

## Understanding Education's Role in Fragility

Synthesis of Four "Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility": Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia

### POLICY BRIEF

#### Background

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open, global network of representatives from NGOs, UN agencies, donors agencies, governments, academic institutions, schools and affected populations working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure all persons the right to quality and safe education in emergencies and post-crisis recovery. The INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility was established in 2008 as an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate diverse initiatives and catalyse collaborative action on education and fragility. Its goals are to:

- strengthen consensus on what works to mitigate fragility through education while ensuring equitable access for all;
- support the development of effective quality education programmes in fragile contexts; and
- promote the development of alternative mechanisms to support education in fragile contexts in the transition from humanitarian to development assistance.

As part of this mandate, the Working Group commissioned a research programme entitled "Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility" including four country case studies — on Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia and Liberia — and a synthesis of these studies as a means of further developing the evidence base necessary for understanding the role of education in either exacerbating or mitigating fragility. The four countries were selected to encompass a range of different types and stages of fragility, with diverse geographical locations and historical antecedents to such fragility. The synthesis highlights some key programming challenges and lessons learnt for education policy and planning in fragile contexts.

For more information on INEE and the Working Group, visit <http://www.ineesite.org> and <http://www.ineesite.org/educationfragility>.

#### Summary

This brief summarises the major findings of the synthesis report examining the relationship between education and fragility based on the four country case studies. The synthesis report highlights education's impact on fragility across a spectrum ranging from the negative, where education actively or deliberately reinforces and perpetuates fragility, to the positive, where education can make inroads into fragility. In addition, the synthesis report highlights key education policy and programming lessons learnt in relation to contexts of fragility including:

- **Access and quality:** Ensure equal, generalised and safe access to education while guaranteeing its quality and relevance.
- **Civic and social relevance:** Promote national unity while acknowledging and respecting differences.
- **Economic relevance:** Promote education for employment by matching skills and knowledge to the labour market; by establishing education and employer partnerships; by bringing the private sector into national planning; and by promoting some form of regulation and accreditation for private schools.
- **Centralisation and decentralisation:** Promote adequate degrees of decentralisation in combination with some form of central regulation, while strengthening capacity and monitoring efficiency at both central and decentralised levels.
- **Funding modalities:** Ensure aid harmonisation and aid alignment with government priorities, while also strengthening government management capacity with the aim to guarantee sustainability.

The main targets and goals for educational programming in relation to fragility mitigation as recommended by the synthesis report include:

- **targeting the education system** by building and/or strengthening its functionality through national education plans, legal and regulatory frameworks, international standards, community involvement and local ownership, and teacher capacity development;
- **targeting individuals and groups** by building and/or strengthening their capacity to cope with fragility through programs aimed at physical protection; and
- **targeting the overall fragility of the state and promoting both peacebuilding and state-building** through equal, generalised and safe access to education, a focus on nation building and good citizenship through civic education programmes, education as preparation for livelihoods and entrepreneurship, child-friendly schools and informal initiatives, as well as a focus on gender sensitivity and environmental sensibility.

## Methodological Approach

At the core of the synthesis report is an analytic framework comprised of three types of comparative approaches. The first takes specific domains of fragility as its starting point and examines how education might impact on them, negatively and positively; the second reveals a varied and nuanced spectrum of impact; and the third outlines six areas of difficult policy and programming choices which appear to be common. The results have generated some insights into the relationship between education and fragility, and suggested recommendations for education policy and programming to improve the mitigating capacities of education in fragile contexts.

### I. Education and Fragility by Domain

The first comparative approach takes five specific domains of fragility – Governance, Security, Economy, Social and Environment – as its starting point. It is based on the premise that education is not neutral in a fragile context but instead sits at the nexus of these five domains of fragility interacting with them all. This approach aims to identify drivers of fragility within these five domains in a given context and examine how education might impact on these drivers both negatively and positively. The impacts are shown to vary, for instance, according to whether access to education is made a privilege or a right; whether curricula and textbooks are biased and divisive or objective and inclusive; and whether education governance and management are characterised by inefficiency, incompetence and corruption, or efficiency and high levels of capacity and transparency.

