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The role of basic education in post-conflict recovery

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The last decade has seen a growing recognition amongst international donors, development agencies, non-government organisations and academics of the vital role education can play in bringing about recovery following violent conflict, natural disaster and other crises. This has led to the development of increasingly targeted and sophisticated programme planning and management tools, for use by government ministries, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations in fragile contexts. Drawing on the 2010 independent study of UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Transition Programme, this paper explores the transformative role education can play in post-conflict recovery. It argues that while basic education assistance can have a catalytic role in helping states during the early stages of a transition out of violent conflict, there is the need for a better understanding of its role in building peace at the national, sub-national and community levels. The paper also argues for the development of a solid evidence base to inform policy and practice at all national, regional and community levels so as to demonstrate conclusively the important role played by education during and in the aftermath of conflict.

Introduction

Throughout the last decade there has been a growing recognition of education's role in response to conflict and the demands of early recovery so that it is seen as the fourth pillar of humanitarian aid alongside food and water, shelter and health (Machel 2001). Schools and teachers can be used to provide a safe space and sense of normality during situations of instability, and can contribute to the physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection of children, adolescents and adult learners. Schools can also become sites for inter-agency collaboration and harmonisation of relief efforts. This greater focus on education's role led to the setting up of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in November 2000 at a consultative meeting in Geneva hosted by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Its purpose was to provide support to professionals working in the field of education in emergencies at global, regional and country levels through information sharing, tools development and advocacy, and to improve linkages between the education sector and other sectors working in emergency and post-crisis contexts (Bromley and Andina 2009).

The INEE initiative was designed to raise the profile and deepen the quality and accountability of educational work in violent conflict, humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict recovery, and to lead to greater inter-agency cooperation. It also brought about the linking of conflict with natural and man-made disasters. As a

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result, the *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction* were launched in 2004 and updated in 2010 (INEE 2010). The INEE Minimum Standards now constitute the normative framework for humanitarian response in the education sector and are increasingly becoming points of reference for government ministries of education, as they systematically address their responsibilities in response to conflict and natural hazards and those affected by such events.

The growing importance of education in conflict in the international arena is reflected in the latest 2011 *EFA* (Education for All) *Global Monitoring Report*, *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education* (UNESCO 2011). In the report, it is argued that armed conflict in the world's poorest countries is one of the greatest barriers facing the EFA goals and it calls upon the international community to strengthen the role of education systems in preventing conflicts and building peaceful societies. In conflict-affected areas it is estimated that 28 million children of primary school age are out of school, making up 42% of the world total. The countries in which they live are often characterised by protracted internal conflict often associated with grievances and perceived injustices linked to identity, faith, ethnicity and religion, poor governance and the indiscriminate use of force targeting civilians. Increasingly, it is observed that classrooms, teachers and students are seen by combatants as legitimate targets (UNESCO 2011, 131–132).

While education systems have the potential to act as a powerful force for peace, reconciliation and conflict prevention by promoting mutual respect, tolerance and critical thinking, they often fuel violence by providing insufficient or unequal access and/or the wrong type of education (Smith and Vaux 2003; Davies 2010; Hilker 2011). When large numbers of young people are denied access to education, the resulting poverty, unemployment and disaffection can act as a powerful recruiting ground for armed militia. Unequal access to education generates wide disparities between communities and can also cause conflicts, as can the use of education systems to reinforce political domination and the subordination of marginalised groups and ethnic segregation (Brown 2011). When the rebuilding of an education system following conflict does begin, it is often in an environment marked by high levels of political instability and uncertainty, chronic financing deficits, low levels of capacity and teacher shortages.

The 2011 EFA report concludes that post-conflict reconstruction in education poses immense challenges yet success in education can help underpin the peace process, build government legitimacy and set a country back on course to recovery. Drawing on an extensive review of UNICEF's global Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Transition (EEPCT) programme, and with field research in Kenya, Nepal and South Sudan, this paper examines the role basic education is playing in bringing about a transition from violent conflict to early recovery and peace.

In the next section we present an overview of the growing body of academic literature and emergent conceptualisation of education in emergencies and post-conflict recovery. This is followed by a discussion of UNICEF's specific conceptualisation of education within the EEPCT programme and its implementation at the country level in each of the three case studies. Finally, we present a discussion of the main lessons to emerge from the country interventions for those charged with designing and implementing programme responses to the need for recovery in the aftermath of conflict and disaster.

Conceptualising education in post-conflict transitions

Education in post-conflict transitions has become the focus of a growing body of research among educationalists and other specialists as it is seen as being critical to the reconstruction process and consolidating peace and stability (Pigozzi 1999; Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Sinclair 2002; Davies 2004; Kagawa 2005; Tomlinson and Benefield 2005; Penson and Tomlinson 2009; Paulson 2011). Over the last 10 years, education in countries affected by conflict has also undergone significant changes in policy and practice, and the way it is conceptualised. This is reflected in the plethora of terms that have been used to describe this emerging field, including 'education for reconstruction', 'education in crisis situations', 'emergency education', 'education in fragile states', 'education and conflict' and 'education and instability' (Karpinska, Yarrow and Gough 2007). More recently, the terminology has shifted to 'fragile situations' or 'states affected by fragility' in line with the broader international policy paradigm, which targets and prioritises states based on a variety of democratic governance-based indicators that measure risk to regional peace and security and foreign policy goals (Kirk 2007; Davies 2011; Buckland 2011). Overall, the discourse recognises that violent conflict, war and natural hazards/disasters, inequality and poverty are seen as the greatest obstacles to human development (World Bank 2011).

