



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**Diplomatic  
Academy.**



**EDUCATION IN  
CONFLICT-AFFECTED  
AND/OR FRAGILE STATES**

*EDUCATION LEARNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT MODULE*

*Practitioner Level*

2021



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## ACRONYMS

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education management information system
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBA	program-based approach
SWAp	sector-wide approach
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Practitioner level module is designed to ensure that all staff members who engage with and lead policy dialogue with international and domestic partners are informed about education in conflict-affected and/or fragile situations and are aware of the tools available to develop an education response that is sensitive to the context.

It is recommended that staff complete the *Education in Conflict-Affected and/or Fragile States: Foundation level* module as background information to this Practitioner level module. In view of the intersections between emergency, conflict and fragility, it is also recommended that staff also complete the *Education in Emergencies* modules.

# 2 DELIVERING EDUCATION IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AND/OR FRAGILE SITUATIONS

## The role of education in fragile and/or conflicted-affected contexts

The role of education in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts has received increased attention during the past decade because of its significance for the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to education. It is widely recognised that crisis and conflict are barriers to education access, which in some cases have stalled and even reversed progress towards the achievement of the education goals.

The international community has reiterated its commitment to addressing education in conflict and emergency situations in the [2030 Education Framework for Action](#). It explicitly calls for countries to “institute measures to develop inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts including internally displaced persons and refugees”.

Source: UNESCO et al., 2015, [Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4](#).

## Challenges and context

It is estimated that 128 million primary and secondary-aged children, including 67 million girls, are out of school in crisis-affected countries. There exist an unequal distribution of school-age children who are affected by conflict. It is estimated that 29 percent of the world’s primary and secondary school-age population live in crisis-affected countries, these countries are home to 49 percent of the world’s out-of-school children.

Children in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts are 30 percent less likely to complete primary school and half as likely to complete lower-secondary school. Girls and refugee children are particularly disadvantaged. Only 50 percent of refugee children have access to primary education and only 22 percent attend lower-secondary school. Girls living in conflict affected countries were two and a half times more likely to be out of primary





school and 90 percent more likely to be out of secondary school.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in education, disproportionately affecting girls. In particular, those with disabilities, in conflict-affected contexts, rural and remote communities and in the poorest quintile. It is estimated that 11 million girls will not return to school.

Sources: INEE, 2020, *20 Years of INEE: Achievements and Challenges in Education in Emergencies*; The Education Commission, 2016, *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World*; PLAN International, 2020, *Left Out, Left Behind: Adolescent Girls' Secondary Education in Crises*; UNESCO, 2015, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: Policy Paper 21*; 2016a, *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?*; UNESCO, 2021, *Global Education Monitoring Report: #HerEducationOurFuture Keeping girls in the picture during and after the COVID-19 crisis*.

## Why is education important?

In fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts, education is an important service for its ability to:

- develop skills, starting with foundational literacy and numeracy
- build practical knowledge
- enable people to contribute to the development of their country's safety, security, and economic growth.

In fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts, education can contribute to the protection of girls and boys by providing a physically safe space for learning and psychosocial development. Where schools are able to operate safely, beyond a focus on learning schools can provide:

- support for the traumatised
- interaction with peers and trusted adults
- opportunities to receive food and medical attention.

## What does education provide?

In fragile and/or conflict-affected situations, education can provide a sense of normalcy and routine for children and adults. It is also a key factor in maintaining stability and reducing the likelihood of conflict. While findings from the [Global Education Monitoring Report 2016](#) showed that education itself doesn't necessarily bring about more peace, better educated populations are more stable and have less conflict. Literacy facilitates democratic participation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Increased public investment in education and secondary school enrolment reduces the outbreak of war.

Source: Thyne, 2006, *ABC's, 123's, and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980-1999*; UNESCO, 2011, *Understanding education's role in fragility: Synthesis of four situational analyses of education and fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia*; UNESCO, 2016b, *Global Education Monitoring Report: Place: inclusive and sustainable cities*.



The right type of education can also help mitigate the impact of conflict. The key messages are:

- Education enables people to participate in political processes constructively and non-violently
- Where there is better education there are more women in political leadership
- An inclusive and equitable education is a powerful preventive tool for conflict
- Education has a role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution
- Education can reduce crime and violence against children and youth
- Educational programs help people access justice and legal protection.

Source: UNESCO, 2011, *Understanding education's role in fragility: Synthesis of four situational analyses of education and fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia*; UNESCO, 2016b, *Global Education Monitoring Report: Place: inclusive and sustainable cities*.

However, in fragile and/or conflict-affected situations access to quality basic education is challenged by:

- limited capacity of national and district-level education authorities to administer the education system
- national budgetary constraints
- a lack of human resources, particularly qualified teachers
- schools' inability to guarantee the safety and security of children and adolescents.

## Development assistance

Development assistance can play an important role in the funding and delivery of education in these contexts. The key challenge is to find ways to help fragile and/or conflict-affected states transition to more stably funded and administered formal education systems. Support needs to be provided in a coordinated or harmonised way so the whole population may benefit from the resulting safety, security, and economic growth.