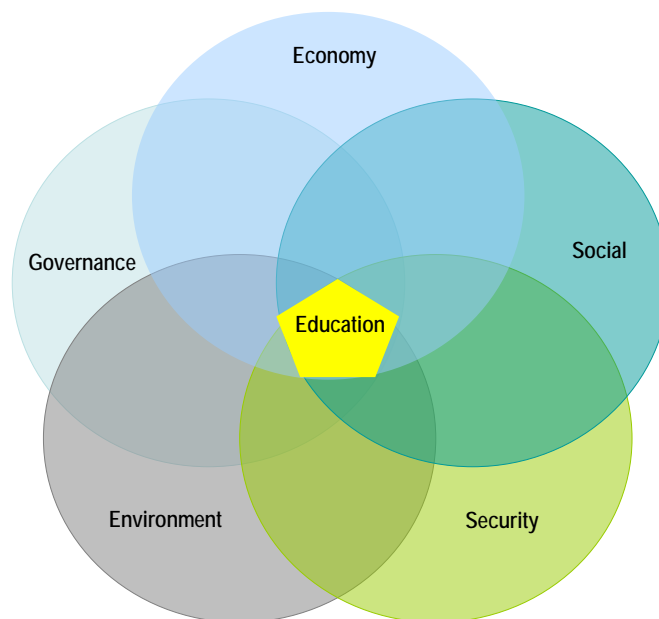
#### Drivers of Fragility by Domain

##### **Governance Domain:**

Weak institutions of governance and ineffective exercise of political power; political arena and administrative structures fragmented along identity lines; power interests linked to inequality and discrimination in resource allocation; lack of political will and/or capacity to ensure the basic well-being of the population and to foster inclusion; widespread corruption; undemocratic and repressive state; concentration of power; lack of or limited legitimacy as well as trust in the government; limited state capacity and efficiency.

**Environment Domain:** Weak environmental management and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources; environmental degradation, generally affecting the poor and powerless disproportionately.

**Economic Domain:** Widespread poverty and static or declining national growth; high levels of debt and of dependence on foreign aid; weak, undeveloped, unproductive economy, vulnerable to global shocks; high levels of unemployment; widespread inequalities in resource and income distribution.



##### **Social Domain:**

History of distrust, grievance and violent conflict; weak national identity and ethnic, religious, and class-based divisions, polarisations and tensions; alienated, aggrieved and disempowered youth, leading to juvenile delinquency; grievance among the poor and the marginalised; widespread gender inequality and violence; widespread attitudes of passivity; high levels of illiteracy and limited access to education; vulnerability to health shocks and food insecurity.

**Security Domain:** Legacy of war; ongoing intra-state conflicts linked to identity and resources; widespread lawlessness, crime and human rights violations; inability of the state to maintain territorial control and guarantee physical security; ineffective security sector reform, including unsuccessful or incomplete demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, and inefficient and corrupt military and police forces.



On the positive side of the spectrum, education is shown to:

- **enable people to live with fragility**, exemplified in Afghanistan by expanded access to education that takes children off streets and creates a sense of routine in a context of general insecurity, and distance and radio schooling which enable education despite security challenges. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, secular education in integrated schools in Brčko enables the integration of returnees, while life skills education in child-friendly schools have enabled children to better cope with the fragile context. In Liberia, increased access to education, efforts to get disengaged youth off the streets and support social reintegration of ex-combatants, and heightened awareness among young people of violations recurrent in their environment as a result of human rights education have all shown to enable people to live with fragility.
- **make inroads into fragility**, exemplified in Afghanistan by the decentralisation of education coupled with community-based educational initiatives that strengthen civil engagement and build trust between armed insurgents, local communities and government, thereby improving governance and stability. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, greater central regulation in view of European Union accession promotes quality improvement. Similarly, the de-politicisation of education reform and cohesive policies and regulations on language and national symbols in integrated schools in Brčko have promoted social integration and cohesion. In Cambodia, community-based educational initiatives break cycles of passivity and strengthen a sense of agency and civil engagement. In Liberia, curriculum and teacher support to focus on 'one Liberia' promote national unity and social cohesion. Similarly, informal civic education which promotes responsible, non-violent citizenship and educational policies and strategies against gender-based violence have both challenged and tackled widespread practices of gender discrimination and violence.