Proponents argue that the 'fragility' lens provides a holistic approach and broader conceptualisation, which in turn enables a deeper level of analysis beyond the state level to include all actors who are perpetuating conditions that limit the provision of basic services, including security, justice, health and education (Tebbe 2009). 'Fragility' also seeks to capture the causes and dynamics of both violent conflict and natural disaster and to understand the inter-linkages. Further, as Davies (2011) argues, the 'fragility' lens reinforces the possibility that education, through flawed design and delivery, can inadvertently exacerbate conflict and vulnerability.

The emergence of the concept of 'education in emergencies' is an important part of this discourse and policy development, and it can be located within the broader concept of 'fragility'. Education in emergencies assumes a dual humanitarian–developmental function and asserts that it is possible to intervene early by addressing basic education needs, in particular through international assistance, to construct a more orderly transition out of protracted and devastating crises into phases of 'recovery' and 'development'. In this way, it assumes a 'multiplier effect'; in other words, that tackling basic education needs can create other humanitarian gains and initiate additional developmental and structural reforms such as sustained and equitable access, curriculum reform and teacher training. Therefore, as well as the ability to transform crises, the education in emergencies model also professes to mitigate against, and prevent, new 'shocks'. In doing so, it aims to address the root and underlying causes of crises, and to work with governmental and non-governmental actors in order to build and maintain local capacities and coping mechanisms (Penson and Tomlinson 2009; Paulson 2011). Accordingly, it understands the causes of conflict, and fragility more broadly, to be grounded in grievances and the inability of individuals and groups to satisfy human needs.

Since the launch of the INEE, practitioners, policymakers and academics have begun to engage collaboratively in discussion regarding education in emergencies and post-conflict transitions, deepening insights into the complex, often contradictory, relationships between education and those affected by conflict or natural disaster

(Davies 2004; Smith and Vaux 2003). The findings have informed the development of increasingly targeted and sophisticated programme planning and management tools, for use by government ministries, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations such as Save the Children, in emergency response and early post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction, such as the development of the INEE Minimum Standards.

Challenges common to education in many post-conflict situations include: the inability of governments to fund capital or recurrent expenditure; a chronic shortage of qualified teachers or over supply of under-qualified teachers; poor record keeping; corruption and lack of transparency in educational governance; and a failure to develop initiatives to build the skills of young people and prevent their recruitment into military or criminal activity (World Bank 2005). With 'education in emergencies', there has been an emerging consensus over the need for an early focus on getting schools functioning, decentralising reforms and fiscal control to allow community ownership and capacity building, and ensuring external support for education builds on the resilience and adaptability of local communities and authorities already active in supporting education (Davies 2011). The need for inter-sectoral collaboration on HIV/AIDS programmes, health education, safety and security in schools, landmines, and psychosocial support is also recognised together with the need to align education reconstruction with social and economic development (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud 2009; Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly 2009; Dolan and Ndaruhutse 2011).

Education is therefore seen as part of a broader pattern in international humanitarian and developmental thinking that supports the need for comprehensive and integrated approaches to crises that work through governmental agencies, and in partnership with non-governmental actors at the international, national and local levels. In creating sustainable solutions to intractable violent conflicts and weak disaster response capacities, it is important to recognise that education has a central role to play within wider reforms in international policy and practice.

Despite these recent contributions, however, the field of education in emergencies and post-conflict transition is still in its infancy. The causes of fragility are hotly debated (Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011), and there is a need to conduct more research and evaluation to understand the complex and critical processes of educational reconstruction, and the processes through which educational systems contribute to promoting or preventing conflict (Harber 2004; Davies 2005; Smith 2005; Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2008; Brown 2011), especially at the local level. There are a growing number of country-based case studies that are beginning to demonstrate salient insights, and notable analytical tools include Davies' (2011) conceptualisation of the 'impact of education on the drivers of fragility and grievance'. Nevertheless, there remains a large gap in the literature between the theorising of the academic community and the more applied approaches of practitioner community (Paulson and Rappleye 2007). There is, therefore, the need to fill the theory–practice gaps and generate a knowledge base of effective approaches to rebuilding education systems emerging from conflict which are sensitive to and can be applied across a range of country contexts (Karpinsk, Yarrow and Gough 2007; Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud 2009).

Attention also needs to be paid to the quality and relevance of the education offered in schools in states affected by fragility since it is now recognised that it has a marked effect on the internal efficiency (completion/drop-out rates) and on the ability of children to benefit from later educational opportunity (UNESCO 2010). This is supported by a recent review of research concerned with quality in the EFA context which

suggests there has been an over-emphasis on inputs and outputs at the expense of class-room processes (Alexander 2008; Riddell 2008; UNESCO 2010). More attention also needs to be paid to understanding the relationships between policy intent and action as translated into classroom and school-level practices if the quality of education is to be markedly improved (Hardman et al. 2011).

