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Humanitarian
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Improving the provision of basic services for the poor in fragile environments

Education Sector International Literature Review

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CBA:	Community-Based Approaches
CBO:	Community-Based Organizations
CCT:	Conditional Cash Transfers
CFCI:	Child-Friendly Community Initiative
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
EPDF:	Education Program Development Fund
EFA:	Education for All
FBO:	Faith-Based Organisations
FBS:	Faith-Based Schools
FTI:	Fast-Track Initiative
GTZ:	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit
JFPR:	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
IIEP:	International Institute for Educational Planning
INGOs:	International Non-Governmental Organizations
INEE:	Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies
IRC:	International Rescue Committee
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MoE:	Ministry of Education
NEP:	North East Province (of Sri Lanka)
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSPs:	Non-State Providers
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRS:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SWAps:	Sector-wide approaches
UN:	United Nations
WB:	World Bank

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Aim and structure of the literature review

The Overseas Development Institute was commissioned to provide a rapid review of recent literature on international practice and experience in supporting pro-poor health service provision in fragile states, focusing on multilateral and bilateral donors' approaches. It was requested that particular attention be paid to literature published since the World Bank 2004 World Development Report *Making Services Work for the Poor* (World Bank, 2004), a milestone in international thinking on service delivery. The overall review consists of three sectoral reports (health, water/sanitation and education) together with a Synthesis. This paper constitutes a literature review of the education sector. The purpose of the literature review was to inform the Office of Development Effectiveness' evaluation of service delivery and contribute to a wider effort within AusAID to better understand donor engagement in fragile environments.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** discusses a framework of accountability in relation to education service delivery in fragile states, points to challenges to donors' engagement in education service delivery in fragile states, and describes the scope and limits of the review.
- **Section 2** discusses the positive and negative role that education plays in relation to state fragility and the neglected role of education in humanitarian response.
- **Section 3** reviews donors' approaches to supporting education service delivery in fragile states, discussing their strategies, alignment and harmonisation, funding mechanisms and approaches to reaching the poorest.
- **Section 4** concludes the review by identifying key challenges and options for donors supporting education service delivery in fragile environments.

1.2 Education service delivery and the framework of accountability

In this review the concept of education service delivery draws on the framework of accountability

developed by the World Bank, which refers to the relationship¹ between three broad categories of actors and encompasses both services and their supporting systems (World Bank 2004):

1. *Policy-makers*, who decide the level and quality of services to be offered, for example the Ministry of Education.
2. *Service providers*, who deliver the services, including 'front line' staff such as teachers, and the organisations that support them. Service providers include a variety of public, private and civil society actors. In this review, private and civil society service provider organisations are referred to as Non-State Providers of Education (NSPs).
3. *Clients*, who are both consumers of the services and the constituents of the policy-makers, for example, the pupils and parents of school-age children.

It is not difficult to see how those different categories of actors will have very different visions about what makes effective education service delivery. Policy-makers tend to want to deliver education services 'at low cost, with propaganda value and political rewards' (OECD 2008, 15); service providers will want technically sound curricula, high and regular compensation, respect and safety; and clients will mostly care about low-cost, safe, easy-to-access, good-quality schooling (ibid.). Effective service delivery is therefore highly dependent on the ability to address competing goals and expectations in an attempt to satisfy the needs and interests of the various stakeholders involved in the process.

This points to a fundamental question: how can donors and partner governments manage the relationship between these three groups of actors, and their competing goals and expectations, so as to provide adequate basic services to the poor?

