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Education and Fragility: an Assessment Tool

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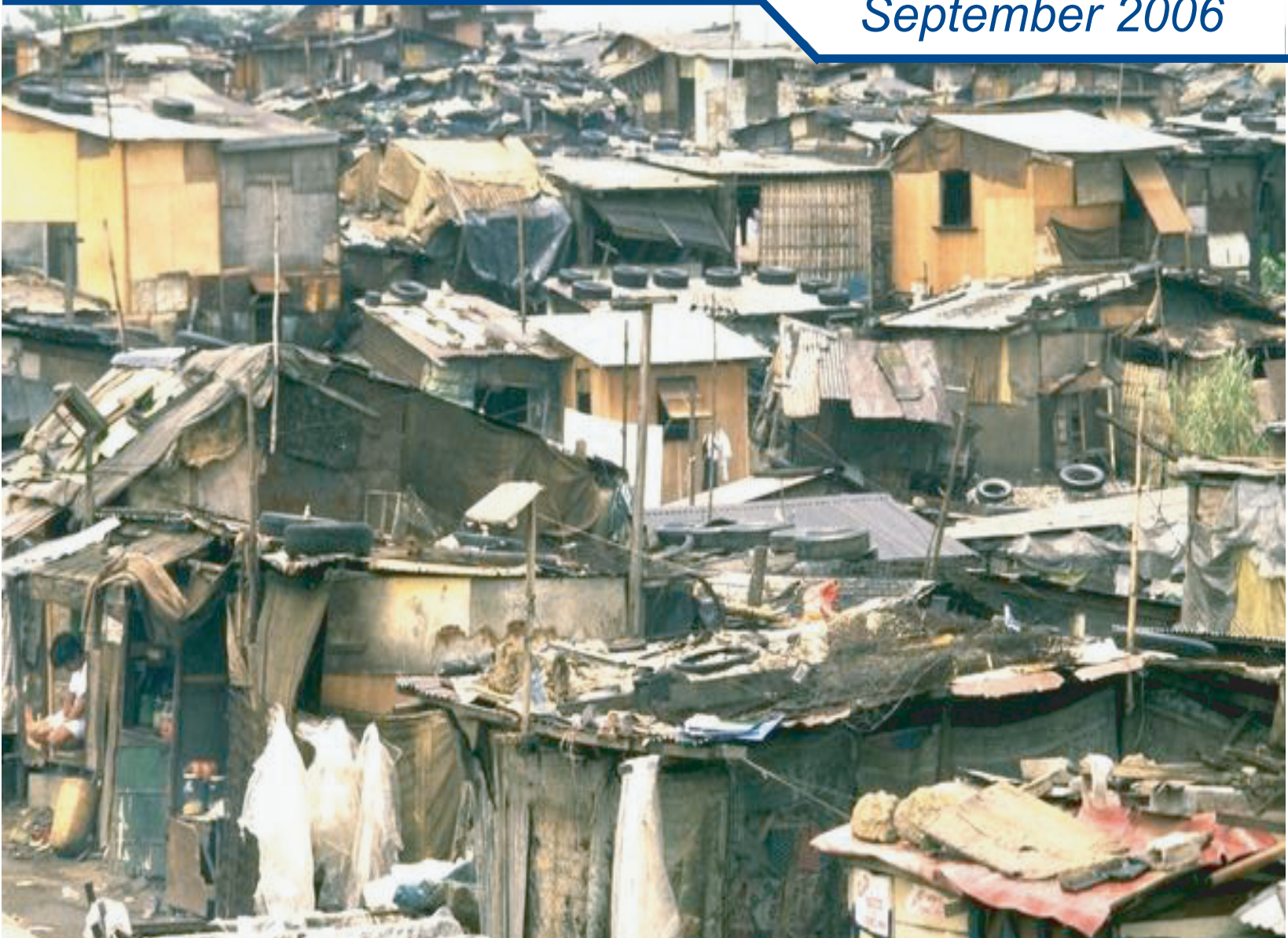




Photo credit: USAID/Leslie McBride

USAID helped rehabilitate 12 classrooms, replacing doors and windows, repairing the roof, renovating the electrical system and installing new lights and fans. The exterior and interior walls were patched and painted, and the classroom floors were redone. Classrooms were also fully furnished with new equipment. A community outreach program now orchestrates maintenance of the school and its surroundings.



