

Looking ahead to 2030

Four reasons why investing in education in fragile contexts is a smart move

Rebecca Winthrop

The needs of people living in fragile states are an urgent priority for our time and thus will almost certainly be prominent in the next round of global development goals. A range of strategies is undoubtedly needed, and there is good reason why there is a heavy emphasis on the economic, legal and security dimensions of development efforts in fragile states. However, efforts in the social sphere are equally needed and education is one important strategy for supporting populations in fragile states that has often been overlooked, until recently.

In this article, we review the role education plays in advancing development outcomes in fragile states. We find that education can play a significant role in helping accelerate progress for people living in fragile states for at least four reasons: advancing economic development, humanitarian action, security and environmental sustainability.

Box 1: Terms and definitions

In this report, we rely on an often-used definition of fragile states to refer to contexts where 'state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations'.¹ The term 'fragile states' is prevalent in the global policy discourse but has been widely critiqued, in part because the conditions described above could affect a sub-region within a state or regional area that crosses international borders and in part because it is a negative term – few governments around the world want their state to be deemed fragile. To address this critique, terms such as 'fragile contexts' and 'situations of fragility' have emerged as alternatives.²

Additionally, within the education sector, a range of terms is used to describe education in specific situations, including, but by no means limited to: 'education in emergencies', which refers to education action in humanitarian emergencies, regardless of whether the source of the conflict is a natural disaster or a violent conflict; 'refugee education', which refers to education for people who have fled across international borders; and 'education and peacebuilding', which refers largely to education in post-conflict contexts. In this report, we recognise that debates on terms are important, but we opt to continue using the term 'fragile states', given that it remains accepted terminology, but also frequently use the interchangeable terms 'fragile contexts' and 'fragility', which in many ways are better descriptors.

Cutting across each of the four reasons, but particularly important for economic development and humanitarian action, is the imperative to uphold international human rights and humanitarian law. The right to education, which is firmly enshrined in international law, has for decades provided motivation and direction for global action on education. Ensuring that young people everywhere, regardless of their circumstances, can access an education of reasonable quality is important first and foremost because it is a basic human right.

Reason 1: Advancing economic development

By contributing to economic growth and poverty alleviation, education is a crucial factor in advancing economic development in all countries, including fragile contexts. But, to date, children in fragile contexts have been particularly excluded from educational opportunities. For example, in low-income countries affected by armed conflict, 28.5 million children of primary school age are out of school (half of the world total).³ Children are not only less likely to be in primary school, but are also more likely to drop out, given that the school survival rate to the last grade is 65 per cent in these contexts, whereas it is 86 per cent in other poor countries. As a result, secondary school enrolment rates are nearly one-third lower in conflict contexts than in other, more stable low-income countries.⁴ It is useful to briefly review the main ways in which education advances economic development.

Economic growth

Education plays an essential role in economic growth across all contexts. Investing in the skills and capacities of people helps develop the human capital needed to grow the economy. This is a particularly important issue in fragile contexts, where factors such as population displacement and violence often mean that educated and skilled members of society are in short supply. While estimating the precise relationship between education and growth can be difficult given the numerous variables, there is general agreement that all else being equal, education plays an important role in fostering economic growth. Economists estimate that each additional year of schooling increases annual gross domestic product (GDP) by one per cent.⁵ It is not only access that matters, however, but also the quality of what students are learning; when student literacy and mathematics test scores on international assessments increase by one standard deviation, annual GDP per capita grows by two per cent.⁶ Ensuring that women are educated appears to be an important part of this phenomenon, with

additional studies showing that increasing the number of women with a secondary education by one per cent can increase annual per capita economic growth by 0.3 per cent.⁷

Poverty reduction

In addition to advancing economic growth at the national level, education also has a powerful role to play in lifting those at the bottom of the economic ladder out of poverty. A number of economists have studied this relationship and found that even the most basic mastery of literacy and numeracy can transform the possibilities for an individual's life. For example, studies show that as little as four years of primary schooling can boost a farmer's productivity by nearly nine per cent.⁸ Additionally, increased years of schooling translate into increased earning potential. Each additional year of schooling increases an individual's potential income by as much as ten per cent, rising to 15 per cent for girls.⁹ Ultimately, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries had an education that allowed them to acquire basic reading skills, according to UNESCO's estimates.¹⁰

Reason 2:

