addressed through education. Assessing the relationship between education

and fragility requires a recognition that much of the impact of education will be found only in long-term outcomes. The long-term timeframe required for assessing educational outcomes and the impact of fragility on education and vice versa has also been noted by the Education For All/Fast Track Initiative (FTI) paper (EFA/FTI, 2005).

According to Colenso (2005), there has been an increased focus on fragility and institutional weaknesses as key long-term development challenges. This focus coincides with an increased interest in 'service delivery' in fragile environments by many international, bilateral, INGO and other agencies/donors. Literature is now emerging that brings together the two priorities of service delivery in fragile contexts (see Berry, 2007; DFID 2005; Slaymaker et al., 2005), and aid effectiveness in fragile contexts (see Leader & Colenso, 2005; Piciotto, 2005). A 2005 DFID study identifies four goals for focusing on pro-poor service delivery found in the existing literature: (1) to achieve the MDGs; (2) the humanitarian imperative, securing people's rights to basic services; (3) as an entry point to triggering longer-term pro-poor social and political change; and (4) to prevent states sliding into or back into civil conflict (Colenso, 2005). Education is also a tool for development, economic growth and the future stability of a nation (Rose & Greeley, 2006).

Despite the contentious nature of the label 'fragility,' and the lack of agreement over a common typology, it is clear that the uniqueness of the fragile contexts and their histories, do share some common characteristics. Fragile contexts are the most off-track for meeting the key MDGs, provide some of the worst contexts for "protecting children from harm" (Save the Children UK, 2008, p.3). Furthermore, partnership is more difficult, as the national, regional or local governance structures are either unwilling or unable, or both, to create conditions favorable to long term development objectives. Finally, direct initiatives that educate certain groups may, at times, bypass the state having positive impacts on communities while undermining state capacity. This emphasis relies on both a short and long-term lens, and how to reconcile the two, which is particularly crucial to service delivery and aid effectiveness in the education sector.

Concluding Remarks

This synthesis paper is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions on research approaches and priorities in the emerging field of education and fragility, while also recognizing inherent assumptions located in the discourses on fragility and education. This paper contributes by presenting the existing literature in an attempt to understand the impacts of fragility on education, education on fragility, and explore the dilemmas of working within such a paradigm. We examined the definitions of fragility and of education in an attempt to develop a common understanding of the reasoning and parameters of such definitions. However, we also explored some common understandings of the terms education, fragility, and of the relationship between the two. We then explored the literature around education and fragility, identifying major themes and how they have evolved over the past decade, pointing out their continued relevancy and looking toward the following areas for further research:

- Revisit the holistic, dynamic, regional concepts of fragility noted above in order to examine how these new perspectives impact, are impacted by, and are in-flux with education initiatives;
- Review the "external shock" and "international system" drivers of fragility mentioned in Vallings & Torres (2005) in order to examine how private international firms, donor agencies, and international non-governmental organization impact the common concepts and holistic perspectives of fragility;

- Uncover the impacts on long-term development and fragilities that parallel systems created by external actors;
- Recognize how policies and programs implemented by "fragile" government agencies and national/local civil society organizations have decreased drivers of fragility;
- Examine the efforts to work across sectors in order to understand fragility's complexities;
- Begin asking the questions: Are the MDGs realistic in countries where fragility is present? How have the MDGs created a deficiency discourse that objectifies countries? What impact does this have on funding?

Throughout this paper, an underlying theme has been brought to the surface: concepts of fragility are created by donors while contributions to the discussion surrounding "fragile states," and now "fragility," are mostly "western-centric." There has been an increasing recognition since the 1990s of political dimensions to aid. In order to engage in a more holistic discussion concerning fragility, education, and the link between the two, various voices need to be brought to the table in order to suggest ways to move forward.

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