

CONTEXT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

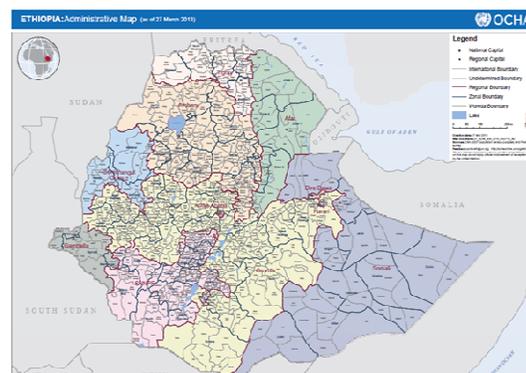
ETHIOPIA

This report summarizes findings from a context analysis undertaken as part of the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), funded by the Government of the Netherlands. The PBEA programme in Ethiopia aims to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and educational equity in the four Developing Regional States (DRS) of Afar, Gambella, Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz. Support for these regions is part of broader Government of Ethiopia efforts to redress historic political, economic and social inequities in these regions and the inequitable provision of public services by prior governments. Focusing efforts in these regions meets the nation's constitutional and policy-level commitments to equality, group rights and equitable access to public goods and services in marginalized regions. The purpose of the context analysis was to explore the nexus between education and conflict in each of the four regional states, and to identify programming strategies in each region that will strengthen education's contribution to resilience, social cohesion and educational equality.

Methodology

The context analysis was developed using regionally based literature reviews combined with participatory, qualitative field-based studies in the four Developing Regional States. Field-based studies began with a participatory workshop with the regional and wereda (district) level education, community and government representatives to understand their perceptions regarding issues of equity, social cohesion and education. Based on the data collected during the workshops, and in consultation with the Regional Educational Bureaus as well as UNICEF regional representatives, sample weredas were selected in each region as case studies. Criteria used to select weredas included intra-regional disparities and inequities, tensions and problems of social cohesion, accessibility, and social representativeness. In each of the selected weredas, the research teams carried out participatory research via interviews and focus group discussions with key officials, NGOs, local community members, teachers, students, Parent

The PBEA programme is a four-year programme, ending in 2016, that seeks to build peaceful societies by strengthening the role of education in peacebuilding and integrating peacebuilding within the education system.



Teacher Associations (PTAs), women's groups, youth groups, and members of contending groups, as well as direct observation. The resulting context analysis includes regional reports on each of the four DRS, as well as a summary of cross-cutting issues.

Context

Ethiopia is a land locked country of 91.73 million people, located in the Horn of Africa and bordered by Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan. Following the political transition of 1991, Ethiopia introduced the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) that resulted in the creation of nine regional states and two city administrations. Four of these regions – Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali –are considered Developing Regional States (DRS) due to their historical marginalization and low levels of development in comparison to more advantaged regions of the country.

Collectively, the population of these States represent 9.2% of the population, but 50% of the land mass. Poverty rates in the DRS, with the exception of Benishangul-Gumuz, are higher than the national average. Maternal deaths in the DRS are also very high. In the education sector, the National Enrolment Rate in primary education was 85.4% nationally but as low as 35.4% in Afar and 63.7% in Somali. Disparities exist between the four DRS as well. Afar and Somali regions have lower primary and secondary enrolment rates than the other two DRS regions but gender disparity in primary education is higher in Gambella and Benishangul-Gumuz.

These regions are affected by long standing conflicts shaped by a number of factors including their peripheral location, inequities in levels of development between and within regions, the volatility and influx of refugees from border countries, recurrent flooding and drought, the presence of multiple ethnic groups, weak governance, and limited social services. This has weakened the legitimacy of the Ethiopian state amongst the population in these regions and low levels of social cohesion have undermined community resilience against various shocks and stresses, both man-made and environmental.

Despite these challenges, state-society relations have improved significantly since 1991. The Constitution, with its unique focus on group rights, cultural plurality, and sovereignty of ethnic groups and peoples, has opened new political space for peripheral regions. Decentralization has brought government closer to local communities. Subsidies and special support to marginalized regions are addressing structural inequalities. The Government's focus on strengthening the management of diversity, improving equity, strengthening resilience to natural disaster, improving access to quality education for disadvantaged groups, and integrating peacebuilding in sector planning, curricula and pedagogy at the school level are all positive steps forward.