Such gaps in knowledge with regard to education in countries affected by violent conflict and natural disaster, point to the need for more systematic and rigorous case study analysis to identify which interventions have the greatest impact in which contexts and at which levels (Penson and Tomlinson 2009). This article, through the comparison of the Nepal, Kenya and South Sudan case studies, seeks to engage critically with the different phases and stages of development that require different responses while also appreciating the possibility that an orderly and linear transition may not be achievable because of the complexity and protracted nature of violent conflict (Smith 2005; Nicolai 2009).

UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition programme

In focusing on a specific example of the conceptualisation of education in emergencies and post-conflict transitions, this paper examines UNICEF's US$205 million EEPCT programme that started in 2007 and is now operating in 39 states. The EEPCT is significant because it seeks to add value to the education in emergency and post-conflict model in terms of its unique objectives and implementation strategy and global reach. The authors of this article formed part of the team that conducted an independent programme review and evaluability study of the EEPCT from October 2009 to May 2010 worldwide (Barakat et al. 2010).[1] Commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office, New York, this study provided the authors with unique access to policy formulation and programme implementation at the headquarters, regional, national and field levels, as well as an opportunity to examine the initial design of the EEPCT.

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the eight-month study reviewed the EEPCT programme at a global, regional and country level. The methodology combined extensive desk-based research with country case studies in Nepal, South Sudan and Kenya and 'remote' data collection through telephone interviews and a web-based survey. These methods enabled all relevant stakeholders at the global, national and district level to contribute input to the study. The programme review also relied upon numerous sources of information, including and beginning with an extensive documentation review of materials related to the EEPCT programme and to the broader thematic area of education in emergencies and transitions. This included: (i) EEPCT programme documents; (ii) previous relevant evaluations conducted by UNICEF and other organisations (Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council, etc.); (iii) UNICEF and non-UNICEF policy documents relevant to education in emergencies and transitions as well as to evaluation methods; (iv) evaluation tools and monitoring frameworks; (v) partnership-related materials; and (vi) relevant scholarly and professional publications and emerging evaluation methodologies. Primary data were also gathered through the following means: (i) semi-structured interviews; (ii) focus group discussions; (iii) community power surveys; (iv) the review of existing data available from UNICEF, implementing partners and governmental sources; (v) observation conducted through visits to assisted schools; and (vi) web-based surveys of UNICEF and key partner personnel.

Background to the EEPCT programme

The EEPCT programme aimed '[t]o put education in emergency and post-crisis transition countries on a viable path of sustainable progress towards quality basic education for all'. Specifically, it revolved around the following four Designated Goals:

- *Designated Goal 1* – Improved quality of education response in emergencies and post-crisis transition countries.
- *Designated Goal 2* – Increased resilience of education sector service delivery in chronic crises, arrested development and deteriorating contexts.
- *Designated Goal 3* – Increased education sector contribution to better Prediction, Prevention and Preparedness for emergencies due to natural disasters and conflict.
- *Designated Goal 4* – Evidence-based policies, efficient operational strategies and fit-for-purpose financing instruments for education in emergencies and post-crisis situations (Barakat et al. 2010, 19).

As is evident in these goals, the EEPCT programme not only aimed to improve UNICEF's and its partners' ability to respond to emergencies, but also to mitigate the damage resulting from future crises through systemic resilience and attention to disaster prediction, preparedness (including disaster risk reduction) and prevention. The final, and perhaps the most far-sighted, goal focused upon the critical importance of building a solid evidence base upon which to guide future policymaking and programming in relation to education in emergencies and transitions.

In line with this fourth designated goal, the EEPCT programme was intended to serve as a form of 'living laboratory' which would enable UNICEF to learn during and through implementation. The authors' study was commissioned in order to enhance this learning process by reviewing, from an independent perspective, the design and implementation of all four designated goals and by developing a monitoring and evaluation framework to assist in measuring the results of the EEPCT programme (within and beyond the scope of the programme's one contractual-obligation evaluation). In commissioning the study, UNICEF noted that

> the programme would benefit from an analytical appraisal in order to provide a state-of-the-art overview of implementation to date – structure and processes in place, management and funds allocation mechanisms, guidance provided, innovation strategies defined, as well as trends and accomplishments reached so far in each of the programme Goals and the cross-cutting issues. (Barakat et al. 2010, 99)

UNICEF's approach to education in emergencies and post-conflict transitions therefore argues that we need to go beyond conflict to include natural hazards and disaster as they often overlap. The EPPCT programme also recognises that while conflict can officially cease at the national level it is often perpetuated at regional and local levels. It is therefore necessary to intervene in education at each of these levels through a decentralised approach so as to create a transformative impact, using education as a vehicle for stability, recovery, reform and transition, and in its purest sense, a catalyst for change.

Country case studies

The case study countries were selected, in consultation with UNICEF's Evaluation Office, according to particular criteria. They included: (i) geographical representation;

(ii) types of emergencies (conflict, disaster, chronic emergency, and so on); (iii) phases of emergencies and transitions (mid-crisis, early recovery or transitional); (iv) the range of programme activities, including the 'routine' and the reportedly innovative; (v) the amount of EEPCT assistance received; (vi) the ability of those countries to facilitate or absorb an additional external mission; and (vii) the presence of relevant UNICEF personnel. The inclusion of Kenya, Nepal and South Sudan enabled a wide-ranging perspective on the EEPCT programme and its variations. Also significant, the choice of locations enabled consultation with personnel from UNICEF's regional offices based in Nairobi, Kathmandu and Bangkok. The sample facilitated a wide range of contact with all relevant stakeholders, including local and governmental partners, as well as UNICEF personnel at all levels, from headquarters down to field-based implementing staff in area and district offices.