Strengthening humanitarian action

Children and youth are frequently victims of crises and can face considerable risks to their personal health, safety and psychosocial well-being. An estimated 20 million children have fled their homes as refugees or internally displaced persons, often contending with family and community fracturing, dangerous environments, and life in new communities and countries.¹¹ In fragile contexts affected by conflict, attacks on education – schools, teachers and students – are becoming widespread, putting thousands of young people at risk. Between January 2007 and July 2009 at least 32 countries experienced attacks on education¹² and, over the last few years, millions have suffered abduction, sexual abuse and exploitation, illness and disease, and death in conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies. It is estimated that over two million children were killed in conflicts and that between four and five million were disabled in the decade ending in 2008.¹³

In all contexts, a good-quality education has a positive influence on an individual's physical and psychosocial health and, in this regard, education offers hope of some protection for children and youth during man-made and natural disasters. These virtuous secondary effects are particularly important in fragile contexts because they strengthen individuals' capacity to cope with adversity, rise above their difficult circumstances and, in the most extreme cases, survive.

Health

The connection between education and physical health is well established, and educating girls in particular has a positive influence on health outcomes. Children born to more educated mothers are more likely to survive and less likely to experience malnutrition. For example, a 2010 study estimates that improvements in women's education explained half the reduction in child deaths between 1990 and 2009.¹⁴ In fragile contexts, communities often face new health risks in their environment, from landmines to contaminated water, and schools are a convenient

place to transmit the new knowledge and skills that young people need to stay safe. Growing evidence reveals that literacy is a critical mechanism by which education translates to better health outcomes. This includes a study in Nepal, which showed that mothers' literacy and language skills were linked to their health proficiency (as measured by the ability to understand health messages, comprehend instructions on a packet of rehydration salts and provide a health narrative).¹⁵

Protection

Schools can also play an important role in helping to protect children from the wide range of dangers that can arise in situations of conflict and crisis, such as kidnapping, exploitation, sexual violence and separation from family members. The simple act of teachers' monitoring children's well-being and alerting community members if a child is distressed or in trouble can help mitigate some of the risks young people face.

Psychosocial well-being

In addition to translating into improved physical health and protection outcomes, education in fragile contexts can play a particularly important role in supporting children's psychosocial well-being. The ability of children and youth to regulate their emotions, develop cognitively, form relationships with others and have hope for the future are all part of psychosocial well-being and help them cope constructively with uncertainty and crisis. This is important for young people's healthy development, especially in fragile contexts.

There have been more than six decades of scholarship on the effects of extreme adversity and conflict on children, dating back to studies of evacuee children in Europe during World War II.¹⁶ Over the years, a narrow focus in these contexts on children's mental health, in particular the role of trauma in hindering children's functioning, has given way to a broader conceptualisation of children's well-being that links psychological and social experiences. This shift was driven in part by the realisation that mental health diagnostics and interventions often did not translate appropriately to large-scale conflicts in the developing world,¹⁷ and in part by the evidence that most children are not traumatised but instead are quite resilient and recover quickly.¹⁸

Today, there is strong evidence that demonstrates the resiliency of children and youth affected by extreme adversity, particularly if they are able to receive the most basic levels of care and attention from the adults and social institutions in their lives.¹⁹ In addition to the family, research across a wide range of contexts finds that schooling and other forms of non-formal education can play an essential role in supporting children's psychosocial well-being.²⁰ For example:

- A northern Uganda study using a quasi-experimental design on the effects of participating in educational activities on children's psychosocial well-being found that students that participated in education were safer, more able to form healthy relationships with others and better able to cope with their circumstances than children in the control group²¹
- A longitudinal study of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in Uganda documents that the connection

between the content of what children learn in school influences not only their persistence in school but also their ability to plan and take steps to prepare themselves for productive futures²²

Reason 3: Contributing to security and statebuilding

Education has an important role to play in peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts, both of which are integral to global security. Research has long shown the impacts of conflict and state weakness on education but evidence is increasingly emerging on the constructive role education can play in peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Peace and stability

There is a clear relationship between education and peace and stability; however, it is heavily mediated by the quality and distribution of services. Robust evidence from the econometric literature on conflict risk demonstrates that expanding access to and participation in education 'breeds peace'. In a recent review of 30 statistical studies, two conflict researchers, Gudrun Ostby and Henrik Urdal, found that higher average levels of education, particularly primary and secondary education, reduce the risk of armed conflict.²³ Above and beyond the association between poverty and armed conflict, researchers have produced precise estimates of the degree to which expanding access to education reduces conflict risk. For example, one seminal study examining this relationship has found that increasing primary school enrolment from 77 per cent to universal provision could reduce the likelihood of civil war by half, and increasing male enrolment in secondary school from 30 per cent to 81 per cent could reduce it by almost two-thirds.²⁴