Photo Credit: USAID/Reverie Zurba

A counselor works with AIDS-affected children at Jabavu Clinic in Soweto.



Photo Credit: Fitore Berisha, Mural Art Group

Young artists work on a mural symbolizing cooperation and connectedness.

Education plays a key role as both a contributor and as a mitigating force to fragility. While the traditional paradigm in the development world has focused on Education for All (EFA), fragility requires a new vision that exceeds EFA goals in pre- and post-conflict settings. Through research and consultation, a new paradigm for education has emerged that addresses the risks of conflict and the need to mitigate them.

This paradigm is framed around three key questions: How does fragility affect education? How does education contribute to fragility? How can education mitigate the sources of fragility and support resiliency? The assessment tool assists in answering these key questions through a series of thematic tables organized around general and specific root causes of fragility and their relationship to education. Each table looks at the links between patterns of fragility and access, quality, relevance, equity and management.

There are tables covering governance, security, social and economic domains as well as separate tables for specific patterns of fragility such as corruption, exclusion and elitism, insufficient capacity, transitional dynamics, organized violence, and public disengagement.

The specific patterns of fragility included in this toolkit are drawn from fragility assessments of current USAID programs.

This assessment tool is intended to help identify the links between education and fragility in countries that are at risk for conflict. The underlying principles that help define fragility include the quality of relationships between those with the power to govern and key actors and groups in society; the outcomes produced by those relationships; and the public's perception of the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state.

The following sample of fragility patterns are preliminary and should be viewed as a partial list:

Corruption/Rent-Seeking: *Those in power manage public affairs for private gain—for themselves or their political supporters. Access to public services is conditional on payments to providers. Examples include kleptocracy and self-enriching leaders.*

Elitism/Exclusion/Factionalism: *A systematic practice by one group (political elite, social, ethnic, religious, regional, socio-economic), to provide for its own needs rather than for the general welfare. Social service delivery is skewed to the group in power.*

Insufficient Capacity: *A government has the will, but lacks the capacity to manage effectively one or more of the structural conditions its faces. Structural conditions can include extractive industries, lack of arable land, bad neighbors or HIV/AIDS.*

Transitional Dynamics: *Transitional moments during post-conflict situations or elections can present either a window of opportunity or a window of vulnerability.*

Organized Violence: *An ongoing, violent confrontation exists between state security forces and one or more opposing armed groups. Violence destabilizes the lives of many in civil societies, destroys productive and social infrastructures, and limits social services.*

Public Disengagement: *One survival strategy of civil societies is withdrawal from the public arena because operating in the public realm is ineffective or risky. This includes political disengagement (low voter turnout in elections, reluctance to speak out), economic disengagement (focus on family subsistence), and social disengagement (under use of available services).*

This education sector assessment tool is designed to analyze the causes of fragility as they relate to the full spectrum of education services and systems, from early childhood to higher education, for formal and non formal education, for in-school children and students and out-of-school youth.

It is a work in progress that challenges traditional views of education development and offers perspectives for further cross sectoral strategies. Most of all it enables education interventions to help avert crises and build capacity and resilience towards peace and transformation.



How does education contribute to fragility? How does fragility affect education? How can education mitigate fragility and build resilience? These key questions frame a new paradigm that casts education in the forefront of addressing the risks and the reality of conflict in countries affected by potential or real unrest.

This Education and Fragility Assessment Tool was designed to help USAID missions and bureaus identify and analyze the links between education and fragility in failing, failed or recovering countries. Understanding this relationship will hopefully lead to approaches and strategies to mitigate the sources of fragility and contribute to building more resilient systems than can inform education policy and implement program recommendations. The goal is to support education's role in alleviating the conditions related to fragility while promoting transformational development.