¹ The principal-agent model, which underpins the WDR framework, is a helpful and widely used instrument of analysis for understanding accountability relationships. If we think of citizens as the principals, and the governments as the agents, then '[a]ccountability is ensured when agents have incentives to do what the principals want them to do' (Grant and Keohane 2005)

There are two potential routes of accountability for securing adequate service delivery.² One path, *long route* accountability (also referred to as ‘voice’) occurs when clients can hold policy-makers accountable (for example through democratic elections and by conveying their preferences and needs in relation to basic services), who in turn hold service providers accountable by setting education delivery standards and establishing monitoring systems and sanctions for non-compliance. In contexts where this is a viable route, donors should aim at supporting it, for example through pro-poor service delivery interventions ‘that maximise the access and participation of the poor by strengthening the relationships between policy makers, providers and service users’ (Berry et al. 2004, see also Carlson et al. 2005, OECD 2008).

However, the ability of clients to influence the contractual relationship between service providers and the government (the functioning of the long route) may be highly problematic or not feasible in fragile states and in particular areas of a country where the state is unable or unwilling to respond. In those cases, service delivery is likely to depend on the *short route* of accountability, which occurs when clients can make their demands directly on service providers (World Bank 2004, OECD 2008). Donors may therefore decide to engage in education service delivery by working directly with service providers, which may include local governments and NSPs.

1.3 Challenges to delivering education services to the poor in fragile states

The lack of willingness and/or capacity typical of fragile states often means that a ‘government is unable to demonstrate a commitment to the Millennium Development Goal of universal basic education ... and/or is unable to effectively utilize ... resources to meet basic education needs’ (FTI 2008 in Barakat et al. 2008). As discussed below, there is a strong rationale for donors’ engagement in pro-poor education services in fragile states, and education offers a great opportunity for addressing the root causes of state fragility. But supporting education services in those environments is a highly difficult and challenging task. The multi-faceted nature of state fragility presents donors with complex issues and a range of contending policy,

technical and political objectives. Difficult choices, inherent policy tensions and high levels of uncertainty are often inevitable features of donors’ engagement in fragile states.

Three of the major challenges are addressed in this review (see below) along with examples of approaches that have attempted to deal with them. Given the limited scope of this review, this report can only indicate some of the options rather than attempting anything more comprehensive.

Challenge 1: What is the appropriate balance between addressing immediate needs and building long-term capacity?

A major challenge that donors face when supporting education service delivery in fragile states is ‘how to achieve near-term humanitarian goals while also advancing long-term sustainability – that is, helping to deliver essential services in a way that builds accountability and keeps governments in a role of having ultimate responsibility’ (OECD 2008: 32, see also OECD/DAC 2006, Rose and Greeley 2006, Meagher 2005). Given the crucial role that education service delivery plays *both* in humanitarian and development interventions (see Section 2 below), this is indeed a relevant challenge that donors will face when engaging in pro-poor education service delivery in fragile environments. The key question here is: what mechanisms, approaches and strategies are most likely to address the immediate educational needs of the poor *while* building state capacity in the long run, or at least not further weakening it in the short term?

Challenge 2: What is the appropriate balance between engaging with the public sector and with NSPs?

Another challenge relates to the degree of donors’ engagement with NSPs in fragile environments. In fragile environments donors face the difficult choice between promoting interventions that use the short route of accountability (NSPs), which allows to quickly scale up service delivery in the short to medium term; and interventions that use and strengthen the longer route (public sector), which contributes to (re)building state capacity and ensuring long-term sustainable and equitable education service delivery. The key questions here are: to what extent should donors’ engagement involve the government, historically seen as the key

² For a fuller discussion of the World Bank accountability framework, see Synthesis report.

actor of public service delivery? And to what extent should donors be partnering with service providers outside the public sector?

Challenge 3: What is the appropriate balance between supporting central and local government?

Another challenge for donors is to choose whether and to what extent they should engage with central government institutions and with district, provincial or local-level institutions. This matters, not least because in fragile states particularly there is often a need to go *beyond* the national level to explore the regions where the central power has never really fully penetrated (Debiel et al. 2005). In many fragile environments, '[w]hile the national government may have the regulatory and policy role, local government can play a key role in coordination and information sharing amongst providers' (OECD/DAC 2006: 38). The key questions here are: to what extent should donors support and work through central state institutions to provide pro-poor education services? And to what extent should donors work and support decentralised modes of delivery which use local state institutions to respond to the education needs of the poorest?

