



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

SUMMARY

This paper aims to determine particular capacity development needs in education in contexts of fragility. It first examines the discussions on fragility in terms of various categorisations of phases, types and causation. Fragile states are understood as those that lack capacity and willingness to perform key government functions for the benefit of all. Education can be both a cause and an effect of fragility, with its own problems of legitimacy, of contributing to conflict as well as peace, of having extremes of inequality and of experiencing weaknesses in governance. The paper identifies state-building as a key concern, that is, how education systems could enhance the accountability, trust, civic participation and social capital which would characterise a stronger state.

Capacity development is defined as going beyond the technical knowledge and skills of individuals to processes which attempt to improve organisational performance, institutional cultures and ultimately the social, economic and political context. This raises questions however of which dimensions to tackle and in which order. Organisational change relates to greater regulation and efficiency in places such as Ministries of Education, while institutional change tackles the more hidden cultures and informal rules of the workplace which may include the exercise of power and authority, nepotism and corruption. The surrounding environment points to education's role in ethnic or religious tension, and the need for attention to curriculum, textbooks and classroom relationships to foster greater social cohesion.

The paper shows the parallel roles of education administrative systems and education institutions in the task of restoring state functions. To enhance transparency and efficiency, administrative systems benefit from capacity development in regulatory functions, planning, accountability, financial management, communication flows, for the establishment of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, with citizen and community ownership important at local levels. To enhance participation and social capital, education institutions need professional development for teachers in areas such as political literacy, citizenship education, human rights education, media understanding, non-violence and the empowerment of females. To enhance human capital, capacity development is needed in specific vocational education and labour market analysis, but also in areas such as health education, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving. All this applies to adult education as well as schools.

The choices around where to focus will clearly depend on the specific context of fragility. This leads to consideration of the roles and positionings of donors. The paper outlines different methodological responses by development partners to date, whether in terms of principles for engagement, step-wise approaches or issue-based approaches. This links to choices around donor alignment and the relationship with government, as well as decisions on which stakeholders to work with. Ways forward at country, regional and global level are outlined. Resilient capacity development in fragile contexts needs a) an honest analyses of fragility, b) to seek multiplier influences, c) incentives for intended beneficiaries, d) to target those who can interrupt cycles of fragility and e) indicators of the impact of capacity development.