The agency's strategic approach is particularly concerned with issues of legitimacy and effectiveness in governance as it pertains to four domains: economic, social, political and security. The Fragility Framework analyzes specific patterns of fragility such as organized violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Conditions of fragility require new ways of conceptualizing, delivering and evaluating the impact of development assistance, particularly in education. This tool is designed to be of relevance to all types of education services, formal and non-formal, and from early childhood development to higher education.

Acknowledgements

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I am proud of the work we have accomplished together to better understand education's fundamental role in lasting recovery and transformational development.

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ECONOMIC DOMAIN

How does fragility in the economic domain affect education? How does education contribute to and mitigate economic fragility?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does the economic situation affect parents? How?

Does the economic situation affect students or specific socio-economic groups? How?

Does the economic situation affect teachers?

Is the private education sector growing? Is this a symptom of weakness of public education?

Does the business sector (including the extractive industry) support formal and non-formal education?

Are there policies on school fees that affect access?

QUALITY

Does education content and quality meet the country's economic growth and development needs?

Do primary school graduates acquire livelihood skills?

Do parents and students see a link between education and employment?

RELEVANCE

Does education provide the skills, knowledge, and attitudes students need for employment?

Does the economic sector (private/public) impact on education and training services?

Are economic opportunities linked to training and education?

Are salaries and opportunities in the private sector more attractive than in teaching?

Do economic policies and decisions contribute to widening social disparities?

EQUITY

Do the inequities in the education system impact on job availability, level of income and status?

Does the availability of training and economic opportunities impact education?

Does the private business sector play an active role in education delivery? Please specify.

MANAGEMENT

Is education planning linked to economic growth or economic recovery plans?

Does the government's budget reflect a collective will to provide education services?

What proportion of the national /local budget is allocated to the education sector? How much is externally financed?

Are financial plans and policies implemented?

Has the economic situation affected the level of education resources, funding, and service delivery in the last three years?

Does decentralized financing impact equity or inequities in education?

Is student enrollment and performance linked to the allocation of education resources?



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GOVERNANCE DOMAIN

How does fragility in governance affect education?

How does education contribute to and mitigate fragility in the governance?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does the political will of the current leadership impact on educational access?

Does access to educational opportunity support the development of leadership capacity?

QUALITY

Have the curricula led to negative attitudes about different population groups and fueled extreme political or religious positions?

Is the classroom environment participatory or inclusive?

Does the quality of education help build democratic culture?

Are the schools affected by the performance and capacity of local education officials?

RELEVANCE

Does education give people the skills needed to participate in political life?

Does the quality of the education system produce students who can participate fully in society?

Can civil society groups involved in education (PTAs, student councils, teachers unions) also participate in local decision making?

EQUITY

Have inequities in the education system affected the political and governance structures?

Have political and governance structures produced inequities in education?

Does education provide equal opportunity for employment or for entrepreneurship?

Are school management committees selected and organized in an equitable manner?

Do inequities in educational quality fuel tensions? (quality of teachers, number of textbooks, materials)

MANAGEMENT

How do people show trust or distrust in national and local education authorities?

Does fragility within the leadership affect the capacity of teachers, school administrators? How? Why?

What factors affect the selection and placement of education leaders?

Is education decision-making (at all levels) participatory or exclusive?

To what extent are schools affected by the performance and capacity of national, regional and local education authorities?

Are resources well-managed within the sector? How does this impact on education quality?

Are the channels of communication encouraged between authorities and stakeholders?

Are citizens informed about the government's education plans?

Do communities participate in the delivery and quality of education services?

Do teachers' unions play a significant role?

Are leaders held accountable for the procurement and distribution of textbooks and materials?



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SECURITY DOMAIN

How does fragility in the security domain affect education?