The use of a spectrum of impact of education on fragility provides some insights into past and present good and bad practices, and potentially some lessons learned for future interventions. In particular, this framework for comparative analysis seems to point to the following findings and conclusions. Firstly, in cases in which reinforcement of fragility is overt and deliberate, those responsible could be identified and possibly negotiated with so as to better guarantee successful design and implementation of education reform (e.g. revision of policies, structures, curricula, and textbooks). Secondly, where education simply reflects and reproduces the less-than-ideal status quo, interventions could be geared towards both questioning and challenging existing patterns of, for instance, violence, corruption, and inequality, and compensating for their effects. Thirdly, where well-intentioned education initiatives start demonstrating inadvertent consequences for fragility, these should be acknowledged and learned from so as to stop 'doing harm', and re-direct efforts towards enhanced effectiveness in operating within fragile contexts, as well as in tackling fragility itself. For the purpose of improving the effectiveness of interventions in dealing with fragility, the fourth and fifth categories have highlighted a number of good practice examples. These cover both enabling people to live in and cope with existent fragility – through, for example, HIV/AIDS programmes and generic livelihoods preparation – and tackling drivers of fragility through more structural and long-term interventions.



Bosnia-Herzegovina © Clare Magill

### III. Policy and Programming: Challenges, Dilemmas and Lessons Learned

The final comparative approach brings together issues within the education sector, examining them in terms of policy and programming priorities and, despite the recognition that some solutions and challenges are highly contextually specific, attempts a tentative formulation of general lessons learnt. These are listed in the categories of:

- access and quality;
- civic and social relevance;
- economic relevance;
- private education provision;
- centralisation and decentralisation; and
- funding modalities.

### Access and Quality

A common dilemma in resource-poor countries concerns whether to prioritize expansionist attempts at Education for All, increasing quantity most likely at the expense of quality, or whether expansion of education should be limited to guaranteeing the quality of existing provision. In a context of limited resources, the frequent precedence of quantity often seems to imply compromising on aspects related to the quality of education, such as curriculum, textbooks, and teacher quality. As far as the curriculum is concerned, a push for quantity often prioritizes focus on a narrow range of teaching areas, in particular, basic literacy and numeracy. The general consequence is neglect of curriculum and textbook reform, including the introduction of newer areas such as civic education, ‘learning to live together’, human rights education, and peace education, all of which might be useful in contexts characterized by conflict. A push for quantity also generally prioritizes a focus on basic education, inevitably sacrificing funding for expanding or improving other educational levels and sectors which would provide useful knowledge and skills to develop the country.

Comparisons of the case studies confirm the importance of Education for All as a general priority in its capacity to provide basic skills to the population as a whole, and consequently restore trust in the government as being willing and capable to provide such skills and fairness. As noted in Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina, there has been resistance to the perceived ‘luxuries’ of peace education or textbook cleansing. This is not to say that such initiatives are unimportant, but that priorities might currently lie elsewhere, for example, attempting to equalize opportunities through enhanced provision. Generally, quality issues seem to become a priority at a later stage. Ideally, however, the ultimate aim should be to **ensure equal, generalized, and safe access to education while guaranteeing its quality and relevance.**

Examples: Access and Quality			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
Efforts to ensure generalised and safe access to education often requiring negotiation and compromise with Taliban, as well as alternative structures (e.g. radio education)	Despite universal access to education, learning remains ethnically divided, passive, uncritical, selective, and politicized (e.g. history of the conflict)	Expansion of education and school-building comes at the expense of quality: schooling is characterized by passive and uncritical learning, limited economic relevance, and limited civic relevance (teaching on the history of genocide is starting, but there is a lack of topics related to contemporary key social issues, such as drug and environmental education)	Efforts to get basic education up and running are starving other sectors as well as diverting focus from quality and relevance of education

### Civic and Social Relevance

A key question in fragile contexts concerns whether the government should emphasize national identity in an attempt to promote social cohesion, or avoid the promotion of nationalism as a dangerous avenue that might infringe cultural sensitivities and create potential hostilities between one’s own nation and ‘others’. Of the four contexts researched, Cambodia proved unique in the sense that ethnic tensions have not been a significant driver of fragility. Instead, a widely felt desire exists among the population to maintain stability at any cost. As such, educational curricula relating to the promotion of national identity with respect to ethnic differences do not face the same dilemmas as in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Liberia.