In situations of conflict and fragility, development partners can do harm: education interventions, policy or positions can have unintended consequences. According to a [survey](#) which monitored the [Fragile States Principles](#), it was found that 'most aid actors are neither set up to meet the specific challenges posed by fragile situations, nor systematically able to translate commitments made by their headquarters into country-level changes'.

Recognising the multidimensional nature of conflict and fragility and the need to adopt new approaches to address fragility under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, the OECD-DAC has produced a report [Good Development Support in Fragile, At-risk and Crisis-affected Contexts](#) as a development partner guide to working more effectively in fragile, at-risk and crisis-affected contexts. The Report identifies 12 good practice lessons under three broad thematic areas: 1) building institutional fitness; 2) aspiring to deliver change; and 3) leaving no one behind. Figure 1 below outlines how these might be put into practice.

Sources: OECD, 2007, *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* ; OECD, 2011, *International Engagement in Fragile States: Can't we do better?*; OECD, 2016, *Good development support in fragile, at-risk and crisis affected contexts*.



Figure 1 – Twelve characteristics of good development support: For education and for all sectors



Source: OECD, 2016, Good development support in fragile, at-risk and crisis affected contexts.



## Why invest in education in fragile situations?

Basic education has been enshrined as a human right, and investment in the right type of education can have high social and economic returns. It is positively associated with long-term economic growth, stability, fertility reduction, and child health.

Education can play a crucial role in helping children cope with their situation in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. For example, providing psychosocial protection and support through recreational activities and learning opportunities can help children feel a sense of normality. Education programs can also facilitate on-going screening and support for those who need assistance (e.g. nutrition), and convey life-saving information and survival skills needed in such situations. Schools can also, if managed properly, provide a safe learning environment to protect children from abuse, exploitation or other risks.

It is important to note the role education can play in countering violent extremism. The rise of violence associated with extremist groups in fragile states and conflict-affected situations such as Syria, Iraq, Mindanao (Case Study on p. 12), and Pakistan has prompted a focus on the ways in which education can help counter violent extremism. The provision of relevant education of good quality can help create the conditions that make it difficult for violent extremist ideologies and acts to proliferate. More specifically, education policies can ensure that places of learning do not become a breeding ground for violent extremism. They can also ensure that educational contents and teaching/ learning approaches develop learners' resilience to violent extremism.

In recent years, research has increasingly focused on the positive benefits of education to peace building and reducing conflict and fragility. It has noted that increased equal access to education can strengthen governance and accountability by restoring trust in the government's will and capacity to serve the needs of the population. It can also strengthen community participation and ownership, and promote the development of an active citizenry through decentralised structures.





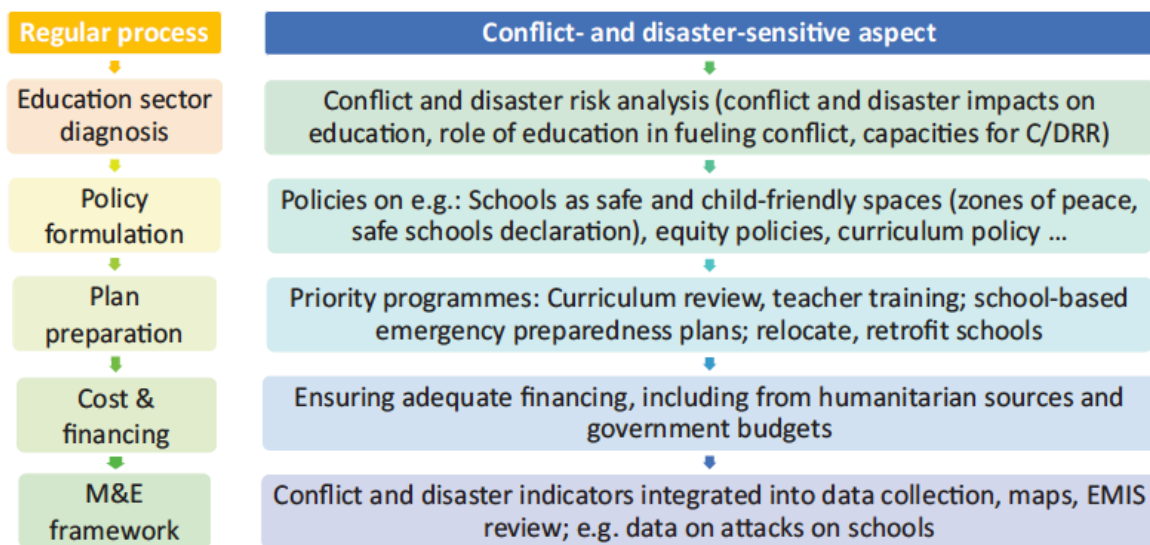
### 3 UNDERSTANDING THE FRAGILITY/CONFLICT CONTEXT

The importance of well-designed and contextually adapted approaches underline all of the key international principles that frame development partners’ engagement in fragile and/or conflict affected situations.