How does education contribute to and mitigate security issues?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does insecurity affect school attendance for teachers and students?

Is access to schools impeded by insecurity in and around schools?

Are students or teachers lost to the schools due to conflict?

Does insecurity impact on educational access for refugees and internally displaced populations?

QUALITY

Does insecurity in and around schools impede education quality?

Do the benefits of an education or the opportunity costs lead to greater youth drop-out or participation?

Does curricula perpetuate and legitimize ethnic/political/religious violence?

Do schools perpetuate a culture of violence and create/sustain insecurity?

RELEVANCE

Is freedom of expression in education institutions encouraged/repressed?

EQUITY

Are ethnic and minority groups marginalized?

Does insecurity affect girls' education opportunities?

MANAGEMENT

Do human rights abuses, including gender based violence, happen with impunity in and around schools?

Does security affect school management?

What codes of conduct for teachers are in place? Are implemented?

Are children's rights violated (child abuse, gender-based abuse, etc)?



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SOCIAL DOMAIN

How does fragility in the social domain affect education?

How does education contribute to and mitigate fragility in the social domain?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does fragility impact on access?

Are schools segregated (ethnic/ religious, etc)? How?

Is HIV/AIDS a determinant of exclusion?

Do schools provide a healthy and clean environment?

Does poor health (HIV, malaria, etc) impact on access?

Do refugee children have access to education services?

Do parents decide which child goes to school?

QUALITY

What is the psycho-social impact of violence on students and teachers?

Do parents and students see a link between education and quality of life?

Do classroom norms support or mitigate a culture of violence? Of discrimination?

RELEVANCE

Is the language of instruction a contested issue?

Are the schools mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS?

Are there community/school mechanisms to respond to psycho-social stress?

EQUITY

Does fragility in the delivery and effectiveness of education services impact on student performance (literacy, retention, completion)?

Are the inequities in education delivery linked to a lack of educational quality (number and capacity of teachers, materials, appropriateness of curriculum)?

Is fragility contributing to inequities in education (numbers and quality of teachers, materials, relevant curriculum)?

Are there gender inequities in the school? What are they?

Do education policy and decision making structures reflect the socio-cultural make up of the country?

MANAGEMENT

Is there a high teacher turn-over rate?

Do education policies mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS (such as teacher replacement)?



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PUBLIC DISENGAGEMENT

How does disengagement affect education?

How does education contribute to and mitigate public disengagement?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Are public services being provided by non-governmental entities? Give a percentage.

Are citizens using government education services? Why?

Are non-governmental institutions (such as churches, civil society organizations, private voluntary organizations, etc.) providing services that should be provided by the government?

What do most citizens think is the appropriate responsibility of the government, the private sector, and religious communities in education?

QUALITY

Are students being taught about their role as citizens and the role of government in providing essential public services?

RELEVANCE

Does the education system politically socialize students/citizens? Does one have to be from a specific political party to succeed?

Does the education system provide students with an understanding of basic economics and job training or employment?

Does the education system encourage national unity? Does the education system reflect and support democratic processes?

How does the education system encourage the development of "critical consciousness" and awareness of social/political inequalities and issues?

Do students, parents, teachers, and communities have access to external and pluralistic sources of information (radio, TV, internet)?

Are educational institutions used as fora for debate or are they used to legitimize the government's actions?

EQUITY

Is the government providing education services to some groups but not others?

MANAGEMENT

Are international donors supporting government-provision of education services? Are donors working "around" the government?

Do communities have the capacity and will to advocate for education?

How does language of instruction policy impact public disengagement?

Are citizens able to become advocates for education services locally, nationally? Are communities organized to do so?

Does the government (in) action mirror the public's disengagement in education? What are the incentives to stakeholders for supporting education?



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CORRUPTION

How does corruption affect education? How does education contribute to and mitigate corruption?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Is there a pattern of money/ favors given in exchange for access to school, for promotion to other levels or other learning opportunities?

How does corruption determine who has access to education?