But not just any expansion of education leads to this result. Education must be accessed equitably between groups to breed peace. In their review, Ostby and Urdal also found that disparities between individuals do not appear to increase conflict risk, but systematic differences in access to education between ethnic, religious and regional groups do. This finding is heavily supported by numerous studies of specific country cases – from Nepal to Peru to Liberia – where unequal provision of education was both a core grievance of marginalised groups and a motivation for joining rebel groups.²⁵ For example, in Peru, large-scale qualitative research identified dissatisfaction with public education and corruption in the education sector as key causes for the growth of the Sendero Luminoso armed faction. These grievances were used to recruit both students and teachers.²⁶

The content of the education provided is another important factor influencing this relationship. Here we must look outside the econometric literature on conflict risk, which is limited by its primary reliance on large global data sets and data on educational access. Fortunately, there have been decades of scholarship from social scientists on the relationship between education and conflict and peace, which includes an examination of issues such as language of instruction, teacher's pedagogy and curriculum content.

Education plays an important role in constructing identity and shaping society, whether by developing a shared national identity,

reproducing social injustices or transforming social relations.²⁷ Education has many points of influence, including education policies such as the language of instruction, curriculum content, pedagogy, factors that determine who can access education, and through what educators often refer to as the hidden curriculum, which includes how social norms are modelled in educational settings, the treatment of teachers by supervisors, and the like.²⁸ Throughout history, this power of education has been manipulated in ways that have served exclusion and violence.

Poorly educated young people are vulnerable to recruitment into conflict also because of limited livelihood options. For example, during Sierra Leone's civil war, insurgency and counter-insurgency movements recruited people from the poorest and least educated parts of society²⁹ by preying on what the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified as pervasive levels of 'unemployment and despair' among uneducated Sierra Leonean youth.³⁰ Relevant education is increasingly critical as the youth demographic continues to grow while jobs remain scarce.

Statebuilding

Education is the social service that people are most likely to request and value – even under conditions of conflict. (Other factors that have a strong bearing on conflict risk are much harder to influence through policy, such as having a past history of conflict, having large populations and having oil.)

It is also one of the few factors about which governments can reasonably hope to do something. Education is one of the most visible and far-reaching services that states provide, given that there is a school in every town or, just as important, citizens' expectation of a school in every town. Additionally, teachers usually form the largest cadres of civil servants, at times rivaling the military. For example, in Pakistan, a country with a significant military tradition, there are over 750,000 public school teachers, 100,000 more than active duty military personnel.³¹ Further, the hiring of teachers is not only important for delivering services but also provides a stabilising effect by employing people and connecting their success with that of the government.

Over the last eight years, at least five studies have examined in depth the role of education in building state legitimacy and capacity in fragile contexts. Collectively, these studies draw on case study research in 24 countries including Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.³² This body of research firmly demonstrates the importance of education service delivery in building citizens' trust in their government and, just as importantly, the risks to state legitimacy when education sector reforms take a back seat to other statebuilding efforts.

Rapidly restoring education services in the aftermath of conflict can be an early 'peace dividend'.³³ In part this is because education can offer 'quick wins' with policy reforms and programme interventions that have a visible impact in the short term. UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2011 (GMR) identifies a number of such quick wins – including rehabilitating schools, removing school fees and integrating returning refugee students – all of which helped enrol millions of children in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Côte d'Ivoire.³⁴

The ability of education to build state legitimacy is powerful, but only as long as the government gets a few things right on the

questions of what type of education, for whom and how services are delivered. There is broad agreement across the cases cited above, as well as in the conflict risk research discussed earlier in this report, that service delivery must be inclusive and thus, that if particular social groups are excluded, it will undermine the legitimacy of the government. In northern Uganda, a study showed that a primary source of grievance against the government among local leaders was the poor quality of education provided in primary and secondary schools, as demonstrated by regional pass rates that were far below national averages.³⁵

The literature also shows that although access to services is an immediate priority, citizens quickly expand their expectations to include quality and cost. Interestingly, who delivers education services is less important than the quality of the services delivered. Citizens' trust in their government can be built even when governments are not directly delivering education services but instead are ensuring that non-state actors are doing so.