The following sections examine the very different applications and definitions of education in emergencies and post-conflict transitions across the three country studies. It considers the extent to which the education initiatives have acted as a catalyst for change at the national, sub-national and local levels so as to promote recovery and peace building.

Nepal

Despite the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 and extensive international intervention, Nepal is still home to many simultaneous 'emergencies'. The country is an insightful and pertinent case study because it has been locked in a precarious post-crisis transition. This stems from a number of factors involving: a war legacy; political stalemate; simmering inter-communal conflicts and the threat of violence; attempts to deal with the aftermath of flooding and ongoing vulnerability from the risk of further natural disaster; and deep-rooted deprivation and discrimination for many Nepali (Davies et al. 2009; Eck 2010; Brown 2011). The imposition of Nepali as the language of instruction has also fed into the broader grievances amongst non-Nepali speaking castes and ethnic minorities. Consequently, educational needs are chronic in Nepal at the primary and secondary school levels.

The EEPCT programme was designed to mitigate the risks of conflict through four main educational initiatives: Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP), Child Friendly Schools, National Curriculum Development and Disaster Risk Reduction. Following the decade-long nationwide conflict, it was recognised that in order to create a culture of peace and understanding of human rights, the education system needed to incorporate learning opportunities in the national curriculum to prepare students with the skills, attitudes, values and knowledge necessary to understand and assert their rights within the framework of the rule of law. In order to 'build back better' during the post-conflict period and equip students with the knowledge and skills to participate in an emerging democracy, UNICEF assisted the government to undertake a national curriculum revision process that introduced new content on peace, human rights and civic education into the formal curriculum for Grades 1–10, and provided in-service training to improve classroom pedagogy. This represented the main strategy of using education to tackle some of the structural causes of the conflict.

The SZOP initiative was seen as contributing to improving the quality of education response in emergencies and post-crisis transitions by depoliticising schools and creating safe teaching and learning spaces. It was grounded in the signing of codes of conduct at national, district and school levels to commit political parties, teachers'

unions and other stakeholders to prohibit political activities from interfering with children's access to school. Although political developments in 2009–2010 had a positive effect on education in many areas of Nepal, the authors' study found that large numbers of schools in the Terai region in the south of the country were still experiencing significant barriers primarily because of political unrest. Continuous advocacy with major political parties had been the main strategy of UNICEF and its partners in creating greater understanding of the responsibilities among political actors towards the protection of education rights. District-level codes of conduct were signed in which key actors and stakeholders, including political leaders, government officials, teacher union representatives and school management committees were brought together to renew their commitments to protect the right to education. A media campaign was also vigorously pursued and included production and dissemination of advocacy materials such as radio jingles, posters and leaflets in local Terai languages.

By focusing on 'hotspots', the EEPCT programme appeared to have strengthened UNICEF's relationship with its implementing partners largely made up of non-government organisations (NGO) working at the local level so as to provide the agency with more mobility in responding to conflict. Crucially, the most marginalised communities were targeted in relation to basic visits, assessments and advocacy for schools participating in SZOP so that they could remain open and function as teaching and learning institutions. At the time of the field visits in 2009, codes of conduct had been agreed in nine districts, 113 village development committees and 524 schools. All major political parties had made a public commitment to SZOP in public hearings televised throughout the country on Kantipur television, which laid the groundwork for commitments at district and local levels.

In measuring the impact of the SZOP initiative, it was reported that schools were exempted from closure during the programme period and that more schools refused to close for small incidents and strikes so that they were open for more days. However, no robust monitoring data had been collected in support of this claim. Overall, the selected communities supported the SZOP efforts and the pressure they had put on political and armed groups to keep schools open, and all asserted that it had helped create a better environment for education for their children. It was also reported that the SZOP initiative had improved school governance through the creation of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) with representation from a range of ethnic groups. It was found in our observations and interviews that schools without SMCs and PTAs were more vulnerable to political interference. As a direct result of the SZOP programme, UNICEF, working through local partners and NGOs, had started to form SMCs in the most vulnerable schools with a reported improvement in transparency about finances and decision making, and being more proactive in addressing problems and mobilising resources. Parents also appeared to be more aware of the facilities provided by the government and more committed to running the schools according to government rules.

The research demonstrated that many schools had been successful in reducing inappropriate use of school property for political programmes, agricultural activities, animal slaughter and weddings. The intervention had also become associated with increasing the enrolment of students. In these ways, the SZOP model was judged by many stakeholders interviewed to be the only model that has managed to de-politicise schools, create local ownership and build trust between communities and the state. While there was a lack of systematic monitoring data to support many of the reported benefits of the SZOP programme, its impact was palpable during the visits to schools that were

not participating in SZOP or receiving external assistance. Compared to the SZOP schools, the non-participating schools demonstrated a very obvious absence of leadership, order and learning. For example, in one non-participating school, some parents came forward and complained that,

> the community received funds to build a toilet at the school but there is no toilet. We have never attended a school meeting. Dalit scholarships not distributed here or for girls. There is no transparency. The brother of the headmaster is involved in politics but there is no headmaster.