Underlying causes and dynamics of conflict

A number of underlying causes and dynamics of conflict were identified in the context analysis. Where appropriate, links to education have been made. While each of the regions are unique, cross-cutting issues that impact equity and social cohesion and drive tension across the four regions include:

SECURITY AND JUSTICE

- **Refugee populations:** The DRS have significant refugee populations from neighbouring states, including Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. Refugees' use of host land and resources creates hostility, especially when there are environmental consequences such as deforestation. Refugee communities have access to services through international NGOs that host populations are often excluded from, including education and health care services.
- **Border-related conflict:** Geopolitical conflicts in neighbouring states and international border related conflicts can escalate inter-communal tension and increase feelings of insecurity. The majority of border issues are related to competition for control of scarce resources (land, water, and forestland). In Gambella, spill-over from the civil war, child abduction and cattle raiding by groups from South Sudan fuel hostilities between the people living in these areas. In Afar, historical conflicts around borders with Eritrea continue to create tensions near the Red Sea coast. Unclear border demarcation and poor border security have resulted in migrating populations, including pastoralists, claiming dual citizenship.

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

- **Political exclusion:** Political representation is a contentious issue played out in power struggles between political elites at all levels of government, affecting the stability of the regional states. Power struggles are expressed through inter-ethnic and clan-based conflicts and tensions. The new pluralistic society is unprecedented in establishing group rights, but tensions still arise as a result of conflicting narratives around "ownership" of a region. More recently, the increase in inclusive regional coalitions have de-escalated some tensions related to political representation but a full meritocracy has yet to be implemented. Investments in education in the DRS are helping to solidify and advance regional, ethnic and gender equality.
- **Inter-regional territorial disputes:** Inter-regional disputes about border demarcation of the regional states and ownership of land has erupted into violent and deadly confrontations in several areas, including between Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia, Somali and Oromia, Somali and Afar. These conflicts often take on an ethnic dimension. The sole trading route connecting Ethiopia to the Red Sea lies on land disputed by the Afar and Issa peoples, an issue of national concern that is being addressed through an Integrated Security and Peace Committee.
- **Inequitable economic development:** Although the current federal constitution and budget are seeking to address inequalities between the regional states to contend with the underdevelopment of the DRS, historic injustices have meant these areas lag behind other regions in Ethiopia, worsening tensions as a result. This includes unequal access to education and vocational training. The poor quality of education in the regions undermines economic development and employment opportunities, particularly for youth.
- **Commercial agricultural development:** Foreign investments in commercial agriculture lands in Ethiopia are largely concentrated in the DRS, especially in Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and Afar. Foreign investors have encroached on protected lands, exacerbating environmental concerns as well as economic vulnerabilities of local people and inciting violence. Government-owned commercial agriculture is less contentious, because of corresponding investment in social services for local communities, though tensions related to the redistribution of compensation money for local communities still arise.

SOCIAL ISSUES

- **Tensions between native and settler groups:** Both economically and politically, the growing demographic of migrants (called "Highlanders" in Gambella) trigger friction with the native "owners" of the regional states, especially in locations where the settler groups have formed a

majority, or where they have greater access to education as a result of their increased likelihood to live in an urban setting (Afar). Tensions between indigenous peoples and settlers are also characterized by racial divisions, differences in marital practices and religion, and business and economic exclusion.