Reason 4: Mitigating impacts of disasters

Education is frequently disrupted by natural disasters. In one month alone, extreme monsoon rains in South Asia destroyed some 3,000 primary schools. In that same month, floods in Sudan destroyed nearly 200 schools, affecting 45,000 children.³⁶ Disasters have killed more than 1.3 million people and affected an average of 220 million per year during the past two decades. In 2011 alone, 106 million people were affected by floods; 60 million were affected by drought, mainly in the Horn of Africa; and almost 30,000 people were killed.³⁷ Estimates suggest that there will be 200 million environmentally displaced persons by 2050.³⁸ The number of disasters caused by natural hazards has increased in the last 20 years, from 200 a year to more than 400 today, and is predicted to increase by as much as 320 per cent in the next 20 years.³⁹ Poor people often suffer the most when catastrophe occurs; 95 per cent of disaster fatalities occur in developing countries.⁴⁰ Women and children bear the brunt of the effects of climate change, making up an estimated 65 per cent of all those affected, and during the next decade 175 million of them will be children.⁴¹

Education has an important role to play in addressing the consequences and reducing the effects of disasters and climate change, through both the knowledge and skills that young people learn and the policies and practices used within schools themselves. Education has an important role to play in the broad goal of promoting healthy natural environments and sustainable human behaviour, but we have chosen to focus on the impacts of disasters and climate change, given their impacts on the continuity of education.

Educating about disaster risk reduction and climate change

This may include incorporating environmental issues such as deforestation and energy conservation, as well as land tenure and land rights, into curricula and textbooks. Empowering learners to contribute to environmental preservation and protection through environmental education and green technical and vocational education and training can help to make education more relevant and responsive to contemporary and emerging challenges,

including sustainable development. Education can assist in the process of shifting the global demand away from resource- and energy-intensive commodities and towards greener products and technologies, less pollution and sustainable lifestyles.

Education systems that prioritise disaster risk reduction (DRR) use a range of strategies such as incorporating emergency preparedness and response planning in education sector plans, implementing early warning systems to alert populations to an impending disaster, and teaching students how to prepare for and respond to disasters. The skills students learn not only help them protect themselves but also their families and communities. There are numerous cases of students who have saved lives by sharing basic information about how to seek safety during a disaster. For example, when Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh in 2007, Lamia Akter, a seven-year-old student, helped save the lives of her family and others by passing on a cyclone warning alert she had received at school to villagers in her community.⁴² This is especially true for women and girls; studies by the World Bank and the Center for Global Development indicate that educating girls and women is an effective way to reduce a community's vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate change.⁴³ In fact, these studies showed that a huge number of weather-related deaths could have been prevented in developing countries if there had been a greater focus on progressive female education policies that included supporting resiliency.

Preparing schools for disasters

When schools themselves are prepared for disasters, they can save the lives of students and teachers. There are far too many examples of students and teachers needlessly dying when disasters strike during school hours – from poorly constructed schools collapsing in earthquakes in Pakistan, China and Haiti to students dying in schools with no safe rooms in tornado-stricken areas of the USA. Fortunately, there are also an increasing number of examples where the measures schools are taking to prepare for disasters are saving lives.⁴⁴ Additionally, environmentally sustainable and carbon-neutral schools can contribute to climate change mitigation efforts on a global scale.⁴⁵

Summing up

Taken together, these four reasons for why investing in education in fragile contexts is a smart move present a useful framework for analysing the status of the field of education and fragility. They also provide a powerful case for prioritising education writ large, including in fragile states. Indeed, the ways in which education affects social change are equally relevant in all contexts. For example, education systems that foster growth, social cohesion, sustainable environmental practices and trust between a government and its citizens are important in stable and fragile states alike. Conversely, the risks associated with education systems that do none of these things are equally precarious across contexts – either by sowing the seeds of instability in stable contexts or by further exacerbating vulnerability and conflict in fragile contexts.

Acknowledgement

Adapted by kind permission from Winthrop, R. and Matsui, E., A New Agenda for Education in Fragile States, Center for Universal Education, Working Paper 10, Washington, DC: Brookings (2013).