Despite these notable results, the main challenge was the sustainability of the SZOP beyond the external assistance. One visited community felt that the immediate task was to secure the 'political will of the parties' and 'money from UNICEF for teachers'. More deeply, a group of respondents from a mixture of backgrounds at the district level said that armed and predatory groups would continue until Nepal develops a 'stable and proper government'. Linked to this, within SZOP, the same respondents ranked corruption as the main barrier to durable results in education. Extortion threatened not only to dilute SZOP but to destroy any gains made. Other tensions in SZOP involved: difficulties in including vulnerable caste and ethnic groups in the system through representation on SMCs; knowing where conflict is emerging; and, given the relatively recent nature of the intervention, the poor quality of school infrastructure and limited training for many of the teachers who are unqualified or underqualified and the instructional materials at their disposal.

At the national level, the protracted political turmoil posed a major threat to the political stability of the country, its economic growth and implementation of political reform. The effects of the 10-year civil war are still emerging, especially by those most affected by the war and socio-economically vulnerable groups and sub-groups. Moreover, despite the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, levels of violent conflict in Nepal have persisted and there is a fear that the class-based conflict will be transformed into belligerent ethnic and other inter-communal divisions. Because of a limited government presence and capacity to deliver services and implement programmes, many rural areas are experiencing a breakdown in law and order. Security challenges such as fear of abduction, extortion, and threats of violence by armed groups and youth organisations affiliated with political parties continue throughout the country. This is particularly the case in the Terai since the 2007 Madhesi separatist uprising. By 2009–2010, numerous armed groups were operating, with regular incidents of shootings, bombs, kidnappings, threats, and intimidation and extortion, all threatening the territorial integrity of the state. This volatile operational context impacted directly on SZOP, with UNICEF having to rely heavily on local NGO staff to deliver the programme. Managing the programme remotely from Kathmandu in turn made it difficult for UNICEF staff to manage and monitor the quality of the provision and to build local capacity.

During the research, stakeholders concurred that many socio-political, cultural and economic grievances remained unaddressed and the protracted political impasse at the national level had created significant fear and uncertainty among those interviewed in Kathmandu and in the districts visited. It was also clear to us that the 'local' and 'national' tensions were interdependent. The *bandhas*,[2] although non-violent in nature, carry the threat of violence. They have become increasingly common in recent years and they entail significant disruption for government, the private sector

and public life. Towards the end of the research, an extensive *bandh*, in response to fatal attacks on Madhesi civilians by the military a few days prior, demonstrated the extent of the fragility and the specific threat of new forms of violent conflict.

Kenya

Since the introduction of the EEPCT programme, the UNICEF country office has been responding to education emergencies following drought in the North Eastern provinces and floods in Northern and Eastern provinces. However, most of its efforts up until the recent drought in east Africa have been directed at the post-election violence that erupted in early 2008, when it is estimated that 200,000 children were displaced from their homes and forced to take refuge in camps and host communities with families and neighbours.

Up until the outbreak of the political violence, Kenya was considered to be a model of stability in a frequently turbulent region. With the election of President Kibaki in 2002 it appeared that the authoritarianism experienced under former President Moi in the 1980s and 1990s had come to a close and that the economy was experiencing major recovery with an annual growth rate of just over 6% by 2007. However, President Kibaki continued to consolidate power in the executive. Political parties were also driven by ethnic clientism with a 'winner-take-all' view of political power rather than a broad-based political agenda that would appeal to a diverse range of interests. The use of gang and ethnic violence to build electoral influence which was common under Moi continued under Kibaki and was evident in the 2005 referendum and in the build up to the 2007 election (Mueller 2008).

Political violence was ignited on a larger scale by the contested election result and the failure of the Judiciary and Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) to establish their independence in the handling of the disputed result. This was because, in the run-up to the election, a new bill had created 57 judicial vacancies in the high court and 17 others in the court of appeal so that President Kibaki was able to appoint three new judges to Kenya's High Court, and less than two months before the election he was allowed to replace all of the ECK's commissioners, simultaneously appointing his former lawyer as the ECK's Vice-Chairman. President's Kibaki's five-year rule was also marred by the Anglo-Leasing scandal awarding air contracts involving several hundred million dollars in transactions to non-existent foreign companies, with some proceeds being diverted to campaign financing (Mueller 2008).

The violent mobilisation of ethnicity for political ends which had characterised the 1992 and 1997 elections and badly affecting the Rift Valley, Western, Coast and North Eastern Provinces was again played out in the 2008 post-election violence. It is estimated that the combined fallout from the two elections in the 1990s was 2000 killed, 500,000 displaced and numerous others intimidated into not voting. The political landscape of the Rift Valley was particularly affected and it was estimated that by 2002, 70% of those who had been pushed off their land in the 1990s had still not returned. In 2008, the Rift Valley was once again badly affected so that Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya, who had made their homes in Eldoret and other parts of the Rift for decades, decamped, vowing never to return. By February 2008, an estimated 1000 were dead across Kenya and over 350,000 displaced in camps (UNICEF Kenya Country Office 2008).