We refer back to these three challenges in the following sections.

1.4 Scope and limitations of the review

This review recognises the fact that support to education service delivery is only part of donors'

broader engagement in fragile states, which links education to other areas such as security, peace-building, governance and public financial management. It also acknowledges that efforts aimed at improving education services in fragile states should be part of an integrated approach which addresses other sectors such as health and water and sanitation (OECD/OCDE 2006, OECD 2008, Berry et al. 2004, DFID 2006, Vaux and Visman 2005). However, for the purpose of this analysis, this review is limited to the literature that focuses on the delivery of education services within the primary and secondary education spectrum.

The review has three main limitations. First, by its nature, it is not prescriptive: it does not offer policy prescriptions and does not seek to judge the validity and appropriateness of the various donors approaches referred to. Second, it does not investigate donors' wider approaches and strategies to fragile states, but considers these only in relation to the support of education system and education service delivery.³ Third, this report does not review in-depth country case studies, but points to brief examples of interventions or components of programmes in several countries to illustrate more general lines of analysis. Examples are drawn from fragile environments, which include: states, such as East Timor, Samoa, Fiji, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Guinea, Nepal etc., and specific provinces, such as Mindanao in the Philippines and the North East Province of Sri Lanka, to provide examples of sub-national fragility.

³ Some of the more general issues relating to donor engagement in fragile states are considered in the Synthesis report.

Section 2: Education services and state fragility

2.1 The two faces of education

The positive role that education plays in relation to state fragility is widely discussed in the literature. According to the OECD ‘education appears to offer the greatest possibilities for addressing sources of fragility’ (OECD 2008, 21). Education is first and foremost a universal right, and as such education services should be available to all children regardless of whether they live in fragile or non-fragile states, and whatever the circumstances (DFID 2006, 12; see also Save the Children 2007, FTI Partnership 2005, Rose and Greeley 2006). Education can protect children and non-combatants living in conflict-affected areas (OECD 2008, Vaux and Visman 2005, Burde 2005), and can offer a much-needed sense of normality and continuity to children and communities during the height of a conflict (Bird 2007, 6; see also Nicolai and Triplehorn 2003, OECD/OCDE 2006, Smith and Vaux 2003). In countries emerging from protracted periods of conflict and violence, education is seen as an important peace-building element of reconciliation efforts (Berry et al 2004, Smith and Vaux 2003, FTI Partnership 2005), and a key driver of nation-building and social cohesion (Berry et al. 2004, Save the Children 2007). Education is also seen as an important point of entry for broader reforms, for achieving the MDGs (DFID 2006, Save the Children 2007), and a crucial contributor to the formation of competitive economies and sustained economic growth (Save the Children 2007, AusAID 2006, Berry et al. 2004).

However, despite the positive impact that education has in addressing the root causes of state fragility, the education system is also seen as carrying the potential to *contribute* to state fragility (Rose and Greeley 2006). Because of the interlinkages that exist between the education sector and the politics of national identity, and the specific social and cultural dimensions that are associated with the process of teaching and learning, education can have negative as well as positive impacts on state fragility. This dual role of education has been defined in the literature as the ‘two-faces of education’ (Smith and Vaux 2003, Bush and Saltarelli 2000) or the ‘education paradox’ (Bird 2007), and education has been defined ‘an area of contention’ (OECD/OCDE 2006). For example, the education system may contribute to fuelling a

conflict if schools become places where hostilities are encouraged, and school materials, school curricula and teachers themselves instigate ethnic and racial hatred (Smith and Vaux 2003). There is some evidence, for example, that the Rwandan genocide may have been partly fuelled by messages of ethnic hatred conveyed through the education system prior to the genocide. In the aftermath of the genocide, changes to the curriculum, the role of history teaching and the provision of human rights education became strategic elements of education system reforms (*Ibid.*).