Endnotes

- 1 OECD, *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007).
- 2 Mosselson, J., Wheaton, W. and St John Frisoli, P., 'Education and Fragility: A synthesis of the literature', *Journal of Education for International Development* 4, No. 1 (2009).
- 3 UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report Policy Paper 10: *Children Still Battling to go to School* (2013).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Hanushek, E. A. and Woessmann, L., *Do Better Schools Lead to More Growth? Cognitive Skills, Economic Outcomes, and Causation*, Working Paper 14633, Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research (2009).
- 6 Hanushek, E. A. and Woessmann, L., *The Role of Education Quality for Economic Growth*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4122, Washington, DC: World Bank (2007).
- 7 Chaaban, J. and Cunningham, W., *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The girl effect dividend*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5753, Washington, DC: World Bank (2011). For an overview of the case for investment in education, see Charles Tapp, 'Investing in Education for All: Worth every penny', Global Partnership for Education, 28 March 2011.
- 8 Tapp, C., 'Investing in Education for All: Worth Every Penny', Global Partnership for Education, 28 March 2011.
- 9 Chaaban, J. and Cunningham, W., *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The girl effect dividend*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5753, Washington, DC: World Bank (2011).
- 10 United Nations, *Education First: An initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General*, New York: United Nations (2012).
- 11 UNICEF, 'Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse: Children in Conflict and Emergencies' (www.unicef.org/protection/index_armedconflict.html).
- 12 UNESCO, 'Protecting Education from Attack: A state-of-the-art review', Paris: UNESCO (2010).
- 13 World Revolution, 'The State of the World: Peace, war, and conflict'.
- 14 Emmanuela Gakidou, E., Cowling, K., Lozano, R. and Murray, C. J. L., 'Increased Educational Attainment and its Effect on Child Mortality in 175 Countries between 1970 and 2009: A Systematic Analysis', *The Lancet* 376, No. 9745 (2010): pp. 959–974.
- 15 LeVine, R. A., LeVine, S. E., Rowe, M. L. and Schnell-Anzola, B., 'Maternal Literacy and Health Behavior: A Nepalese case study', *Social Science and Medicine*, 58 (2004): 863–877. For further examples, see: Cynthia Lloyd, 'Education for Girls: Alternative Pathways to Girls' Empowerment,' Paper Commissioned by Girl Hub: Draft to be presented to Adolescent Girls Expert Meeting (2012).
- 16 Burlingham, D. T. and Freud, A., *War and Children*, New York: Medical War Books (1943).
- 17 Das, V., Kleinman, A., Lock, M. M., Ramphel M. and Reynolds, P. (Eds.), *Remaking a World: Violence, social suffering and recovery*, Berkeley: University of California Press (2001); Ager, Alastair, 'Tensions in the Psychosocial Discourse: Implications for the planning of interventions with war-affected populations', *Development in Practice* 7, No. 4 (1997): pp. 402–407; Boothby, Neil., 'Mobilizing Communities to Meet the Psychosocial Needs of Children in War and Refugee Crises,' in Apfel, R. and Simon Bennett, S. (Eds.), *Minefields in Their Hearts: The mental health of children in war and communal violence*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press (1996).
- 18 Loughry, M. and Eyber, C. (Eds.), *Psychosocial Concepts in Humanitarian Work with Children: A review of the concepts and related literature*, Washington, DC: National Research Council (2003).
- 19 *Ibid.*; Psychosocial Working Group, *Psychosocial Intervention in Complex Emergencies: A conceptual framework*, Edinburgh: Psychosocial Working Group (2003).
- 20 Bronfenbrenner, U., *The Ecology of Human Development*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); Reyes, J., *What Matters Most for Students in Contexts of Adversity: A framework paper*, Washington, DC: World Bank (2013).
- 21 Kostenly, K. and Wessells, M., 'The Protection and Psychosocial Well-Being of Young Children Following Armed Conflict: Outcome research on child-centered spaces in northern Uganda', *Journal of Developmental Processes* 3, No. 2 (Fall 2008).
- 22 Dryden-Peterson, S., 'Refugee Children Aspiring toward the Future: Linking education and livelihoods'. In Mundy, K. and Dryden-Peterson, S. (Eds.), *Educating Children in Conflict Zones: Research, policy, and practice for systemic change* (A Tribute to Jackie Kirk) (pp. 85–99), New York: Teachers College Press (2011).
- 23 Ostby, G. and Urdal, H., *Education and Conflict: What the evidence says*, Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo (2011).
- 24 Thyne, C., 'ABC's, 123's, and the Golden Rule: The pacifying effect of education on civil war, 1980–99', *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): pp. 733–754.
- 25 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis*; Bruce, B., 'Liberia: The challenges of post-conflict reconstruction', Social Science Research Council, September 2004; Shields, R. and Rappleye, J., 'Differentiation, Development, (Dis)Integration: Education in Nepal's 'People's War'', *Research in Comparative and International Education* 3, No. 1 (2008).
- 26 Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación de Peru, Informe Final, Lima: Oficina de Comunicaciones e Impacto Público Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación (2003), available at www.cverdad.org.pe.
- 27 Appadurai, A., *Modernity at Large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1996); Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum International (1970); Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education*, New York: Free Press (1916).
- 28 Dryden-Peterson, S., 'The Present is Local, The Future is Global? Reconciling Current and Future Livelihood Strategies in the Education of Congolese Refugees in Uganda', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 25, (2006): pp. 81–92.