In response to the post-election violence, EEPCT funding was primarily targeted towards traditional support provided in emergencies, including supplies, temporary learning spaces and educational materials such as desks, books, uniforms and

blackboards. The EEPCT programme also enabled longer-term interventions to respond to the aftermath of the post-election violence through the provision of counselling such as psycho-social trauma and the development of a peace education curriculum and the establishment of Talent Academies to engage unemployed and out-of-school youth, who were vulnerable to exploitation and disaffection during and following the violence. The EEPCT programme therefore provided UNICEF with a unique opportunity to consolidate achievements in education in emergencies and post-conflict transitions while at the same time supporting its role as a catalyst in the immediate aftermath of the disasters.

The development of the peace education curriculum by the Ministry of Education with technical support from UNICEF, was initially designed to build the resilience of local communities and schools most affected by the post-election violence by training teachers to teach conflict-resolution skills. Following its perceived success, the peace curriculum was rolled out across the country; however, limitations on funding necessitated the implementation of a top-down, 'cascaded' training system for teachers with more than 7000 teachers trained nationally. Overall, the EEPCT programme appeared to have had a significant impact on the education response to the post-election violence which resulted in the displacement of communities and the destruction of villages and of schools. However, no systematic monitoring and evaluation of the EEPCT initiatives had been conducted at the time of the research at the national, regional or district levels so it was hard to reliably measure the impact beyond the perceptions of those interviewed (Barakat et al. 2010). As in Nepal, there was an urgent need to put in place a more systematic monitoring and evaluation system to improve accountability mechanisms, planning and implementation, and assist in knowledge sharing at all levels of the education system.

During the visits to communities most affected by the post-election violence, there appeared to be a denial of enduring political and ethnic tension by adult stakeholders at all levels. The discourse of governmental representatives, teachers, district education officers and parents interviewed centred round national unity and having moved on from the post-election violence. However, field surveys suggested the looming threat of violence, possibly to be sparked by the constitutional referendum and the 2012 general election (Kenya Thabiti Task-Force 2008; Kenya National Dialogue 2010). Education initiatives like the peace education curriculum cannot be considered or developed in isolation as they inevitably reflect the wider political economy. However, the field visits to schools and communities affected by violence suggested they can contribute to the reconciliation process and help build transparency and local resilience.

South Sudan

Before the secession of South Sudan, Sudan was one of the largest and most diverse countries in Africa. Composed of deserts, mountain ranges, swamps and rain forests, its landscape is equally scarred by violent conflict. A two-decade civil war between the mainly Muslim North and the Animist and Christian South, resulted in an estimated 1.5 million fatalities (Sommers 2005). The incidence of poverty is estimated at up to 90% in South Sudan, which affects most children, and over a third of under-fives are under weight and suffering from moderate or chronic malnutrition. The low social development indicators are exacerbated by the ongoing arrival of hundreds of thousands of returnees from within and outside the country. It is estimated that between 2006 and 2009 over 2 million internally displaced persons and refugees have returned

to South Sudan. Small 'shocks' can develop quickly into emergencies given the limited basic services on the ground. During the last five years, the humanitarian context has been characterised by disease outbreaks, food insecurity, flooding and various localised conflicts with threats of spill-over, including the threat of the Uganda-based Lord's Resistance Army, which has led to the displacement of populations [United Nations Organisation for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2009; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2009].

Despite the challenges outlined above, South Sudan is considered to be in a position to consolidate and sustain peace so as to improve the quality of life for its citizens (Kim et al. 2011). The relatively peaceful January 2011 referendum on the self-determination of South Sudan, in which 98% voted in favour of independence and the elections planned for 2012, have raised optimism generally among stakeholders in relation to political stability and peace building. Similarly, the economic dividends of peace could be great as South Sudan has large areas of cultivatable land, as well as gold and cotton, and its oil reserves are ripe for further development. However, the government is highly reliant on oil revenue which makes up 95% of its annual budget. This makes the economy particularly vulnerable to global financial crises, as in 2009 when a fall in the price of oil cut the budget by almost a third, badly affecting education, health and other key areas. Spending on human development and economic growth is also compromised because of the continued threat from North Sudan and the severity of internal violent conflict. It is therefore politically difficult to cut around one-third of the budget being allocated to security (UNESCO 2011).

To meet the educational challenges as a result of war and natural disasters, UNICEF, as the lead agency for education in South Sudan, works closely with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to establish systems, respond to local emergencies, build partnerships and better coordinate the education sector, develop accelerated learning for adolescents, reduce the gender gap, improve the quality of teachers and teaching, and build capacity for planning and managing services across all levels of the system. Under the title of the Go To School (GTS) initiative, the Government of South Sudan, in partnership with UNICEF, launched its education strategy on 1 April 2006 with a focus on both access to education and the quality of learning. The GTS initiative represents one of the most significant interventions in the sector to-date and UNICEF reported spending of around US$18 million in 2010. While this funding is substantial, it is currently secured on an annual basis, thereby limiting the scope of multi-year commitments to finance education construction (Barakat et al. 2010).