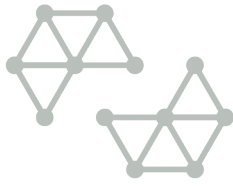
Educational planning which is sensitive to the causes and triggers of conflict, and which addresses potential natural hazards, can reduce – and sometimes prevent – the effects of conflict and disasters on education, saving lives in the process. In addition, conflict-sensitive and risk-informed planning can be cost-efficient, protecting investments in infrastructure, equipment, and supplies. It has been estimated that every dollar invested in disaster risk reduction can save \$4 to \$7 in reconstruction costs.

The following figure itemises the key processes in planning an education investment in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

**Figure 2 – The crisis-sensitive planning process**



Source: IIEP-UNESCO, 2017, Crisis sensitive planning in education: Lessons learned.



## What is fragility/conflict sensitive education programming?

Fragility/conflict sensitive education programming and delivery is the process of:

- understanding the context in which education takes place
- analysing the two-way interaction between the country context and the education sector (development, planning, and delivery)
- acting to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict of planned and/or proposed education policies and programming, within an organisation's given priorities.

Source: INEE, 2013, [Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education](#).

## Education situation analysis

In a context considered fragile and/or conflict-affected, an education situation analysis is just as critical as in other contexts.

What differentiates a fragility and conflict sensitive education analysis from a standard analysis is the emphasis on how the context affects the education system. Step one, the Education Sector Diagnosis, analyses how fragility and conflict has impacted education systems and processes in your context. Key questions could include:

- What is the political, economic, socio-cultural structural profile surrounding education?
- What are the causes of conflict and the factors for peace?
- Who are the main education, conflict and peacebuilding actors and how do they relate to one another?

A fragility and conflict-sensitive analysis asks questions about the safety and protection of both learners and teaching staff, and examines the resilience of education systems to fragility and conflict. But it also needs to examine how education might itself contribute to conflict. Whenever possible, it should draw upon existing data, including – but not limited to – the country's education management information system (EMIS). Additional surveys may be needed to fully understand the risks that the system is confronted with (or contributing to). Finally, the information collected must be analysed and processed to assess the potential (and/or actual) effects of fragility or conflict on the education system, as well as what parts of the education system may be exacerbating tensions or creating new conflict (e.g. placement of schools, exclusion of parts of the population), and to understand existing mechanisms for conflict reduction.



## Conducting an education situation analysis in a fragile and/or conflict affected situation

Approaches to conducting an education situation analysis vary, but can include any, all or a mix of the following:

- desk research
- community consultations
- surveys
- analytical frameworks (e.g. [INEE Analytic Framework for Education and Fragility](#); [ECW Education in Emergency GenKit](#); [USAID Education and Fragility Assessment Tool](#); the [SABER Education Resilience Approaches Program](#))
- key informant interviews
- focus groups
- participatory workshops
- reviews of conflict analyses, current policy program documents and frameworks.

It is important to gather information from as wide a range of sources as possible and to listen to many different actors (state, community and individual), in order to broaden the understanding of the context and to include multiple perspectives. In order to achieve this, joint education needs assessments/situation analyses should be used to develop a common understanding of the country context, including at the sub-national levels. They should also be used to generate a 'common narrative' for international engagement in the sector. As noted above, various strategic frameworks have been developed, and these include the [USAID Education and Fragility Assessment Tool](#) and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Analytic Framework for Education and Fragility which was applied in [this study](#).

These analytical frameworks are designed to help reflect on the impact of conflict dynamics on education programs and how these education programs can help either mitigate or exacerbate the conflict dynamics. They can be used to integrate conflict sensitivity at all stages of the project cycle: assessment, design, implementation/management, monitoring and evaluation.

Sources: USAID, 2006, [Conflict Assessment Framework](#); UNESCO, 2011, [Understanding education's role in fragility: Synthesis of four situational analyses of education and fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia](#).



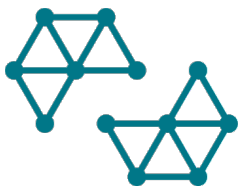
## Analysing context

It is important to be realistic and take into account timeframes, context and safety issues when seeking to analyse the context. Sometimes only a “snapshot” analysis will be possible. This will need to be followed up with a more in-depth analysis when the situation allows.

At other times, the context may be such that an initial analysis must be undertaken through a review of secondary sources. These must be supported with the collection of primary data and in-country consultations as circumstances permit.

Whatever the context, it is important that an early analysis of context is undertaken and that it provides a solid contestable basis for future planning and identification of response strategies. At a minimum, an education specific fragility and/or conflict analysis should include an examination of societal structures, actors, and dynamics of conflict/fragility and their bi-directional relationship with education.

When response strategies take into account analysis of the conflict and address the related barriers to education, this is fragility/conflict sensitive education.