On balance, this chapter concludes that the promotion of a common national identity should be generally preferred as opposed to acceding to ethnic claims and policies of ‘recognition’. Claims regarding language and religion should be taken into account, but should be managed within the broader goals of nation-building and the need for peaceful co-existence. The overarching general goal should be to **promote national unity while acknowledging and respecting differences and particularities.**

Examples: Civic and Social Relevance			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
Government is trying to build a unified Afghan identity based on Islam, but no agreement has been reached on whose definition of a ‘true’ Islamic identity should prevail	Rights-based arguments used to demand segregated and differentiated learning along ‘national’ lines (e.g. characterized by selective and politicized history teaching and religious instruction) impacting adversely on social cohesion	N/A based on data	When promoting national identity (‘One Liberia’), uncertainty as to whether nation-building should be based on addressing the past or focusing on the future

### Economic Relevance

Another aspect of quality that raises considerable challenges and dilemmas is the economic relevance of educational programmes. In contexts characterized by economic fragility, a critical area of concern is the kind of education that should be promoted in a volatile and weak marketplace, which might not cater to graduate needs and could frustrate their expectations. In all four countries, education was to shown to have failed to match the labour market and the existing economy.

Overall, the four case studies seem to confirm the importance of a focus on literacy for livelihoods, combined with social and political skills as well as foreign language skills, as opposed to a focus on specific artisan skills. This agrees with arguments for entrepreneurship as a route out of fragility, according to which ways of learning, flexible mental models, problem-solving and familiarity with technology are to be emphasized over a specific body of knowledge. The overarching general goal is to **promote education for employment by matching skills and knowledge to the labour market and establishing education/employer partnerships.**

Examples: Economic Relevance			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
Prospects for livelihood diversification through education faces challenges from widespread illiteracy (two-thirds of population) and the large (illegal) opium industry	Despite various academic and vocational education options, challenges remain in matching education to the labour market and enhancing education’s professional orientation	Despite various academic and vocational education options, challenges remain in matching education to the labour market: education has increased aspirations, but also unrealistic expectations of employment opportunities	Despite various academic and vocational education options, challenges remain in matching education to the labour market

### Private Education Provision



Afghanistan © UNESCO

One governance of education issue relates to educational providers and, in particular, the private sector. Privatization of educational provision seems to have enabled expanded access by compensating for the state’s inability to afford full education provision. However, it has often resulted in general poor quality and perpetuation of class disparities and inequalities. Evidence from three of the four situational analyses highlights positive benefits of private education, as well as some of the dilemmas in educational policy and programming.

Overall, the goal should be to **ensure quality private education while avoiding entrenching disparities and divisions.** Part of the solution might lie in **building creative public-private partnerships, bringing the private sector into national planning, as well as promoting some form of regulation and accreditation for private schools.**

Examples: Private Education Provision			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
‘Private’ schools run by tribal elders are not attacked by the Taliban, thus ensuring continued provision, but state control of education remains important to ensure the quality of teaching and to prevent indoctrination	N/A based on data	Private sector is faced with issues of poor quality, with wealthy Cambodians turning towards higher quality private institutions, contributing to the exacerbation of social disparities and divisions	Large private sector enables many providers to share in educating the country’s children, but suffers from issues of poor quality and runs the risk of exacerbating disparities in access to quality education, with the best private schools being reserved for wealthy elites, able to retain their privileged position

### Centralisation and Decentralisation

The desirability of centralisation versus decentralisation of education regulation is another key area of debate. Central control might provide cohesive direction and regulation, but may also result in dangerous concentration of power. Decentralisation might increase community ownership, but also enhance ethnic or religious fragmentation, and result in high inefficiency due to lack of local capacity.

The four case studies present some interesting contrasts, making any attempt at generalization particularly difficult. Bosnia-Herzegovina appears to need greater centralization in the sense of unified monitoring, laws, and curriculum, as well as cross-ethnic ownership. Afghanistan also appears to need strengthened central control in order to produce and implement national plans, although there is a national push for decentralization and community ownership. Conversely, Cambodia and Liberia would both seemingly benefit from some decentralisation, although this raises capacity issues, as well as political questions related to how power interests should be represented at the local level. While realities vary greatly, in general it can be concluded that viable balances are possible. For example, while curriculum and admissions may have to be centralised in order to foster national cohesion, schools could simultaneously be granted autonomy in their day-to-day management and budgeting in order to promote local ownership. This process should then be subject to monitoring at both local and central levels to ensure transparency. The overarching goal could generally be **to promote adequate degrees of decentralisation in combination with some form of central regulation, while strengthening capacity and monitoring efficiency at both central and decentralised levels.**