- **Mobilisation of ethnic and religious divisions:** While the constitution provides for self-determination of all ethnic groups on an equal basis, there are still some "invisible minorities" who lack political representation and are deprived of rights in access to basic social services. There is also growing religious tension in the Benishangul-Gumuz region where Islamists are posing a threat to inter-faith co-existence, as well as causing conflict within the Muslim community. In the Somali region, there is religious tension between Christians and Muslims, as well as potential for sectarian violence. Ongoing ethnic conflicts in Afar between several groups, including the Issa, are deeply rooted in history but have taken on an international dimension with the perception that the Issa are receiving arms and financial support from other countries in order to pursue an expansionist agenda into Afar territories.
- **Gender-based violence and discrimination:** Gender conflicts are manifested in marriage practices and bride wealth systems that favour men and treat girls as a resource in a material transaction. Domestic violence rates are high. Women lack property, inheritance and parental rights. Both infanticide and female suicide are on the rise in Gambella as a result of deteriorating social value systems that have led to a breakdown of traditional rules, a normalization of violence, and a sharp rise in rape cases. Absuma and early marriage practices in Afar also prevent girls from pursuing education.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- **Competition over scarce resources:** Competition over land (cropland, pasture), water, forests, and gold mines are key sources of tension between various groups across the four regions. Conflict over riverine lands in Gambella and Somali regions, conversion of forest lands into land for cash crops in Gambella, pastoralist encroachment into farmlands in Somali, and divisions between Afar and Isa Somalis over access to the Awash river are examples of these tensions. Longstanding resentment between indigenous and settler communities in Benishangul-Gumuz region linger. Many of these conflicts have a strong inter and intra-ethnic dimension and are exacerbated by migration of populations. Cattle-raiding is a traditional practice that has evolved to become increasingly violent in some areas.
- **Natural and man-made disasters:** Ethiopia is prone to natural disasters including flooding and drought, which undermines development gains, weakens the capacity of government and institutions, and increases the vulnerability of populations. Natural and man-made disasters can also exacerbate inequalities in the provision of services, including schools that are wiped out by floods or are made inaccessible.

Key conflict dynamics at the regional state levels

Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State

Under the regional state constitution, there are five major ethnic groups who are the "owners" of the region (Berta, Gumuz, Shinasha, Mao, and Komo). These ethnic groups account for only 57 per cent of the population with a large percentage of non-owners originating from the politically and economically dominant Amhara and Oromo groups. Tensions between groups have a strong ethnic dimension. Some of the most significant conflict drivers in Benishangul-Gumuz include lack of clear border demarcation resulting in conflict over control of land and natural resources in border areas, as well as tensions between indigenous people and settlers based on demographic shifts in the number of settlers and in traditional share-cropping arrangements

that by-pass indigenous populations. Relationships between settler and indigenous populations are complicated by the poor implementation of the Voluntary Villagization Scheme. Political elites and dissenters capitalize on these tensions and manipulate inter-ethnic conflicts for political gain. Issues related to traditional gold mining activities, friction between investors and local communities over agricultural investments, and cross-border insurgencies from the Sudan also fuel conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz region. The Tongo Refugee Camp and the Bambasi Refugee camp affect stability and socio-economic factors in host communities as a result of the destruction of farmland and forests, violent protests, and discord regarding inter-group marriage. In some areas, concepts of vengeance and revenge ('black blood' and 'red blood') are responsible for triggering and perpetuating inter-ethnic conflicts. Exclusion and discrimination on the basis of race, village or locality, religion, skin-colour, health conditions, and/or economics are also a major source of dispute/tension in the Benishangul-Gumuz region. Weak governance and lack of community based mechanisms for conflict resolution are key factors impacting social cohesion.

Somali Regional State (SRS)

Somali Regional State (SRS) is in the eastern-most corner of Ethiopia, and shares borders with Kenya, Somalia, the Republic of Djibouti, and the Afar and Oromiya Regional States. The people of Somali are considered to be homogenous linguistically, religiously and from a historical/cultural perspective, however there are deep divides across occupational, class, physical type and dialectic lines. Clans define the Amhara, Oromo and Gurages. The region has natural resources, but suffers from extreme poverty as a result of historical neglect of infrastructure and economic development and a two to three year drought cycle that devastates crops and livelihoods.

Conflicts in SRS revolve around governance, economics and social inequality. Clan dynamics strongly resemble ethnic divisions elsewhere and are the major underlying barrier to social cohesion. Clans disagree internally on politics and allegiances. Identity conflicts between clans take on a dimension of racial or occupational discrimination. An example of this is the divide between the nomadic pastoralist Somalis and the Bantu farmers. The dominant Somali look down on the Bantu and eschew intermarriage with them. This leads to systemic inequality and discrimination of minority groups.