Of the three countries visited, the GTS initiative in South Sudan appeared to be the most successful in meeting the four strategic objectives of the EEPCT programme. A major goal was to respond to the 'positive emergency' of a growing demand for schooling following the signing of the peace agreement in January 2005 by building the education system. In terms of promoting enrolment, the initiative had met a great deal of success since its launch in April 2006. During the war, it was estimated that only 343,000 children were in school; by the end of 2008 the number had climbed to over 1.6 million and by the end of 2009 it had risen to over 1.6 million children in schools (Kim et al. 2011). In addition to the growth in enrolment, learning materials were supplied to nearly every learning space in South Sudan, thereby eliminating one of the major secondary costs that prevents families from sending children to school so as to expand access to education. A major school building programme was also put in place to accommodate the growing number of pupils.

Major curriculum reform was introduced in 2006 when a harmonised curriculum was finalised for primary classes 1–4 enabling the MoEST and UNICEF to provide textbooks to every school through a massive distribution project. A fully harmonised Year 1–8 curriculum was completed in 2007 along with Year 5–8 textbooks, and a new secondary curriculum was developed throughout 2008. English language training has also been made available to Arabic-pattern teachers to support the implementation of the new English-based curriculum. A Life Skills curriculum, including HIV prevention and peace education curriculum to challenge ethnic and group-based prejudices fuelling violence, was also developed for schools, including teacher guides and student support materials (UNICEF South Sudan Office 2009).

In order to develop capacity in the system, organisational development, educational leadership and management, teacher training and monitoring of learning outcomes became key areas of focus. A quality assurance and inspection system was being developed alongside certification, accreditation and registration of teachers. The establishment of a fully functioning Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the establishment of a South Sudan Institute of Education were also central to developing and monitoring the quality of the education system. The EMIS database was therefore being developed to collect data on other sectors post-primary, including informal education initiatives, vocational and technical institutions, teacher training and higher education. Overall, the EMIS system was seen as being central to improving planning and management and measuring quality, efficiencies and effectiveness (Barakat et al. 2010).

Of the three countries visited, South Sudan had the most comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system in place against which to track the effectiveness of the GTS. Given the long history of war in South Sudan, the establishment of a comprehensive data collection system had proved impossible. Therefore, it was recognised from the beginning of the GTS that an effective education management system had to be put in place. In 2006, the Government of South Sudan and UNICEF completed the *Rapid Assessment of Learning Spaces* (GoSS/UNICEF 2006) exercise. This was the first ever survey to reach learning spaces across all of South Sudan. Through the rapid assessment, every identified school was mapped using global positioning satellite coordinates and coded in a central database. This information was used as a foundation for the EMIS and acted as a baseline against which to measure interventions under the GTS. A second baseline study was conducted in 2008 on the socio-cultural and economic barriers to schooling in South Sudan. Both studies were used to inform the development of EMIS to judge the effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives designed to address access, quality and equity issues. Annual statistical data and assessments of differing scope and depth were also carried out at several points in the year in response to the evolving needs for evaluative knowledge and learning in the GTS and to feed into EMIS. While EMIS data are increasingly being used by the Ministry of Education, donor agencies and development partners in evidence-informed decision making, and are increasingly being used at the state level, field research by the authors in Malakal and Yambio found that the collection of systematic data at the district level with regard to, for example, attacks on schools and school closures, was more or less absent.

While the GTS initiative has proven highly successful in increasing school enrolment and laying the foundation for improved quality of teaching and learning, recent donor assessments point to the conclusion that improved enrolment numbers will not be sustained without equivalent efforts to build durable systems over the long-term. A recent lack of prioritisation of education at the national level is a worrying trend:

since 2006 the government has reduced the education budget from US$134 million to US$100 million in 2008 and up slightly in 2010 (though still reduced overall) to US $111 million. Unless the shrinking education budget is addressed, it is likely that the quality of education will suffer leading to a drop in enrolment and a loss of interest in education among parents and communities.

Spending on education is inevitably affected by the wider political economy and while progress has been made through the UNICEF GTS initiative it will fail unless the country maintains progress in other areas such as economic growth, employment creation, improvements in public health, security and the rule of law. The Government of South Sudan and the international aid donors will need to invest in education over the long-term and ensure there is equity in the allocation of resources across states and groups to help address the marked education disparities between states which feed the group-based localised conflict. Educational needs in many districts of the country remain chronic as a result of the war legacy, poverty and dependency on international aid and ongoing inter- and intra-group conflict. Outbreaks of violence at a local level, in addition to (and sometimes in tandem with) the impacts and risk of flooding and droughts, continue to prevent many children from accessing primary education, reduce the quality of education and lock communities into a long-term cycle of vulnerability. In 2009 alone, over 2500 people were killed and 350,000 displaced, and during the 2010 elections there were heavy outbreaks of violence in Lakes, Upper Nile, Warrap and Jonglei. The destabilising effect of this group-based violence highlights the importance of building an education system and curriculum that promotes mutual understanding and a shared identity.

Emerging lessons

While the EEPCT programme was being interpreted in very different ways in each of the countries visited, due to the different nature of the conflicts and consequences for education, recurrent themes did emerge. Overall, the case studies suggest basic education can act as a catalyst for peace building, particularly at a school and community level, by providing a platform for re-establishing social bonds and forming partnerships with government once the conflict subsides. In the three country studies, we came across schools and communities that had been surprisingly resilient to the violence and natural disasters around them and that were in recovery. In such communities, education was playing a role in mitigating fragility through community-based initiatives as this helped build local ownership and confidence and increase transparency and accountability from the bottom up. Responding at the school and community level was also important to allow for on the ground decision making in the face of a constantly changing environmental and political situation. While the examples provide grounds for optimism, it is essential that resources and external support from government and the international community are provided over the long-term to allow trust and relationships to reform and spread to other communities (Davies 2005; Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly 2009; Brannelly, Ndaruhutse and Rigaud 2009; Kim et al. 2011).