### Case study: Pathways to Peace in Mindanao

In 2017, the Australian government launched an education program in conflict-affected **Mindanao**. Running until 2026, the PATHWAYS program is informed by a number of joint conflict analyses that focused on the effects of the longstanding and endemic vertical and horizontal conflicts on education services in the region. These included a DFAT commissioned political economy analysis of the Department of Education in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM); a joint DFAT-Australia-World Bank public expenditure and institutional review of the education system and a field mission to interview key stakeholders. As a result of these consolidated analyses, the PATHWAYS program is an education program which contributes to peace-building by focusing on the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao – specifically within the ARMM, and, which ensures inclusion of least served communities to address issues of disparity and inequity. The program is prioritising capacity development and institutional strengthening in four areas critical to effective educational systems: i) curriculum and delivery; ii) teacher and teaching quality and teacher management; iii) data management and use; and iv) engagement of stakeholders.

Source: DFAT, 2017, [Education Pathways to Peace in Conflict-Affected Areas of Mindanao](#).





## Assessment, analysis and response

Assessment, analysis and the related response should be viewed as a continuing, dynamic process. Drivers of conflict can and do change in fragile and conflict-affected situations (and not always in a linear way). As a result, key factors influencing and/or influenced by the context may shift and change.

Only by keeping analysis current can programming choices continue to be robust and relevant. Programs that perform best are often the ones that seek to understand the dynamic nature of fragile situations and can work iteratively towards 'best fit' solutions. These programs are flexible in their approach to problem solving, adapting to changing contextual realities, rather than applying technical and vigorously verified 'best practice' interventions. They do this by employing a range of instruments and partnerships that allow them to respond quickly and flexibly to changes. These approaches require an acceptance of risk and a commitment to context monitoring to mitigate risk and make rapid adjustment.

**More information:** For further guidance on conflict analysis and tools see:

- ✦ [INEE, 2013, Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education \(Annex 2\)](#)
- ✦ [OECD, 2016, Good Development Support in Fragile, At-risk, and Conflict-affected Contexts, OECD Development Policy Papers No.4](#)
- ✦ [Department for International Development \(DFID\), 2010, Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper E - Aligning with Local Priorities](#)
- ✦ [DFID, 2010, Working Effectively in conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper F - Practical Coordination Mechanisms](#)
- ✦ [USAID, 2012, Conflict Assessment Framework](#)
- ✦ [USAID, 2013, Integrating Conflict and Fragility Analysis into the Education System Analysis Guidelines: A Proposed Companion Guide](#)
- ✦ [INEE, 2009, Education and Fragility: Common Research Questions for Situational Analyses](#)
- ✦ [INEE, 2013, Reflection Tool for Designing and Implementing Conflict Sensitive Education Programmes in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts](#)



## Who is involved?

As in all contexts, there are a wide range of stakeholders in the education system. Stakeholders may include:

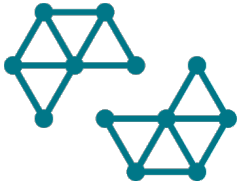
- government agencies
- civil society and NGOs
- children and youth
- parents and care-givers
- community members
- the private sector
- local authorities
- bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Whilst government teams in charge of education system analysis bear ultimate responsibility for education programming, it is recognised that in a fragile and/or conflict affected context multilateral agencies or non-governmental institutions, rather than the government, may lead the education system analysis team. If this is the case, consideration should be given to how the perspectives, assumptions, politics, and characteristics of those conducting the analysis may influence the type of information collected regarding conflict and fragility. A robust conflict/fragility analysis for education will incorporate a variety of perspectives and state up-front the assumptions of the team conducting the analysis and how these would influence the data.

**Note:** For further information see the 'The Role of Key Stakeholders in Education and Aid Effectiveness Principles' [Foundation](#) and [Practitioner](#) modules.

## The importance of community participation

Equitable and transparent community participation is critical for conflict sensitive education. If this is not done well and from the beginning, policies and related implementation may perpetuate existing inequalities or trigger inter-group grievances and conflict. If participation is managed well, with a diverse and representative group, the potential of education to contribute to building social cohesion can be realised.



### Case study: Nepal

In Nepal, Save the Children, UNICEF, World Education and other partners supported community participation in the establishment of codes of conduct to promote the school as a Zone of Peace. This meant that schools would be protected from involvement with Maoist armed groups or the army.

The Nepalese Ministry of Education issued a directive that proclaimed schools as “zones of peace,” and the government and civil society organisations launched numerous awareness-raising campaigns to stop the use of schools for political purposes. Community members assessed the risks conflict imposed on their school community and agreed on appropriate school codes of conduct. In some schools, the code of conduct was painted on the school wall and monitored by the parent teacher association.

Source: [Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, 2019, Nepal: Making schools zones of peace.](#)

Supporting participation in both the analysis of conflict dynamics impacting a learning environment, as well as the design of an appropriate response strategy, as the Nepal case study illustrates, are example of how conflict sensitive processes can be implemented through an educational context.

The [INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education](#) provides conflict sensitive strategies to consider including:

- Using the conflict analysis to explore the individuals and relationships that comprise the community and to what extent these community actors are influential either in the conflict and/or peace sphere. Who are the actors using education to serve conflict purposes (for example, by promoting violent extremism), and who are the actors promoting education as a tool for peacebuilding (for example, by promoting social cohesion)?
- Ensuring the diversity of views in the community is represented (e.g. ethnic, religious, disability, sex, age, or political) and including children and youth in meaningful ways.
- Building on existing community resilience, such as efforts a community has already made to provide education or the way parents may already value education as a path to greater opportunities for their children.
- Including a range of community members in the analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education programs and policies.

