

EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



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Education in Conflict-Affected States



Many different types of education programs are implemented in conflict-affected states, whether they are in pre-conflict, emergency/conflict, post-conflict, or fragile-state settings. Education programs in emergency situations provide interventions that allow children access to quality, relevant and safe education opportunities. These programs work to ensure that education services are integrated into all humanitarian responses, and that governments and donors ensure sustainable funding for education preparedness, crisis response, mitigation, and recovery.¹

Other researchers, practitioners, and advocates have grouped conflict-affected states (both in the pre-conflict and post-conflict stages) into a broader characterization of state fragility. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) classifies a state as fragile when it “lacks 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”.² USAID’s education and fragility paradigm illuminates the full spectrum of sources and drivers of conflict in fragile states and explores how best to approach education in such environments.³

Education for children in conflict-affected states is widely advocated. Supporting children emotionally, psychologically, and physically through education can provide access, protection, and a sense of normalcy that might not otherwise be possible. It can also provide space for innovative programs that can make a real difference in children’s lives. But at the same time, we must also be aware of the potential risks that the education sector can pose to children in conflict affected states: it can jeopardize their well-being. For example, the school itself can be a place of vulnerability to violent attacks, a site of political contestation, and a space for intolerance of various groups (either overtly or embedded in curricula, for example).⁴

While Education for All paradigms are certainly valuable, the realities and consequences of conflict require looking beyond traditional education development models. As we work in conflict-affected states, we can apply a broader lens of fragility to create new paradigms that respond to the sources and drivers of conflict and better address the needs of people living in fragile environments. Conflict can be both exacerbated and mitigated through the education sector, and to “do no harm” we must be advocates for and practitioners of a comprehensive education practice that creates safe, relevant, and quality education programs. Working groups, networks, and communities have formed to share lessons learned and develop best practices, thereby expanding our knowledge and understanding of education in conflict-affected and fragile environments.

This issue of EQ Review focuses on how recent studies are contributing to this growing base of knowledge on education in post-conflict or fragile states. The publication highlights a fast track to quality education initiative in Southern Sudan, how radio keeps learning alive in Somalia, and a study on education and fragility conducted in northern Uganda.

For more information, please contact Meredith McCormack, Project Associate, American Institutes for Research, at mmccormac@air.org.

¹ See Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies at www.ineesite.org

² OECD. (2007). *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states or situation*.

³ See USAID (September 2006). *Education and Fragility: An Assessment Tool* at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH913.pdf

⁴ Winthrop, R. & Kirk, J. (2008). Learning for a bright future: schooling, armed conflict, and children’s well-being. *Comparative Education Review* 52(4), 639 -661.

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Southern Sudan: A Fast Track to Quality Education

Shaban Ladeu has taught at Haddow Primary School in Maridi, Southern Sudan, since 2001, but has only regularly received a salary since 2006. The eighty students in his first grade class range in age from six to twelve. Most of his students have just begun their formal education. Many have recently returned to Maridi with their families, who fled to other parts of the country during Sudan's twenty-year civil war. The USAID-supported Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) project is helping Ladeu and hundreds of teachers like him meet their students' needs.

Southern Sudan presents a particularly challenging post-conflict environment. Since the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, a new government has established the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). However, due to the war, human capacity is weak and basic infrastructure is poor. A majority of classes are held under trees and 90% of the teachers have had little or no professional education experience and are not certified for teaching. The construction of schools has hardly begun. A new system for paying teachers often experiences delays. Teacher education programs have been designed, but only the first steps have been taken towards implementation. Within the context of these challenges, SSIRI, implemented by Education Development Center (EDC), has been an important partner of the MOEST. Its Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programs and alternative technologies are seen as effective ways of quickly and broadly delivering quality education to several audiences in Southern Sudan and Sudan's Three Areas of Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Based on achievement tests in many countries throughout the world, IRI has been shown to be highly effective; test results in grade 1 in Southern Sudan are consistent with the positive results obtained elsewhere.

SSIRI, slated to run from 2004 to 2009, implements four interrelated, technology-based education programs. The central technology is radio, but SSIRI also is using successfully alternative devices for delivering the audio programs in some locations, plus supporting computer centers with internet access at teacher training institutions. Through alternative learning technologies, SSIRI helps schools and listening groups with calendars or timetables that are not compatible with the broadcast schedule, or are in locations that can't receive a radio signal, by providing alternative devices such as a "boom box" with audio files on a memory stick or a small MP3 system. The primary education IRI program, *The Learning Village*, supports and complements classroom instruction in local language literacy, English language, mathematics, and life skills (health, HIV/AIDs, mine awareness, and peace education) for Grades 1 - 4. The English IRI program, *Terbia*, provides instruction in Southern Sudan's new official language to youth and adults. The Professional Studies for Teachers program is a non-traditional, audio-based, distance learning course for Southern Sudanese teachers.

In Maridi, Ladeu says SSIRI has helped him incorporate students' active participation in their learning and made school more fun. "My pupils are eager to attend, pay close attention to me and the radio teacher, and best of all, they do much better in their school work." Ladeu's school is just one place where SSIRI is completing its mission of contributing to the peace and stability of Southern Sudan and the three areas through quality education.

For more information please contact Inez Andrews, the USAID Team Leader for Education in Southern Sudan at iandrews@usaid.gov.