- 29 Arjona A. and Kalyvas, S., 'Rebelling Against Rebellion: Comparing Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Recruitment' (2008).
- 30 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission* Volume 1, Freetown: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2004).
- 31 Winthrop, R. and Graff, C., *Beyond Madrasas: Assessing the links between education and militancy in Pakistan*, Center for Universal Education Working Paper 2, Washington, DC: Brookings (2010).
- 32 A number of studies have reviewed the relationship between education sector governance and state building, including the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011. The following five studies are by no means the only studies on this topic, but they all use detailed reviews of country cases to shed light on this important topic: Buckland, Peter. *Reshaping the Future: Education and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Washington, DC: World Bank (2005); Winthrop and Graff, *Beyond Madrasas*; UNESCO, *Understanding Education's Role in Fragility: Synthesis of Four Situational Analyses of Education and Fragility: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia*, Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), (2011); EuroTrends, *Study on Governance Challenges for Education in Fragile Situations*, Study Synthesis Report, December 2009; CfBT Education Trust, *State-Building, Peace-Building and Service Delivery in Fragile and Conflict-affected States*, Synthesis Research Report, December 2012; and UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The Hidden Crisis*.
- 33 Buckland, P., *Reshaping the Future: Education and post-conflict reconstruction*, Washington, DC: World Bank (2005).
- 34 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis*.
- 35 Ackerman, X., *Humanitarian and Development Approaches to Education and Implications for Conflict Prevention* (2011).
- 36 UNICEF, *Our Climate, Our Children, Our Responsibility: The implications of climate change for the world's children*, UNICEF UK Climate Change Report, New York: UNICEF (2008).
- 37 United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Fast Facts* (2012).
- 38 West, L., 'Scholars Predict 50 Million Environmental Refugees by 2010'; Abbot, C., *An Uncertain Future: Law enforcement, national security and climate change*, Briefing Paper, London: Oxfam Research Group (2008).
- 39 Webster, M., Ginnetti, J., Walker, P., Coppard, D. and Kent, R., *The Humanitarian Costs of Climate Change*, Medford, Mass.: Feinstein International Center (2009). Data were acquired from the International Disaster Database, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, www.EMDAT.be.
- 40 UNDP, *Fast Facts*, (2012).
- 41 UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report*, New York: United Nations Children's Fund (2009).
- 42 Anderson, A., *Combating Climate Change through Quality Education*, Brookings Institution Policy Brief 2010-03, Washington, DC: Brookings (2010).
- 43 Blankespoor, B., Dasgupta, S., Laplante, B. and Wheeler, D., *Adaptation to Climate Extremes in Developing Countries: The Role of Education*, Policy Research Working Paper 5342, Washington, DC: World Bank (2010). See also Blankespoor, B., Dasgupta, S., Laplante, B. and Wheeler, D., *The Economics of Adaptation to Extreme Weather Events in Developing Countries*, Working Paper 199, Washington, DC: Center for Global Development (2010).
- 44 United Nations, *Towards a Culture of Prevention: Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School*, UNESCO International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2007).
- 45 Anderson, A., *Combating Climate Change through Quality Education*, Brookings Institution Policy Brief 2010-03, Washington, DC: Brookings (2010).

DR REBECCA WINTHROP, a senior fellow and director of the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, is a leading expert on global education, particularly in contexts of armed conflict. Her work focuses on education quality and equity, humanitarian assistance, children's well-being, forced migration and state fragility. She was educated at Columbia University, Teachers College (PhD, 2008); Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs (MA, 2001); and Swarthmore College (BA, 1996).

Prior to joining Brookings in June 2009, Dr Winthrop spent 15 years working in the field of education for displaced and migrant communities, most recently as the head of education for the International Rescue Committee. She has field experience in a wide variety of contexts, including Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Croatia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda.