The findings also illustrate that the longer-term and broader impacts of interventions are ultimately dependent on the structural factors that maintain the conflict and thus the broader political, social and economic context (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2008; Brown 2011; UNESCO 2011). Among the communities visited in Kenya, Nepal and South Sudan, education was providing a clearly visible peace dividend. However, local grievances and perceived injustices linked to identity, faith and ethnicity that

had underpinned the intra-state conflict were still evident. To address such grievances, the post-conflict environment needs to be carefully assessed to promote conflict-sensitive educational planning as legacies of violence and mistrust are long-standing. A rigorous analysis of the needs of communities coming out of conflict, and the potential impact of proposed policies on those communities, drawing on both technical data and public opinion, needs to be conducted.

Peace building calls for a commitment to policies that focus on the creation of an effective learning environment for all children so as to overcome social divisions. It requires the provision of secure and adequate facilities, well-trained teachers, a relevant curriculum and clearly defined learning outcomes. Most importantly, it has to be recognised that educational quality is largely obtained through pedagogical processes in the classroom and that what students achieve is heavily influenced by the knowledge, skills, dispositions and commitment of the teachers in whose care students are entrusted (Hardman et al. 2011; UNESCO 2011). This, in turn, will require the appropriate training of teachers in the use of mother tongue and second language teaching, and the provision of appropriate instructional materials that promote conflict resolution and peace building (Cummins 2007; Davies 2011).

In order to create a safe teaching and learning environment, the three case studies suggest the need for a more systematic, coordinated and comprehensive reporting system that documents and investigates attacks on schoolchildren, schools and teachers so as to hold perpetrators to account. The Schools as Zones of Peace initiative in Nepal goes some way towards the provision of such a system, but there is a need for far more rigorous reporting, investigation and prosecution from national government and, where appropriate, at the international level. The 2011 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report suggests that UNESCO should be given a mandate and the resources to lead on the monitoring of attacks on children, school and teachers through a dedicated Violence Against Education Monitoring Group.

Putting in place a systematic monitoring and evaluation system with input from stakeholders across all levels of the education system will help improve accountability, planning and implementation in peace building, and assist in knowledge sharing. Developing a solid evidence base to inform policy and practice will be crucial in winning over detractors and in mobilising evidence to demonstrate conclusively the important role played by education during and in the aftermath of conflict. As the South Sudan case study shows, the starting point should always be a baseline assessment of existing provision. A broad situation analysis of all factors affecting education quality and access is also highly desirable, as is an analysis of existing structures, systems, and policies and plans. Too often peace-building initiatives start at the micro-level and are very seldom scaled up because they have not addressed systemic issues that need to be identified through feasibility studies, audits and baseline studies to gauge existing capacity and identify developmental inputs.

The 2011 Global Monitoring Report concludes that the single biggest obstacle to addressing the hidden crisis of armed conflict in education is the continuing perception that education is not a central priority in humanitarian crises, reflected by the fact that education only receives around 2% of humanitarian aid budgets. Post-conflict countries need well-planned interventions to support economic growth and poverty reduction and the support and re-establishment of education must be a funding priority (Holmes 2011). It calls for increased funding for peace building and the full integration of education into humanitarian planning in conflict-affected states, building on the work of the INEE, UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children. Such agencies can help develop the

capacity of government at the national, sub-national and local levels in countries emerging from conflict by providing technical support in such areas as curriculum development, textbook design and teacher training, so that education is central to the peace-building agenda.

Concluding comment

The three very different country contexts discussed in this paper suggest that we cannot prescribe how to respond to conflict. While education is not a direct cause of conflict, it can influence the incidence of conflict as it interacts with so many dimensions. It can act as an important tool of inclusion and exclusion and economic well being, and it can provide a means of recognising minority cultures, languages and practices. The three case studies above indicate that states affected by fragility can be assisted through conflict-sensitive policies and interventions to improve educational outcomes that are responsive to national, regional and local conditions.

Nevertheless, the case studies suggest the need for a deeper level of analysis that gets beyond the state level to include all actors who are perpetuating conditions that limit the provision of basic services, including security, justice, health and education at the sub-national and local levels. They also support the emerging consensus over the need for an early focus on getting schools functioning, decentralising reforms and fiscal control to allow community ownership and capacity building, and ensuring external support for education builds on the resilience and adaptability of local communities and authorities already active in supporting education.

The findings of the case studies also assert the demand for more investment in the monitoring and evaluation of peace-building interventions so as to allow for the gathering and analysis of data, identifying what needs to be known at the various levels and evaluating promising variables and trends across a range of country contexts. This, in turn, will allow for the pooling of knowledge for inter-agency coordination of the most promising research findings as the basis for further investigation and contextualisation in regions, districts and schools across states.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The full report can be accessed at www.york.ac.uk/iee/eice/publications.htm.
2. A *bandh* is a form of protest and strike that varies from the closing down of city markets for a day to nationwide standstills for political reasons, to get compensation for road accident victims, to get services or other causes.

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