Source: [INEE, 2013, Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education.](#)

Community engagement can provide a strong foundation for developing appropriate responses related to local resource mobilisation. On the response side, effectively delivering education in resource-scarce, conflict-affected environments often involves identifying and



mobilising community resources (human, intellectual, linguistic, monetary or material, and reaching out to that country's diaspora). The benefits of local resource mobilisation include promoting local ownership to strengthen the activity, as well as recognition of the value of existing skills.

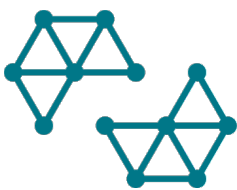
### The importance of inclusive education principles

**During or following an emergency or conflict it is particularly important to ensure that inclusive education principles remain central to any education assessments/analysis and proposed responses.**

A range of strategies can be used to ensure inclusion. Inclusive education principles and practices should be built into early assessment/analysis. For example, some strategies proposed by the INEE to make instruction and learning processes more inclusive in these settings include:

- Teaching methods are appropriate to the age, developmental level, language, culture, capacities and needs of learners, are disability inclusive, and include internally displaced, refugees, or children and youth of other nationalities.
- Teachers demonstrate an understanding of conflict dynamics, their own biases, and adapting their instruction accordingly.
- Teachers model non-violence and do not use corporal punishment.
- Parents and community leaders understand and accept the learning content and teaching methods used, and do not regard it as a challenge to their particular identity group.
- Teachers employ instruction methods that are participatory, inclusive, foster critical thinking, peaceful conflict resolution and respect for different opinions.

Source: INEE, 2013, *Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education*.



### Case study: Pakistan

In Bagh, Pakistan, teachers supported by USAID's ENGAGE program used simple and available materials to make lessons more visual or tactile for students. Teachers asked students to bring supplies from home to use in lessons, such as dried foods, empty boxes, bottle caps, or buttons. Teachers used dried beans/corn to teach number concepts. Ten beans glued on a small stick became a "10- stick" which was useful for teaching place values. When posters or flashcards were made, teachers outlined the letters, numbers, or objects with yarn so that children with visual disabilities could feel them.

Source: INEE, 2010, *Pocket Guide Learners with Disabilities*.





## Strategies for incorporating gender in education in conflict-affected and/or fragile states

A range of strategies can be used to incorporate gender-sensitive education principles and practices into early assessment/analysis. Some of these strategies include:

- Conduct gender analyses at the school and community levels to identify gender-based needs.
- Where changes at the national level will take time or where there remain significant threats to girls' participation in formal schools, support community-based alternative or non-formal forms of girls' education. These should occur in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, with the goal of eventual handover to state-run formal education. The [Empowerment Through Education program](#), for example, was implemented by CARE Australia and funded by DFAT to provide quality basic education to over 19,000 students in rural and remote communities in Afghanistan, where government schools do not reach.
- Ensure data is disaggregated in the Education Monitoring Information System (EMIS).
- Ensure your situational analysis makes specific reference to girls' and boys' needs.
- Within coordination bodies for program-based or sector-wide approaches or the development of interim sector plans, include gender as a key lens for working together in education.
- Work with the Ministry of Education or relevant education authorities, to ensure inclusion of gender-sensitive policies in education sector plans. These should be reflected in, for example, building design guidelines and practices, teacher recruitment and training policies and procedures, community outreach, and curriculum reform.
- Include gender as a criterion for framing proposals, terms of reference, monitoring and evaluation tools and reports.

Source: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 2010, [Tip Sheets on Education in Emergencies, Conflict, Post-conflict, and Fragile States](#); DFAT, 2016, [Case study: Empowerment through education in Afghanistan](#).



## When is assessment done in fragile and conflict-affected situations?

When used appropriately, the conflict/fragility analysis should be reviewed systematically. This should occur from the beginning and over the life of the intervention, to analyse the education and conflict-affected and/or fragile context and continually inform education program design, monitoring, evaluation and feedback.

The following websites provide more information about the key links and tools used in the fragility/conflict context.

- [INEE, 2013, Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education](#)
- [INEE, 2020b, Education in Emergencies Competency Framework](#)
- [USAID, 2012, Conflict Assessment Framework: Application Guide](#)
- [USAID, 2019, Safer Learning Environments Assessment Toolkit](#)

You can learn more about undertaking a fragility/conflict analysis in the education sector at the [INEE website](#) and the [Education in Crisis and Conflict Network](#).



## 4 STRATEGIES FOR COORDINATING EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IN FRAGILE AND/OR CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

### Development partner coordination

Coordination has traditionally been poor in situations of conflict and fragility, due to differing motivations and interests. The need for rapid disbursement of education funds can work against coordination, and the transaction costs can be high. Uncoordinated assistance may be harmful to early recovery, peacebuilding and state-building.