Education and fragility: an intellectual history

Understanding how the field of education and fragility developed sheds light on why it is the way it is today and offers some insights for future directions. While a common refrain among experts is that education and fragility is a new field, the practice of providing schooling and non-formal education to children and youth affected by conflict dates back at least to World War II's evacuee and refugee children, and the rebuilding of European education systems through the Marshall Plan, perhaps the largest and most successful post-conflict education programme to date.¹ Not until the 1990s, however, was this practice named and given concerted attention through both initial investigation in academia and formalisation in policy.²

A careful historical review demonstrates that there have been three main stages to the development of the field of education and fragility (see Figure 1):³

- 1. Proliferation** (1948 to mid-1990s) Diffusion of grass-roots education practice amid refugee displacement and conflict; humanitarian action prioritises biological survival through perceived neutral interventions that do not influence the conflict at hand
- 2. Consolidation** (mid-1990s to mid-2000s) Development of a new specialised education field through internally focused work to build shared assumptions, standards and tools; humanitarian action extends its focus to children's physical and mental health and, in the international development arena, educators promote a view that 'more education is better education'.
- 3. Collaboration** (mid-2000s to present) A shift from internally focused to externally focused collaboration with other sectors, and an increased recognition of the transformative power of education and the political nature of humanitarian intervention

The second stage, *consolidation*, spans an impressive decade of development for the newly emerging field of education and fragility. Two phenomena heavily shaped its development: increased attention to the need to protect children in humanitarian settings, and the global push to enroll every child in school. A 1996 United Nations report, written by Graca Machel at the request of the UN Secretary-General, lambasted the international system for being geared towards adults while systematically neglecting the needs of children living in places experiencing armed conflict, among these being the need for social protection and education.⁴

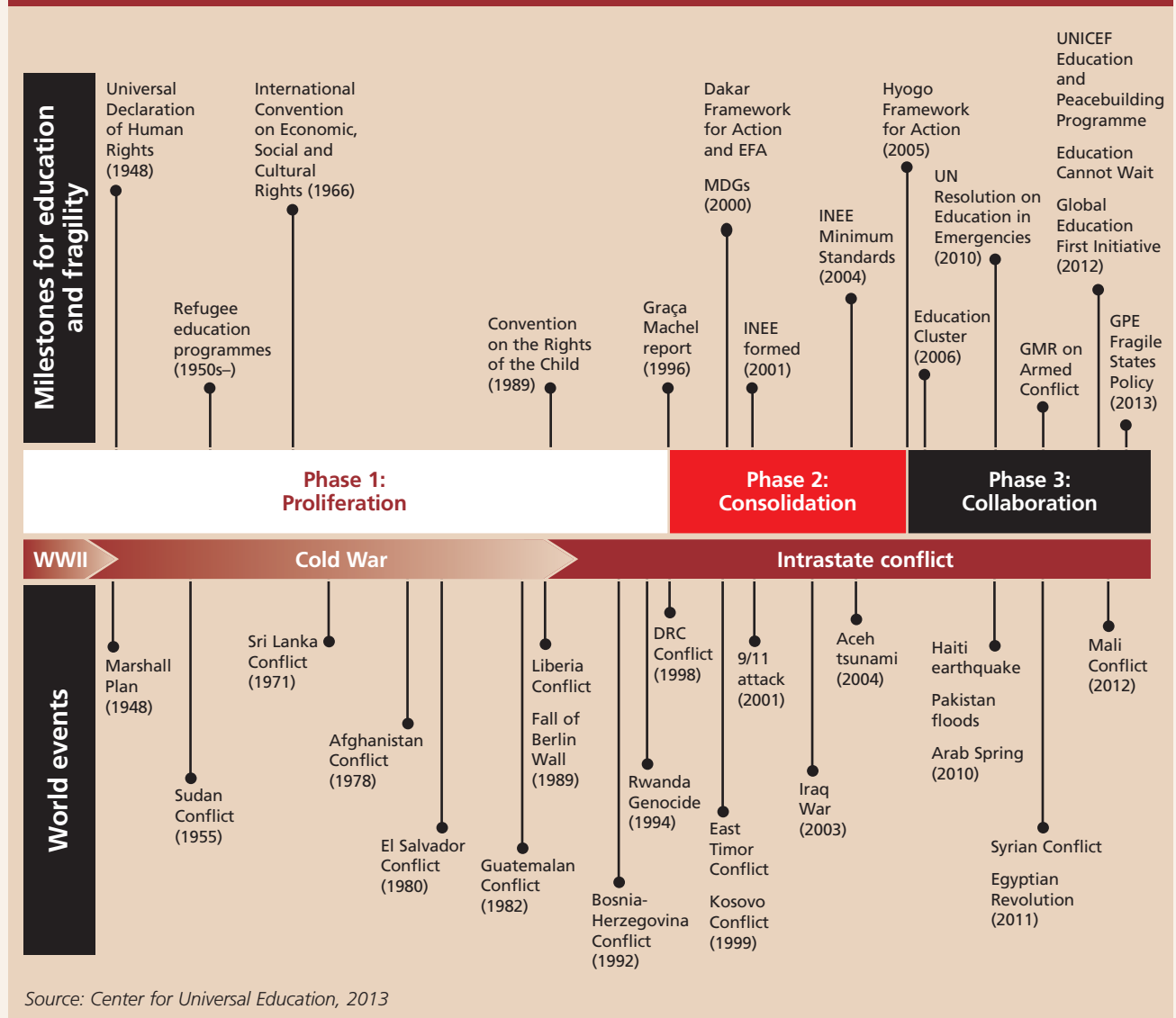
Machel's report drew on the children's rights movement and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, as well as reflected theoretical concepts that had evolved over decades, including the theory that education, along with other 'normalising' social activities, can help children cope psychologically.⁵