Economically, resource scarcity (water, grazing land) has increased hostilities and violence between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in SRS and neighbouring regions. Growing populations of both people and livestock have not been matched by equal expansion of social services, a problem which has been compounded by an influx of refugees. Somali also has several protracted trans-boundary conflicts with the regional states of Afar and Oromia. The district of Moyale is the most contested area between Oromia and Somali, with ongoing conflict. Meiso-Mulu Woreda is also the site of an active conflict triggered by the looting of animals, and by territorial and resource competition.

Afar National Regional State

The Afar National Regional State stretches from Eritrea to Djibouti along the Red Sea coast. It also shares borders with Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and Somali. More than 90% of the population in the regional state are Afars, and the remaining 10% are minority ethnic groups who settled in the region. Non-Afars are the majority in the emerging towns and on the larger mechanized farms. Pastoralism is the dominant livelihood for 80% of Afars. The Afar have never had statehood, but historically the region was divided into five small sultanates (Tajurah, Rahayto, Aussa, Girrifo, Gobaad) all of whom had equal status and defined territories. Similarly to the Somali, the Afars are a strong clan-based society with a homogenous Afar identity that extends over international boundaries. Clan leaders settle disputes and protect clan members from attack and natural disaster. Clanship is the fundamental political, administrative, social, economic and security institution regulating their life.

Afar has experienced ongoing conflicts with neighbouring ethnic groups, mostly to do with control of natural resources. Conflicts between the Afar and Issa are deeply rooted in history. The Afar believe that the Issa, supported with arms and financial support from neighbouring countries, are strategically attacking with expansionist intent to permanently occupy and settle in regions currently owned by the Afar. As the sole import-export trading route connecting Ethiopia to the Red Sea goes through the Afar/Issa lands, this conflict is a critical concern at the national level. Many of the conflicts mentioned above have evolving causes and triggers, although the control of scarce resources is at the heart of most inter-ethnic tensions.

The Afar Regional Government supported the establishment of Joint Peace Committees with neighbouring states at all levels of government to maintain peace and order, settle justice cases, and organize people-to-people conferences to build trust between ethnic groups. Similarly, the Integrated Security and Peace Committees in Afar and Somali are working to address the Afar and Issa conflict, and have made progress in reducing violent incidents. Other conflict drivers in Afar include large-scale commercial farming resulting in environmental destruction, and the ongoing Ethio-Eritrea border conflict.

The role of education in peacebuilding

There is growing recognition of the potential for education to play a key role in building and sustaining peace. Education in conflict and post-conflict countries can provide early peace dividends and a return to normalcy for children and youth and can serve as an important preventive strategy by addressing inequalities and grievances between groups. Transformative education can challenge inequalities in society and contribute towards transformation of accepted norms around violence, gender and power. At the same time education can drive conflict through the inequitable provision of education services and biased curriculum as well as teaching methods that reinforce exclusion. When conflict impacts education it denies children their right to realize their full potential, as well as improved livelihoods, health, and protection that education affords.

In Ethiopia, conflict has been a significant barrier to advancement in the DRS. Conflicts have resulted in the destruction and closure of educational infrastructure and have strained the limited financial resources of the regions. Inequality in access to education and unequal mother tongue education provision widens intra-regional disparities. Rural areas and indigenous

populations lag behind urban areas and settlers in educational indicators. In parts of the DRS, schools reinforce existing conflicts when they are constructed in contested territories, leading to disagreements over curriculum, language and media of instruction. Insecurity and migration prevent families from sending their children to schools. Internally displaced populations strain educational resources in host communities. Political favouritism and clientelism in the civil service affects the competence and accountability of regional educational leadership. Cultural practices, particularly early marriage, have contributed to gender disparity in education, weakening the rights of girls and women. The increasing number of unemployed educated youth illustrates a misalignment between school and the job market. Annual demonstrations by TVET graduates testify as to the necessity to align the job market with education.

At the same time, increased access to education strengthens state legitimacy and can help the government redress historic injustices, deliver equitable services, and create a sense of social justice. Progress is being made across the DRS in educational performance indicators, and literacy, enrolment and gender parity rates are rising in almost all areas. The introduction of mother tongue education as a medium of instruction in primary education is a step toward the institutionalization of cultural pluralism and shows great promise to strengthen the quality of education received.