The [2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development](#) calls for new ways of delivering assistance to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’. To unlock the right type of financing requires exploring new partnerships with different stakeholders working in fragile and conflict-affected situations, including the private sector, humanitarian actors, political decision-makers, security sector actors, researchers, local and subnational governments, and regional bodies. The challenge will be to ensure these diverse actors are committed to working more coherently towards common goals. The OECD-DAC Report [International Support to Post-conflict Transition: Rethinking Policy, Changing Practice](#) provides guidance for the delivery of harmonised development assistance during transition.

### The importance of retaining partner country strategies and systems

Aligning with a partner country’s strategies and priorities, and using country systems for program delivery, is very challenging in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Yet, even in the most difficult environments, it is still an important principle. If development partners disregard country policies and systems, the capacity and legitimacy of the state may be undermined as key functions (planning and financing) become externally driven. Conversely, early progress on alignment can help a fragile state re-establish its core functions and legitimacy. This means a comprehensive and context sensitive assessment of the risks and benefits of using partner government systems is essential when planning and designing interventions in these contexts.

Source: DFID, 2010, [Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations](#); United Nations n.d., [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#); OECD, 2012, [International Support to Post-conflict Transition: Rethinking Policy, Changing Practice](#).

### Challenges of education program delivery

There are many challenges to alignment and harmonisation of education program delivery in fragile and conflict-affected environments. These challenges include conflicting incentives among development partner organisations and the reluctance of some partner governments to open up their policies and systems to development partner engagement.

In post-conflict environments, there may be trade-offs between rapid restoration of services (possibly through non-state actors) and building state capacity. There are no “blueprints”



but taking the time to build ownership and to (re-)establish local institutions is more likely to result in more solid progress and sustainable outcomes.

The extent or type of alignment that is possible depends very much on country context, and the risks are likely to be high compared to other contexts. The choice of whether to deliver through or outside the state is a complex one and needs to be informed by careful (and continuing) analysis.

**Note:** Useful resources on the various options and instruments available for promoting alignment and coordination can be found at:

- ✦ [Department for International Development \(DFID\), 2010, Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper E - Aligning with Local Priorities](#)
- ✦ [Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\), 2015, Use of Country Systems in Fragile States](#)

Furthermore, it will not always be possible to maintain basic levels of education service provision in a fragile and/or conflict-affected state setting. In some circumstances, it will be possible based on a combination of market, voluntary and local government initiatives. However, this will not always be the case as instability grows and systems deteriorate; especially given the need for co-ordination and oversight to ensure quality.

In such circumstances, education provision may ultimately depend on progress elsewhere. For example the provision of:

- basic security (in access to and from schools for staff, parents and students)
- health, water and sanitation
- livelihoods (so that subsistence needs do not interfere with student and teacher attendance).

## Strategies for coordinating education interventions in fragile and/or conflict-affected states

Some of these strategies include:

- Promoting the leadership and initiative of government authorities (district, provincial, national levels) and, where necessary, providing management and technical capacity development support.
- Encouraging the establishment of a coordination mechanism, led by the Ministry of Education (MoE), including all education-sector stakeholders (e.g. development partners, teacher unions or associations, local academia, national and international civil society organisations, and parent groups).
- Establishing regular education sector-specific development partner coordination meetings (development partner groups) around key issues for strategic and financial planning with the MoE.
- If a country is receiving support from the [Global Partnership for Education](#) or [Education Cannot Wait](#), consider how to utilise existing coordination as a mechanism around which to further organise education interventions, coordination, and funding.
- Inviting other government departments to participate in coordination meetings so





they can see the role education plays in mitigating fragility and can contribute resources when required.

- Where persistent armed conflict or natural disasters contribute to fragility, familiarise partners with emergency education measures and plan for their adoption.
- Once an appropriate level of stability has been achieved, working with the MoE and other development partners to develop strategies to advocate for appropriate levels of domestic budgeting for education over time.

Source: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 2010, *Tip Sheets on Education in Emergencies, Conflict, Post-conflict, and Fragile States*.



### An activity for you

**Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.**

Question 1: When planning co-ordination strategies for a proposed education program, what are some of the specific conflict sensitive strategies that need to be employed?

Develop a simple action plan for ensuring these strategies are built into your education program response.

Question 2: What are some examples of conflict sensitive strategies you might use to engage with state/sub-state actors to promote leadership and ownership that will not run the risk of exacerbating the conflict?

The following links may also help guide your analysis:

- 🔗 *DFID, 2010, Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper E - Aligning with Local Priorities*
- 🔗 *DFID, 2010, Working Effectively in conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper F- Practical Coordination Mechanisms*
- 🔗 *USAID, 2006, Fragility and Conflict Education Assessment Tool*
- 🔗 *INEE, 2013, Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education*
- 🔗 *INEE, 2009, Education and Fragility: Common Research Questions for Situational Analyses*
- 🔗 *OECD, 2012, International Support to Post-conflict Transition: Rethinking Policy, Changing Practice*



## 5 ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION RESPONSES

### Maximise the positive impact and minimise the negative impact

It is crucial that the education response strategy in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts does not inadvertently exacerbate the drivers of conflict or contribute to increasing inequality or marginalisation. Specific conflict/fragility sensitive education response strategies are identified in [INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education](#).