This move to expand the humanitarian approach beyond the traditional biological or medical model of assistance also reflected the emerging predominance of intra-state conflict – and, in particular, the predominance of civilians, women and children among the casualties.

Parallel to the developments in the humanitarian field, children's education was getting increasing attention on the global stage. In 2000, when the world's education ministers reconvened in Dakar to review progress on the 1990 Education for All goals, this time the needs of people affected by crises were more fulsomely discussed and the resulting Dakar Framework for Action laid out six broad goals for improving education, with one of the 12 strategies for action focusing on education during a crisis. Most importantly, two of the goals – primary school completion and gender parity – were later that year included in the global community's UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in doing so elevated access to primary schooling for all boys and girls as a global priority. At this point, unlike in decades past, it becomes unacceptable for a state to only educate some of its young people as a matter of policy.

This global push for primary schooling for all children led to the formation of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the most important force during this period for developing the theory and practice of this new field of education and fragility. In 2001, INEE started with a handful of members who, having been in Dakar, came together out of the realisation that the MDGs and EFA goals would not be met without a concerted effort to advance global understanding on how to reach children living in the midst of conflict and crisis. When humanitarian actors developed standards for intervention across a number of sectors – for example, health, water and shelter – but left education out, INEE expanded its network and developed its own standards for the sector, releasing them in 2004.⁶

This process led not only to the rapid growth of the network but also to an important period of internal reflection among educators about what shared standards are and could be, which ultimately led to consolidating isolated country-level practices into a common set of programming directives. Education was not initially considered to be part of the UN's humanitarian reform process in 2005, but the INEE mobilised its members and a year later education was part of the new humanitarian cluster process. During this period, pushing for the inclusion of education in humanitarian response took considerable effort, focused attention and above all a clear articulation of why continuity of education is good for children in these settings. It left very little scope for engaging with development actors or with concepts that examined the political nature of education. Rather, the overarching goal driving actors in the field of education and fragility at this time was to get education, which was so frequently left out, included as a regular part of humanitarian action.

Figure 1: From proliferation to collaboration – an illustrative timeline

Today, unlike ten years ago, a wealth of technical tools guide policy-makers and practitioners in dealing with numerous issues. In 2002, when the first global technical kit for education and emergencies was produced by INEE, it consisted of three blue file boxes with hard copies of approximately 50 programming guides and manuals. Today, thanks to both digital technology but, more importantly, the dedication of many members of the various technical networks, close to 1,000 technical resources are available from numerous agencies on the INEE website (and they are also available on CD-ROM for those without internet access).⁷ These tools – which have been developed by NGOs, donor agencies, developing country governments, teachers and students – have focused heavily on usability by field practitioners, including those in the remotest areas.

Rebecca Winthrop

Endnotes

1 Loughry, M. and Eyber, C. *Psychosocial Concepts in Humanitarian Work with Children: A review of the concepts and related literature*, Washington, DC: National Research Council (2003); C. Tarnoff and L. Nowels, *Foreign Aid: An*

introductory overview of US programs and policy, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service (2004).

2 Retamal, G. and Aedo-Richmond, R. (Eds.) *Education as a Humanitarian Response*, London: Cassell (1998).

3 This framework of three main phases of development in the education and fragility field was first introduced by Winthrop in 2009 and has been further developed for the purposes of this report. R. Winthrop, *Think piece commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011, The Hidden Crisis: Armed conflict and education*.

4 Machel, G. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, United Nations (1996).

5 Loughry, M. and Eyber, C. *Psychosocial Concepts in Humanitarian Work with Children: A review of the concepts and related literature*, Washington, DC: National Research Council (2003).

6 INEE, *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, response, recovery*, New York: UNICEF (2010).

7 INEE, *INEE Annual Report 2011*.