Education in Benishangul-Gumuz

Ethiopia's strategic focus on access in Benishangul-Gumuz led to the construction of cheap, poor-quality infrastructure that was rapidly destroyed by termites, conflict, vandalism, and weather resulting in disasters (collapses) and low completion/achievement rates. Inequitable access to education for rural populations, and disparities in indigenous versus non-indigenous participation in education, creates negative long-term effects on conflict dynamics. The poor management of teacher contracts (lack of good governance, salary delays, transferring of teachers) has also contributed to a lack of quality teachers and has damaged relationships between teachers and students/parents. All of these issues lead to high drop-out rates, and a mass of unemployed youth susceptible to conflict-related activities.

The growth of religious (Islamic) education, increased involvement of youth in religious institutions, and the expansion of madrasa schools indicate an increased tendency for religious fundamentalism. This contributes to problems with social cohesion within the Muslim community, as well as between Muslims and Christians.

In Benishangul-Gumuz, the poor implementation of the language/mother tongue policy and the Voluntary Villagization program both contributed to tensions in the region. However, with improvements to the implementation processes, these two programs will help to diffuse conflicts and tensions in the region and will contribute greatly to social cohesion and unity. Progress is already being made on these fronts. Alphabets have been developed for three languages in the region, and a new language of instruction (Berta) was introduced in pilot schools. Other societal rights around language, culture and history that are included in the constitution also received enthusiastic responses from indigenous ethnic communities. In addition, the inclusion of child rights and security in the constitution, and related legislation, helps to ensure that more children will be able to access health, education and other social services. Since the creation of the

region, almost all measures of educational performance in the region have improved, and specifically increases have been seen over the past five years.

Education in Gambella

Education in Gambella has contributed to state legitimacy through improved access, efforts to redress historical grievances, affirmative action, and mother tongue language policies. Educational access has been increased significantly. There is now an educational facility in almost all kebeles, as well as four TVET and one College of Education and Health Sciences. In addition, Metu Public University established an Agricultural faculty in Gambella town. Indigenous students have benefited from affirmative action and have gained access to higher education in Addis Ababa.

However, inequities in access to education, and the unequal development of mother tongue education among the five indigenous languages of the region, have undermined progress. Many of the region's "schools" have no infrastructure and take place under trees. In addition, the shortages of textbooks and qualified teachers contribute to a sense of relative deprivation among those who trail behind. Intra-regional disparity in educational access has triggered grievances. Indigenous populations are lagging behind Highlanders in terms of educational access, which breeds resentment by creating unequal opportunities for advancement. The education system has also failed to strengthen the resilience of communities in the face of disasters such as flooding, when schools are forced to close and opportunities are created for insurgency movements to arise. Education in Gambella also fails to align with the job market, and the rising number of unemployed, educated youth reinforces political clientalism, creating hostility among those left out.

Education in Somali

In Somali, there are significant intra-regional disparities in enrolment, dropout, repetition, number and quality of teachers, schools and infrastructure. To some extent, the disparities between zones and weredas reflect inter-clan and urban-rural disparities in the region as well. Educational inequality, especially between majority pastoralists and minority groups, contributes to internalized marginalization of minority groups. For example, the Bantu have extremely poor access to education and see education as something associated with the Somali and not with themselves. Schools constructed in contested territories cause clashes between groups fighting over the medium of instruction and curricula to be used in the school. Land dispute and the ownership of the school are the main issues, as well as the protection of culture and ethnic identity. Damage to school infrastructure is a common result of such conflicts. Similarly, the irrelevance of learning materials and curricula that are not adapted for regional contexts can create problems.

Peace clubs in schools are helping to manage these issues. For example, in Jigjiga Secondary School, the peace club played a major role in calming the student uprisings in 2003/04 and 2011/12 when violence erupted over an image of the Prophet Mohammed in a textbook. The school peace club advocated for non-violence, played the role of mediator, and spoke to students about peace, as well as spread messages of non-violence to government agents.

Literacy rates in the SRS have increased for both male and female students over the past five years. The number of classrooms has tripled, teacher recruitment has increased, and gender parity in education has progressed. Civil and ethical education, with themes of peacebuilding and cultural pluralism, has been introduced in the education system to promote citizenship and cohesive identity. Education has helped to reduce division amongst clans among educated youth, contributing to a unified regional state.