QUALITY

Do school inspectors receive money from teachers?

Is money favor given in exchange for good grades, scholarships, textbooks or materials?

What is the relationship between private tutoring and grades?

Are there standards for teacher performance and accountability? How are they enforced?

Are teachers models for students to emulate (in terms of honesty and transparency)?

How is corruption addressed in the curriculum and formal and non-formal school/ learning environment?

RELEVANCE

Do learners feel their formal or non-formal education is relevant to their lives?

Are students able to use the skills acquired in school to earn a living?

What are the economic benefits of learning? What is the economic benefit of certification at each level of education?

What civic values are taught and practiced in the schools? Is accountability part of the formal and non-formal learning environment?

Are there school gardens? How are they used?

What problem solving and conflict management skills are taught? What behaviors are patterned related to problem solving and conflict management?

Can formal and non-formal education offer an attractive alternative to corruption?

EQUITY

Are money/ favors disproportionately required of certain groups for grades/ scholarships/ textbooks/ materials?

MANAGEMENT

Is there evidence of ghost teachers?

Is there evidence of improper use of school fees (paid by parents)?

Is there evidence of improper use of school budgets (allocated by the government)?

How are the proceeds from school gardens and other revenue generating activities used?

What role do PTAs or school management committees play in mitigating or facilitating corruption practices?

Is there an expenditure tracking system (National Education Accounts)? How is it used? And by whom?

Is there government will/ capacity to promote financial accountability? Is there a demand for accountability from communities?

Is there a demand for accountability regarding school performance and availability of materials?

Is there accountability for the procurement and distribution of textbooks and materials?

To what extent are schools unsafe because of corrupt building practices?

Are fees or party loyalties required by faculty or teachers for placement in certain positions?



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INSUFFICIENT CAPACITY

How does government institutions' lack of capacity affect education? How does education contribute to and mitigate the insufficiency of national capacity?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does access to education at all levels depend on socio-economic status or ethnicity?

Who has access to public administration training?

Are there universities and centers of research?

QUALITY

What leadership skills are needed in ministries and local governments? What technical skills are needed? Are sufficient skills transferred through public administration training options?

Are education institutions used effectively in the policy making process? (i.e.: research institutes, data collection)

Does the curriculum support capacity development? How?

Are students acquiring the skills needed to live productive lives and contribute to the economic prosperity and social well being of their communities?

Are educational institutions sufficiently staffed and trained? What are the training needs of teachers and administrators?

RELEVANCE

What jobs exist for people who are educated in country to contribute to national development goals?

Are local and national education institutions being used to develop government capacity, as opposed to using international institutions or NGOs?

Are citizens able to engage with government, civil society organizations, private sector, to advocate for their rights?

EQUITY

What examples of favoritism in capacity building by donors/ NGOs exist to date? How can they be addressed?

How is inequity a factor in insufficient capacity? Could capacity development contribute to increased equity?

Are education institutions being manipulated to influence the education policy making process? (such as through data collection)

How are decisions made about who has access to education?

MANAGEMENT

Is there political will to address capacity in education?

What steps has the government taken to assess the skills needed to improve government capacity? Are there opportunities or plans to meet the skills gaps?

Is the government trying to attract skilled members of the Diaspora and local professionals?

How are educational priorities at the basic and tertiary levels coordinated? How are they aligned with economic opportunities in the country?

How are linkages among foreign, regional and domestic universities strengthening local capacity?

Are financial resources managed effectively and transparently? Do communities have access to school budgets?

Are education staff sufficiently paid?

Is the capacity of the education system aligned with the country's needs? (such as too many teachers being trained? Not enough?)

Do school management committees (PTAs, etc.) have capacity to participate in the management of schools? Is there a power imbalance in the management committees?

Is education information managed effectively and transparently? Is there an effective education management information system in place? Is it being used?

How are communities and religious schools recognized?



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ORGANIZED VIOLENCE

How does organized violence affect education?