Examples: Centralisation and Decentralisation			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
Central planning is hindered by poor security, but decentralization first requires central capacity and central ownership of education planning	High decentralization is creating fragmentation, costly duplication, and resulting inefficiency, as well as ethnic divisions	Moves towards decentralization and enhanced local ownership have started, but actual decision-making remains centralized	Highly centralized system limits the opportunity for local-level capacity development, with resulting bottlenecks and fewer checks on excess and patronage

### Funding Modalities

There is the central question of who controls the allocation of education spending in countries heavily dependent on aid. In sustainability terms, the central issue for donors involved in situations characterized by weak governance concerns the extent to which they should align with the government, or channel funds directly to extra-state agencies. The issue of aid dependency is problematic for the escape from fragility, and presents constant dilemmas for donors. While acknowledging the genuine desire to build the state and strengthen national pride and ownership, donors frequently have to recognize that government ownership may mean a highly inefficient or even corrupt use of resources. Additionally, tension also exists between immediate service delivery versus long-term state-building.



Cambodia © Save the Children

This chapter confirms the principles of the Paris Declaration and the dangers of fragmented projectization, which bypass government or undermine their efforts. In general, the main goal should be to **ensure aid harmonization and aid alignment with government priorities, while also strengthening government management capacity with the aim of guaranteeing sustainability.**

Examples: Funding Modalities			
Afghanistan	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Cambodia	Liberia
High levels of aid dependency are hindering sustainability	Dilemma exists as to whether aid should be tied to eradication of political obstacles or be focused on more practicable and technical reform	Aid is closing the financing gap, but direct-to-ministry and recipient project agreements are hindering alignment of aid with government priorities and leading to fragmentation	Most external aid is off-budget and 'projectized', channelled directly to implementing agencies, resulting in a lack of government overview of funds, hindering planning, and opportunities to build long-term government capacity

## Recommendations for Policy and Planning

In general, three main targets and goals of educational programming can be identified in relation to fragility mitigation:

- **Targeting the fragility of the education system by building and/or strengthening its functionality**
- **Targeting individuals and groups by building and/or strengthening their capacity to cope with fragility**
- **Targeting the overall fragility of the state and promoting both peacebuilding and state-building**

For each of these goals and targets, a number of entry-points can be suggested. Before any intervention is designed and implemented – regardless of whether or not it is intended to achieve any such goals – one general recommendation should be taken into consideration – “Mapping the Connections”.

### Mapping the Connections

Education policy, planning, and programming in a fragile context cannot afford to ignore possible negative and positive impacts on different domains and drivers of fragility. Mapping the connections between education and fragility should therefore be seen as critical in thinking about education policy and programming, and should serve as a basis for determining needs and risks, and setting targets and evaluating progress. It is advisable to build on the various conflict/fragility assessments or analyses currently available to develop relevant indicators, which could be useful for planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Three simple-sounding queries, in particular, should form the core of such exercises:

- Can this policy/project/intervention have a negative impact on conditions of fragility?
- What evidence exists that it will have a positive impact on fragility?
- What factors and dynamics might influence the course and impacts of the intervention?

In order to answer the last contextual question, in particular, it is necessary to consider a political economy analysis as well as constant acknowledgement and assessment of the politico-cultural aspects surrounding the workings of organizations. This is central to effective and conscientious policy and programming, if aid is not to be sidelined.

### Target 1: Building and Strengthening a Functional Education System

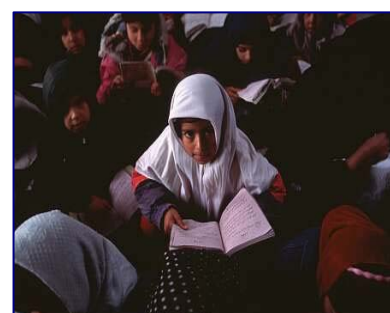
A strong and functional education system appears to be a prerequisite for education to impact positively on the drivers and dynamics of fragility. Four key areas are particularly important for the purposes of mitigating the fragility of the education system and building and strengthening its functionality. These are: ***national planning, legal and regulatory frameworks, community involvement and local ownership, and teacher capacity development.***