Working Group on Education and Fragility within INEE

In early 2008, a Working Group on Education and Fragility was established within INEE (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies), as an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate diverse initiatives and catalyze collaborative action on education and fragility. Later, INEE commissioned a team of researchers from Oxford University's Conflict and Education Research Group (CERG) to carry out a desktop study that would investigate the effects of education on fragility. The central question asked was: *How can provision of quality education mitigate fragility and contribute to peace building, peace dividends, state building, the resilience of institutions and state stabilization?*

For more information on this study and the working group's work plan please visit their website at www.ineesite.org/educationandfragility.



SSIRI programs supporting education in Southern Sudan



A teacher in Southern Sudan, actively engages students in a lesson

Somalia: Radio Keeps Learning Alive



A Somali Teacher with a Wind-Up Radio



An IDP camp on the Mogadishu outskirts

In a nation frequently disrupted by violence, there are few educational certainties. Somali students, parents and teachers can, however, rely on one sure thing: The Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program (SIRIP) broadcasts a regular schedule of high-quality, imaginative educational programs in the South-Central Region, Somaliland, and Puntland. When the fighting causes changes to their schedules and even their locations, Somalis are finding ways to tune in the radio and keep learning alive.

Since an outbreak of violence in early 2007, an estimated sixty percent of Mogadishu's residents have fled their homes, many for internally displaced person (IDP) camps at the city's outskirts. In these camps, refugees live close together in tents and makeshift structures, safer from violence but subjected to ever-increasing hardships.

“The SIRIP radio education program remains the only alternative for education for many IDP children,” says Feysal Osman, a Regional Coordinator for SIRIP. “Temporary learning centers were set up right away after their displacement.” SIRIP has trained teachers in 60 tent schools in the camps and continues to conduct teacher training and distribute wind-up radios to encourage listening. SIRIP programs are produced and broadcast by Education Development Center with funding from USAID.

SIRIP does much more than reach the IDP camps. Daunting educational challenges are common throughout the country, including one of the lowest student enrollment rates in the world, little public financing of education, a limited supply of qualified teachers, and three independent ministries of education.

Interactive Radio Instruction is well suited to address these challenges. IRI can quickly reach a large number of children in and out of the formal education system. It is less susceptible to disruption during periods of unrest, as content can be delivered from afar. And while IRI is most successful with a facilitator, radios are widespread in Somalia and many children are able to follow the programs outside of a classroom setting. These IRI programs are also effective. A recent study⁵ showed that children in IRI schools performed significantly better than students without IRI in mathematics and Somali literacy.

Halima Ibrahim, a mother of two who fled with her family to the outskirts of Mogadishu, appreciates IRI's flexibility, saying, “This radio program is a golden opportunity for our children to continue their learning in the camp's tent school.” Ibrahim adds that she and other housewives also learn from the program: “The people here are addicted to listening.”

Ibrahim's example shows why SIRIP works: the demand for education remains strong in Somalia despite years of turmoil, and SIRIP is able to supply continuous educational content at a high quality.

For more information please contact Mitch Kirby, SIRIP CTO at mikirby@usaid.gov.

⁵ Letshabo, K., Kariuki, S., and Yasin, S. Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program Grade 1 Evaluation 2006/2007. December 2007: Unpublished; available from authors.

Education as a Means to Mitigate Fragility, Northern Uganda Study

“Many countries around the world have made remarkable progress, both in terms of eliminating poverty and getting more children into school and improving health outcomes,” said Desmond Bermingham, head of the ‘Education for All’ Fast Track Initiative. “But there are significant numbers of countries, often affected by war or other kinds of emergencies, which – unless we do something different for them – are not going to stand a chance of reaching the MDGs”. Uganda is one of these countries. For three decades, conflict has plagued northern regions of the country. Thousands have lost their lives, millions have lost their homes, and education for most children has been severely disrupted. While “Education for All” paradigms are certainly valuable, the consequences of conflict require looking beyond traditional education development models to create new paradigms that better address the needs of those living in fragile states.

With funding from USAID, AIR conducted a study in northern Uganda from June 14 – July 6, 2008 to investigate effects of conflict on the education sector. The study utilized USAID/EGAT’s Education and Fragility Assessment Tool⁶ to collect data on how fragility affects education and how education can mitigate fragility in northern Uganda. AIR data collectors visited the Acholi, Lango, and Teso regions, which are affected by both civil conflict with the Lord’s Resistance Army and local tribal conflicts. Through observations, and structured interviews and focus groups with parents, teachers, students, NGO workers, local police, members of the religious community, and Government of Uganda officials including head teachers, teacher trainers, and district education officers, the research team discovered that the education sector both suffers from *and* contributes to fragility. Additionally, the team investigated the root causes and drivers of fragility and found that exclusion, corruption, and insufficient political will and capacity impelled years of conflict in the north. A final report analyzes the concept of fragility and education, examines the historical background and educational context of Uganda, describes key findings and proposes recommendations for the education sector to mitigate fragility.

While hostilities in the north have recently diminished, the consequences of conflict and fragility have deeply impacted the education sector and present serious challenges for future growth. It is hoped that this study will inform and guide the education sector by investigating its links to fragility and proposing recommendations, as well as expand education and fragility as a critical area of inquiry.

For more information, on Education and Fragility, please contact Yolande Miller-Grandvaux, Senior Education Advisor at USAID at ymiller-grandvaux@usaid.gov.



An Interview with the Head Teacher at Laipanat Primary School, N. Uganda



A Crowded Classroom in Gulu District, Northern Uganda

⁶ Education and Fragility: an Assessment Tool: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADH913.pdf