Interventions in these contexts should be conflict-sensitive (including planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating) and at a minimum ensure that we do no harm.

Source: INEE, 2013, [Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education](#).

### Reflection questions for developing education responses

The following reflection questions can be used to review your proposed education response and identify any gaps/issues that may need to be addressed.

There are a number of fundamental questions to ask when considering developing education responses to fragile and/or conflict affected states.

#### What needs to happen?

To determine the response strategy objectives:

- Have you considered the conflict actors, dynamics, timing and risks (as revealed in the conflict analysis)?
- Do the education activities aim to meet the needs of conflict-affected populations for inclusive and quality education in equitable ways?
- Is there a high degree of confidence that the education activities will not contribute to grievances, intergroup tensions or conflict?

#### Who is to benefit from these responses?

If a response strategy will not have national reach, it is critical that beneficiary selection is done in a conflict sensitive way.

- What are the group interactions and perceptions of the conflict?
- How will different groups receive the education program or policy?
- What are the known biases of the delivering actor/agency/government?

#### Where is the conflict and where should the response best be delivered?

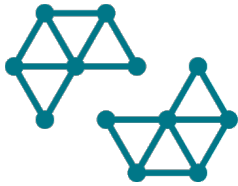
- How does the conflict affect the geographic area?
- If the geographic area contains beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, how will the intervention lessen intergroup tensions? Is there a potential for the non-beneficiaries to react with violence?



## When should the response be delivered?

- What are the conflict dynamics over a calendar year? E.g. do they ebb and flow with a rainy/dry season?
- How will the education program or policy adapt for these fluctuations?
- Is the education program or policy harmonised with the national education system?

Source: INEE, 2013, *Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education*.



### Case study: Myanmar: Competing Education Systems

Decades of political instability and civil conflict has resulted in a complex education system in Myanmar. Low levels of spending has led to low enrolment and completion rates, poor learning outcomes and inequalities in access to and quality of education across the country. The situation is exacerbated in ethnic and border regions where conflict often caused schools to close and made school access almost impossible for internally displaced populations.

Education has been used as a tool in forging a form of national identity in Myanmar. This has long been recognised as a driver of conflict culturally and politically, widening the gap in education access and quality between different regions, ethnic groups and political groupings. Although non-state providers have only a marginal share of education service delivery in Myanmar, they play an important role in providing access to education in ethnic, remote and conflict-affected areas of Myanmar, including the border regions. For example, it is estimated that in the Karen areas bordering Thailand, refugee camp schools cater to approximately 40,000 school aged children. These border-based education systems are well-funded and well-organised by a network of international non-governmental organisations with established teaching standards and quality learning materials. As a result, this created an unintended impact on education in the border regions, where ethnic department schools in Myanmar became less attractive to local populations who preferred to send their children across the border and enter the camps to gain access to better resourced schools. Many teachers and education officials from the ethnic department schools also left to find employment with the international non-governmental organisations across the border. The development of an education system in the cross-border refugee camps has resulted in educated students with qualifications unrecognised by Myanmar: this means that the graduates may be unable to matriculate or enter Myanmar's higher education system.

Source: Education Analytic Service, 2016, *Non state actors in basic education: Myanmar case study*.



## Risk management

Risk management is key to an ability to operate effectively in situations of conflict and fragility. Fragile states are more volatile, with weaker capacities, and with more divergent political agendas. The impact of risk is also higher, threatening not just education activities, but the viability of country engagement and the security of staff, partners and beneficiaries.

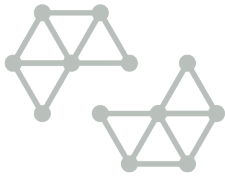
There are a number of different kinds of risk which may frequently overlap in fragile and/or conflict-affected contexts including:

- environmental risks
- partner risk (the capacity and will of partners and accompanying fiduciary issues)
- operational risk (factors impacting on program implementation)
- reputational risk.

Scenario and contingency planning have become increasingly important tools for risk management. Thinking through possible futures for a country, and identifying drivers that may bring these about, can help country offices identify interventions that increase the likelihood of positive scenarios, while preparing fall back options in the event that negative scenarios eventuate.

Source: DFID, 2010, [Working Effectively in Conflict-awareness and Fragile Situations](#).





## 6 TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Assessment questions

Answer the following questions by ticking 'True' or 'False'. Once you have selected your answers to all the questions, turn the page to 'The correct answers are...' to check the accuracy of your answers.

#### Question 1

Conventional programming tools are equally appropriate in fragile and/or conflict-affected situations.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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#### Question 2

Education is not a key priority in addressing the effects of conflict and fragility.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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#### Question 3

In a context considered fragile and/or conflict-affected, an education situation analysis is just as critical as in other contexts.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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#### Question 4

A situation analysis conducted during a period of conflict or instability should remain the agreed framework for 3-5 years.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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#### Question 5

Analysis of education programs in contexts of fragility and/or conflict can be done at any time – so long as they accord with DFAT's requirements.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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### Question 6

Inclusive education approaches should remain central to any education assessments/analysis and proposed responses.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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### Question 7

Community participation in developing and implementing appropriate education responses can only take place once stability is restored.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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### Question 8

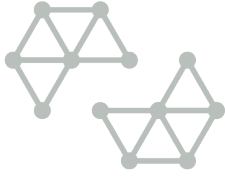
Uncoordinated assistance in conflict-affected and/or fragile contexts may be harmful to early recovery, peace-building and state-building.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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## The correct answers are...