How does education contribute to and mitigate organized violence?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Does organized violence affect school attendance for teachers, administrators and students?

Is access impeded by insecurity in and around schools?

Are students or teachers diverted from education due to violence?

How do internally displaced populations and refugees access education services?

What protective measures or services are in place for students?

Has a generation of students missed out on educational opportunities and is the problems continuing with the current generation?

QUALITY

Is education quality impeded by insecurity in and around schools?

What are the benefits of education versus opportunity costs that may lead to greater youth drop-out or participation?

Does the curriculum perpetuate and legitimize ethnic/political/ religious violence? Is peace education a part of the non formal and formal curriculum?

Do schools perpetuate a culture of violence and create or sustain insecurity?

What is the psycho-social impact of violence on students and teachers? How is it being addressed?

Do classroom norms support a culture of violence or non violence?

Are teachers trained in conflict resolution or peace education?

RELEVANCE

Are schools/universities serving as recruiting grounds (forced or voluntary) for organized violence or violent extremism?

Are gangs present in the schools? If so, are they school-based or external? What impact do they have on the 'culture' of violence as well as school-based violence norms among students and teachers?

Are out-of-school youth and gangs being reached by education?

EQUITY

Do human rights abuses, particularly gender based violence, happen with impunity in and around school?

Are students or teachers targets of organized violence? Why? (ethnicity, status as teachers, etc.)

Are students and out-of-school children displaced by violence receiving an education? What is the quality of that education?

Does violence create inequities in education quality? (number, quality of teachers, materials, appropriateness of curriculum, etc.?)

Are there gender inequities in the school? What are they?

Is fragility impacting inequalities in student performance (literacy, retention, completion, etc)?

How are disaffected youth excluded from educational opportunities?

MANAGEMENT

What is the relationship between education institutions and law enforcement/ military/ insurgents?

What role is played by security forces in suppressing or perpetuating organized violence in school?

What rules and procedures are in place to recognize and manage school-based violence or the recruitment of students?

Does the government have the political will or the capacity to address organized violence in education?

What role do communities have in managing the causes and mitigating the consequences/intensity of organized violence affecting schools?

Is the central government able to provide teachers, learning materials, and salaries throughout the country as a result of organized violence?



TRANSITIONAL DYNAMICS

How does transitional dynamics affect education? How does education contribute to and mitigate transitional dynamics?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

What are citizens' expectations of the education system during a transitional period? Are there sufficient schools and school slots to accommodate demand?

Does the transitional government provide a safe environment for students and teachers to attend school?

Does the government provide education services to displaced and relocating populations, including over-age groups? How?

Are the administrative barriers to school attendance being addressed, such as lack of identification, proof of completion, fees paid, etc.?

What is the size of the out-of-school youth population? Do they have access to education services? Have they ever had an opportunity to attend school?

Are schools being built by religious institutions? Are community schools being built with government approval or support?

QUALITY

Is there a procurement plan for textbooks and learning materials? Are there signs of equitable distribution?

Are curriculum content and learning materials being considered as a way to mitigate against fragility or reinforce resiliency?

Is the government promoting nationwide literacy? Please describe.

RELEVANCE

Are citizens, especially youth, being prepared to become productive members of the community? Are there non-formal education services offered for youth/de-mobilized combatants, etc.?

Are citizens being prepared to become active participants in the political process to build a democratic culture? How?

Are formal and non-formal education services providing opportunities for youth and adults to affect change during the transition?

Are there successes from the Office of Transition Initiatives efforts that could be expanded?

EQUITY

Are unqualified teachers being recruited, trained, and paid? How does this compare to the recruitment, training and payment of qualified teachers? Are there tensions?

Is there gender and/or ethnic balance in the recruitment of teachers?

MANAGEMENT

Does government will and capacity affect positive change? Is there an education budget?

What parts of the budget get funded? Is the budget tied to education policy or plans?

What are the government's philosophy and plans for education? How are donor activities supporting or shaping the government's plans?