- **National planning:** A national plan for education is a prerequisite for a functional and coherent education system. Additionally, the fact that the MoE is responsible for coordination – although not necessarily implementation – of education efforts can be crucial in creating ownership, building capacity, and strengthening its position vis-à-vis donors, as well as in building trust in the government.
  - *Joint planning across sectors.* Education systems do not exist in a vacuum; their operation is conditioned by various factors and actors. While one cannot always predict events, it is possible to take into account the existence of other sectors and predict how they operate. Education systems and goals should be aligned with other sectors and joint planning should be attempted. Such cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination is crucial, for example, to ensure that educational opportunities for youth are effectively linked to the job-market.
  - *Joint planning across donors and government.* In order to conform to the Paris Declaration and Principles for Good Engagement, the frequent projectization and fragmentation of donor and government activity should be replaced by inclusion of all education programming and financing within the national planning process. The harmonization and alignment of aid with government priorities should be prioritized, with the aim of enhancing state ownership, avoiding fragmentation of planning, developing and strengthening MoE capacity, tackling inefficiency and corruption, and building a reporting culture.
  - *Robust data systems.* Robust data systems should be established in support of effective, evidence-based planning. Databases should be improved through base lines, both quantitative and qualitative, enabling longitudinal assessments, time-line comparisons, and correlations across different dynamics.

- **Legal and regulatory frameworks:** Regulation does not change attitudes and behaviours overnight; however, its promotion is likely to lead people to behave in certain ways, which over time might become part of normality. External actors have an important role to play in the promotion of regulation, as was the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Regulation around corruption (e.g. in the form of policies and mechanisms promoting accountability and transparency) and around violence (e.g. in the form of codes of conduct for teachers), for example, are critical to countering fragility, provided that sustained compliance measures and sanctions are in place. In particular, INEE's Minimum Standards, which are increasingly recognized as international standards in countries affected by conflict or fragility, should be furthered promoted.
- **Community involvement and local ownership:** Community and local ownership generally appear to play an important role in underpinning functional and strong education systems. A focus on local involvement and strengthening community capacity is therefore advisable. Communities should not only be supported in the implementation of their educational initiatives, but also systematically involved in decision-taking and decision-making in order to ensure alignment with local priorities. Ways should be found to reconcile national planning with community ownership. Possible avenues include high levels of consultation to mobilize public understanding and buy-in, participatory involvement in deciding needs and priorities, monitoring of community-based initiatives, and training at local levels. Additionally, donors and ministries should be accommodating and pragmatic in terms of accepting to work with a range of power interests, partners, and gatekeepers. Children and young people should also be given more opportunities to participate in shaping decision-making in educational planning as integral members of the community.
- **Teacher capacity development:** Capacity development is commonly cited as a key aspect of the role education plays in mitigating fragility. Within such development, the need for teacher training would seem incontrovertible.

### Target 2. Building and Strengthening People's Capacity to Live and Cope with Fragility

A second target and goal of educational action in mitigating fragility relates to building and enhancing peoples' ability to live and cope with political, economic, social, and environmental fragility. One entry-point here could be programmes aimed at physical protection. These include such existing programmes as mine-risk education, HIV/AIDS education, and the introduction of disaster-preparedness programmes, as well as the construction of safe schools.



Afghanistan © UNESCO

### Target 3. Building and Strengthening Peace, the State and the Nation

A third, broader, and much more ambitious target and goal relates to tackling the drivers and dynamics of fragility themselves, and promoting peace-building, state-building, and nation-building. This could be attempted by promoting the following:

- **Equal, generalized, and safe access to education.** Policies and regulations aimed at ensuring equal rights to education and tackling inequality and unfairness should be prioritized, given their potential to help build or restore legitimacy and public trust in the state, and to challenge exclusion and marginalization.
- **Nation-building and good citizenship.** Programmes that contribute to nation-building and to active and responsible citizenship should be allocated high importance. These include civic education that focuses on shared national identity and commonalities, but which is respectful of differences and particularities; human rights and peace education; and environmental education. History education needs to be addressed in a sensitive and future-oriented manner where histories of conflict are concerned, ensuring that hostilities are not reinforced. The sanitizing of curriculum and textbooks agreed to be outdated, biased, or harmful can be a valuable immediate target. However, a high degree of caution is needed to avoid entrenching positions.
- **Preparation for livelihoods and entrepreneurship.** Priority should be given to programmes able to offer an effective preparation for livelihoods, and to developing entrepreneurship including skills such as communication skills, financial and legal knowledge, and information technology. Education and training should be geared towards employment, by matching skills and knowledge to the labour market, and establishing education/employer/government partnerships.
- **Gender-sensitivity.** Programmes that target gender equity and gender relations should continue to receive high priority. This includes initiatives on gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS education.
- **Environmental sensibility.** More attention should be given to environmental education that teaches and raises awareness of environmental issues.

- **Child-friendly schools and informal initiatives.** Initiatives such as child-friendly schools should be scaled-up because of their potential to enhance individual security, gender equity, non-violence, and teacher development. Informal sector education initiatives, such as radio voter education and forums for youth voices, should also be scaled-up.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This synthesis uncovered several research gaps. Four main areas for future research have been identified that could fill some of these gaps and consequently strengthen the evidence base needed to make connections between education and fragility:

**Improve the qualitative and quantitative database for education decisions.** The database should be improved through base lines, both quantitative and qualitative, which would enable longitudinal assessments, time-line comparisons, and correlations across different dynamics. This would also involve the generation of indicators of fragility.

**Assess the impact of social science curriculum initiatives.** While peace education, child rights, life skills, and civic education have been included in the curriculum of various countries with the assumption that these programmes would promote peace, time and further research is needed to investigate their actual impact on fragility. Even if notoriously difficult, continuing efforts need to be made to trial evaluation models on the impact of 'quality' education to promote non-violence and rights, as well as specific curricular programmes.

**Enhance knowledge of the workings of community governance.** While community governance, manifested for instance in community-based schools, is generally believed to promote local democracy and stronger civil society, details on local governance, such as how decisions are made and by whom, are still largely lacking. Such research would be beneficial in situations of attempted democratization to assess, for example, whether local autonomy strengthens or weakens national identity and cohesion.

**Elicit the voice of youth.** The absence of the youth voice was noted in more than one of the countries, and emphasis placed on youth participation in design and programming, as well as research and evaluation. The youth and development literature stresses the importance of decision-making mechanisms that empower young people by giving them voice through legitimate outlets, and allowing them to exercise agency. Research on how young people see or use various means of expressing their voice will provide insights into which areas to support.

## Conclusion

The three approaches used in this report may provide ways to start filling research and evaluation gaps, and, ultimately, contribute to the improvement of educational practice in its relation to fragility. Firstly, identifying a particular driver or domain of fragility for scrutiny can enable more targeted and long-term indicators of the 'success' of an educational programme or policy to be established. Secondly, acknowledging the spectrum of possible impact means greater realism about possibilities, and honesty about past mistakes or unforeseen consequences. Thirdly, seeing most policy and programming as being about inevitable trade-offs and dilemmas may, on the one hand, lead to greater discussion and argument among stakeholders, but also to the acceptance of opportunity costs and compromises. Above all, mapping the connections between education and fragility enables the intersections to be monitored.

The overall general results of this analysis highlight that, at present, education in the four countries under review appears to have had the greatest potential for positive, mitigating impact on fragility in:

- **Governance** by restoring trust in the government's will and capacity to serve the needs of the population through increased equal access and accountability measures, and by strengthening community participation and ownership, and promoting the development of an active citizenry through decentralized structures.
- **Security** through access to education that prevents armed conscription and by promoting respect for rights and non-violence through codes of conduct for teachers, as well as through peace education programmes.
- The **Social** domain by promoting nation-building, social cohesion, and positive values through integrated structures, as well as through inclusive and peace-oriented curricula and textbooks; by promoting an equal society through equal educational access and outcomes; and by challenging and addressing patterns of gender discrimination, oppression, and violence through gender-sensitive policies, as well as through HIV/AIDS education.

Conversely, education is argued to be, at present, less positively influential in:

- **Economy** given frequent neglect of secondary and tertiary education, as well as economically irrelevant curricula, results in a failure to boost weak economies.
- **Environment** due to the general lack of widespread environmental programmes fails to raise awareness of and prevent environmental degradation.