### Question 1

Conventional programming tools are equally appropriate in fragile and/or conflict-affected situations.

**This statement is false.** Working effectively in fragile and/or conflict-affected situations requires using conventional programming tools with some degree of flexibility and innovation. Faced with insecurity, weak state capacity, difficult political environments and acute humanitarian crises, conventional approaches to aid delivery are often inadequate. Responding to such challenges tests our ability to understand complex environments and adapt our objectives, modalities and partnerships accordingly.

### Question 2

Education is not a key priority in addressing the effects of conflict and fragility.

**This statement is false.** In fragile and/or conflict-affected situations, education can provide a sense of normalcy and routine for children and adults. Findings from the Global Education Monitoring Report 2016 showed that education itself doesn't necessarily bring about more peace, better educated populations are more stable and have less conflict, facilitates democratic participation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Furthermore, increased public investment in education and secondary school enrolment reduces the outbreak of war and ensuring that the right type of education is delivered to students can help mitigate the impact of conflict. The key messages are:

- Education enables people to participate in political processes constructively and non-violently.
- Where there is better education there are more women in political leadership.
- An inclusive and equitable education is a powerful preventive tool for conflict.
- Education has a role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
- Education can reduce crime and violence against children and youth.
- Educational programs help people access justice and legal protection.



### Question 3

In a context considered fragile and/or conflict-affected, an education situation analysis is just as critical as in other contexts.

**This statement is true.** A situation analysis is a key first step in developing an appropriate education response in a conflict-affected and/or fragile context.

Such an analysis provides a systematic study of the background and history, root causes, actors, and dynamics of fragility and conflict and their interaction with the (proposed) education program or policy. In doing so, it also provides a better understanding of the causes, dynamics and forces promoting violent conflict and/or the road to peace; as well as an opportunity to identify and prioritise key underlying triggers of conflicts. This information provides a basis to inform education programming.

Refer to the [Foundation level Country or Region Specific Analysis](#) for further information regarding situation analyses.

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### Question 4

A situation analysis conducted during a period of conflict or instability should remain the agreed framework for 3-5 years.

**This statement is false.** Any assessment/analysis and response(s) should be viewed as a continuing, dynamic process, rather than as static outputs.

Drivers of conflict can and do change in fragile and conflict-affected situations (and not always in a linear way) and key actors influencing and/or influenced by the context may shift and change. Only by keeping the analysis current, can programming choices continue to be robust. Development partners' programs that perform best are often the ones that accept the dynamic nature of fragile situations. They do this by employing a range of instruments and partnerships or by responding quickly and flexibly to changes. These approaches require an acceptance of risk and a commitment to monitoring the context to enable risk mitigation and rapid adjustment.

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### Question 5

Analysis of education programs in contexts of fragility and/or conflict can be done at any time – so long as they accord with DFAT's requirements.

**This statement is false.** Whatever the context, it is important that an early analysis of context is undertaken. It needs to provide a solid, contestable basis for future programming planning and identification of response strategies. It is, however, important to be realistic and take into account time-frames, context and safety issues. Sometimes a "snapshot" analysis will only be possible – and will need to be followed up with a more in-depth analysis when the situation allows. At other times, the context may be such that an initial analysis must be undertaken primarily through a review of secondary sources. This then needs to be supported with the collection of primary data and in-country consultations as circumstances permit.

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### Question 6

Inclusive education approaches should remain central to any education assessments/analysis and proposed responses.

**This statement is true.** During or following an emergency or conflict, inclusive education principles remain central to developing appropriate responses. A range of strategies can be used to ensure inclusion, and inclusive education principles and practices should be built into early assessment/analysis.

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### Question 7

Community participation in developing and implementing appropriate education responses can only take place once stability is restored.

**This statement is false.** Equitable and transparent community participation is critical for conflict sensitive education. If this is not done well and from the beginning, policies and related implementation may perpetuate existing inequalities or trigger inter-group grievances and conflict. If participation is managed well, with a diverse and representative group, the potential for education to transform a society into one of peace can be maximised.

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### Question 8

Uncoordinated assistance in conflict-affected and/or fragile contexts may be harmful to early recovery, peacebuilding and state building.

**This statement is true.** Development partner coordination has traditionally been poor in situations of conflict and fragility, due to differing development partner motivations and interests. The need for rapid disbursement of education funds can work against coordination, and the transaction costs can be high. Investing in coordination is critical.

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## Learn more about...

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- ✦ *DFID's Working Effectively in Conflict-affected and Fragile Situations - Briefing Paper E: Aligning with Local Priorities*, found at, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/67700/building-peaceful-states-E.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67700/building-peaceful-states-E.pdf)
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