Education in Afar

The Afar region had a history of receiving almost no public service support. When the region was created in 1992, only four primary schools were in existence, mainly serving migrant populations in urban settings. There are now 539 primary schools and 16 secondary schools, in addition to one Technical Training Institute (an agricultural research institute) and Semera University. These schools are still disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, which prevents adequate access for the Afars. School feeding programs, affirmative action, and the more accessible locations of Alternative Basic Education (ABE) and first cycle primary education have helped to improve gender parity at those levels, although equality diminishes as education level increases due to early marriage and Absuma.

Education in Afar is designed to take into account the seasonal migration of pastoralist children. ABE and mobile schools are designed to move schools closer to the children, or allow for enrolment in new schools in line with migration. However, there are indicators that the program has not been succeeding because of the complexity of management and infrastructure requirements. In addition, children in pastoralist families are expected to work to help support the family livelihood, or may be forced to drop out to migrate to wet areas during periods of drought. Teachers are demotivated, and low levels of investment in education force Afar youth to migrate across weredas or regions to access secondary school education. Despite these challenges, programmes like ABE and mobile schools are evolving to meet the needs of students in Afar and have high potential.

Peacebuilding entry points in education and learning

Political and Policy Responses

- **Promote education for girls** through mainstreaming of gender issues, affirmative action programs, girls' education clubs and affirmative action programs, and protection mechanisms (e.g. boarding schools for girls).
 - **Deliver education in emergencies during times of drought, flooding and insecurity** to help strengthen the resilience of communities to better cope with disasters. Support education in emergencies through mobile schools, emergency kits with educational supplies, teacher training, offering education in shifts/flexible attendance models, condensing curricula, and integrating the community in education provision.
 - **Build the institutional capacity** of the regional education bureaus in strategic planning, leadership, management and peacebuilding.
 - **Develop environmental and livelihood programmes** that mitigate the need for livelihood opportunities that encroach into forestland and result in environmental destruction.
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- **Promote the indigenous peoples' literacy in the Amharic language** to promote regional social cohesion and ensure competitiveness of students at the regional and national levels.
- **Promote child protection** by working with regional and federal governments to combat child abductions.
- **Pilot an assistance program for disadvantaged school children and displaced youth** to improve enrolment and retention rates (e.g. school feeding program, scholarships, etc.)

Structural and Education Reforms

- **Address intra-regional disparities** by enhancing access to education in conflict-affected areas of the country and to minority groups. Ensure equitable access to education by designing a support mechanism for equitable distribution of resources and access to schools. Promote mobile schools and ABEs, and scale up ABEs to full-cycle primary schools to improve access to education.
- **Strengthen the mother-tongue language program** through support to curriculum development and improvement, teacher training and conflict-sensitive textbooks to advance equality of access and quality of education in all languages. Give support to languages that lag behind in mother tongue education to protect against developing perceptions of relative deprivation.
- **Reform curriculum** to accommodate specific regional contexts. Introduce civic education on ethnicity, tolerance and respect for difference at the primary level. Incorporate environmental education and peacebuilding at all levels. Ensure the curricula reflect regional history and culture. Involve communities in curriculum reform and build the capacity of education personnel to deliver revised curricula.
- **Align the education system with the job market** to improve local livelihoods through formal and non-formal education in practical skills, a strategic plan for livelihood development, and the empowerment of indigenous populations through technology transfer.
- **Build on learning from the Voluntary Villagization Scheme** by strengthening education infrastructure and facilities in Villagization centers and improving the relevance of the curriculum to agricultural livelihoods.

Individual and Interpersonal Changes

- **Promote the integration of students of different ethnicities** through peace clubs, sporting events and co-curricular activities that allow children and youth with different backgrounds to cooperate and build social cohesion.
 - **Facilitate dialogue and joint action** among local political leaders, students, teachers, school management, and parents to diffuse tension among groups. Strengthen community management systems to enhance community and parent participation in schools.
 - **Provide psychosocial support to children** who have been traumatized through school guidance and counselling activities.
 - **Raise awareness about the value of education** for minority groups, positive parenting, education for girls, the eradication of harmful cultural practices, and civic commitments. Implement inter- and intra-community conflict related training-based interventions.
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