What are the government's capacity gaps (such as personnel) to deliver education services (such as teacher deployment, payroll, supplies, etc.)?

How is the government recruiting and training teachers? Is there an attempt by the government to involve stakeholders?

Are higher education institutions involved in the transition phase?

Are communities defined and organized to support education?

Does the government plan to use education (formal, non-formal, basic, higher education) to facilitate the transition?



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EXCLUSION

How does exclusion, elitism and factionalism practices affect education? How does education contribute to and mitigate exclusion, factionalism, elitism?

To what extent does...

ACCESS

Are there statistical inequalities at all levels of the school system related to gender, ethnicity, pastoralists, language, economic class, region, geographic, disabilities, religion, elite status, political affiliation?

Are there alternative schools or compensatory opportunities for inclusion?

Are certain formative education experiences required of leadership or civil service positions in the country?

Are certain groups excluded from gaining access and acquiring skills for certain professions?

Does a lack of safety (ethnic tensions, gender-based violence) exclude some students from attending school?

Does lack of security exclude certain teachers or students from attending formal or non-formal schools?

Are all students and teachers able to travel safely to and from school? Are the roads safe from mines, attacks, kidnappings, gender-based violence?

Do internally displaced populations receive differential access to education services and resources? What is the impact of this treatment?

Are community leaders working to mitigate exclusion? How effective are they?

Are the educational services provided to refugees different (favored or excluded) from those provided to the local population?

Do the health and hygiene conditions in schools reinforce exclusion, such as water and sanitation, mixed latrines, lighting, etc.?

QUALITY

Does the curriculum content meet the needs of all students?

Do the curriculum and educational materials mitigate or perpetuate hostility/conflict between social groups? Do curriculum and educational materials emphasize the history, accomplishments, customs, values, and traditions of one social group?

How does the pedagogy reinforce or discourage independent and critical thinking?

Does the pedagogy reinforce participatory learning verses rote learning?

Does the language of instruction and general language use affect student attendance and learning? How?

RELEVANCE

Are inequalities represented in the curriculum and text?

Do some groups have more access to education content that is relevant to their lives and their vocational needs than other groups?

Are certain groups of people excluded from gaining the skills needed for broad participation in the political process?

Are there opportunities to improve the relevance of education for excluded groups?

What strategies are used to balance biased learning materials?

EQUITY

“Are there statistical inequalities in the teacher population? Are the better prepared teachers in urban areas and least prepared in rural areas?”

Does the quality of trainer preparation reflect gender, ethnic, or religious inequities? Are curriculum and learning materials distributed equitably?

Are schools appropriately located for all students? Does school location favor one group over another?

Are girls excluded because of the lack of sanitary facilities?

How are girls financing their education? Are they reliant on “sugar daddies”?

Are inequitable cultural norms related to gender roles and responsibilities reinforced in the classroom?

MANAGEMENT

Is there political will to make education inclusive?

Are data management systems used to drive policy decisions in education?

Does school financing exclude students? Are national policies designed to exclude certain groups from education (language of instruction, curriculum, teacher deployment, system of entry, exam system)?

Is there a system for addressing teachers' grievances? Is the system transparent and equitable?

Is there a high teacher turnover in certain areas (region, rural vs. urban) and in relation to gender, ethnicity, or other groups?

Do all students and teachers feel equally secure in the educational setting?

Are there differences in security levels among schools in the country?

Does the school management encourage or discourage certain groups from being targeted, recruited, or abducted?

How are internally displaced populations positively influencing education and assimilation? Are there examples of positive integration?

Do schools perpetuate a culture of violence or insecurity? Who is targeted? Are there instances of gender-based violence by students or teachers? Are there inequities in how discipline is applied? How does the state/school respond to incidents? Are incidents reported? Are there meetings?

Do authorities punish the offender? How is education managed when the political arena dictates closing public education?

How does an overly-politicized community/school leadership promote exclusion/ elitism/ factionalism?

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