2.2 The neglected role of education in humanitarian response: a gap between policy and practice

There is a growing consensus in the literature and in international policy circles that education should be a key priority of donors’ interventions *both* in times of conflict and crisis *and* during transitional and post-conflict phases. Increasingly, education is seen as ‘an essential component of both an emergency response and a development goal’ (Save the Children 2007, 1). However, it is only in recent years that the international community has recognised the crucial role that education plays in humanitarian responses and has repositioned the role of education as a legitimate humanitarian concern (Bird 2007, Nicolai and Triplehorn 2003, Save the Children 2007, Save the Children-UK 2006, Burde 2005, DFID 2006, UNESCO 2003). Historically, the provision of education services during emergencies has been considered ‘a luxury and a task best left to the development community’ (Nicolai and Triplehorn 2003, 1). Mainly because education was not perceived to be a life-saving intervention such as health-related interventions for example, support to the education sector has always been a neglected aspect of international humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, despite the reappraisal of the role of education at policy level, and the significant progresses that have been made, such as the creation of the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the remarkable commitment of positioning education as the fourth pillar of humanitarian relief, in practice support to education service delivery is still far from optimal (Rose and Greeley 2006, Nicolai and

Triplehorn 2003). As will be discussed in the sections below, the gap between policy and practice and the marginalised role of education in

emergencies carry significant implications for education programming and funding in fragile states.

Section 3: Donors' approaches to supporting education service provision in fragile environments

A key theme that emerges from the review of the literature is that there is no single approach for donors' engagement in education service delivery in fragile states (FTI Partnership 2005, OECD 2008, Smith and Vaux 2003, Leader and Colenso 2005). Given the dynamic and complex nature of state fragility, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is widely recognised to be a counterproductive strategy in these environments. Instead, donors' initiatives should be based on a sound and robust political analysis aimed at assessing the type (e.g. willingness and/or capacity) and context (e.g. conflict, transitional, post-conflict) of state fragility, so that interventions in the education sector can be tailored accordingly (Rose and Greeley 2006, OECD/OCDE 2006, DFID 2005(a), Commins 2005, and many others).

In this section, donors' approaches to supporting education services in fragile environments are discussed by investigating two dimensions: the *contents* of education services, addressing *what* is taught and specifically focusing on school curriculum; and the *processes* through which education takes place, exploring *how* education services are delivered and *who* delivers them. The content has to be considered in the light of the basic functions that education is supposed to perform at different stages, including the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy; socialisation and citizenship; and the promotion of children's health and safety.

3.1 General approaches and strategies

School curriculum

Reforming the school curriculum is seen in the literature as an important aspect of state-building efforts and integral part of broader initiatives to rehabilitate the education sector (Berry et al. 2004, Rose and Greeley 2006). Improving the school curriculum needs to be seen as just one of several interventions, such as improving pedagogical methods, textbooks and information technologies that donors may promote as part of broader reforms of the education system. While a comprehensive discussion of those interventions is beyond the scope of this analysis, this review will focus mainly on the school curriculum as it is an initiative that has received particular attention in the literature.

Donors should keep in mind that changes to the school curriculum, for example in relation to teaching language and pedagogical techniques,⁴ need to be sequenced to ensure that the curriculum itself does not become an additional source of tension. During the height of a conflict, for example, it may be sensible for donors not to engage in any significant alterations to the curriculum. The teaching of controversial subjects, such as history, may have to be suspended for the same reason. Once the situation improves, however, donors may gradually begin to introduce the necessary changes to the curriculum to ensure that children receive an education which is based on principles of tolerance and social cohesion (Rose and Greeley 2006). This sequencing of changes is in line with the 'good enough governance' approach to fragile states proposed by DFID. This approach highlights the need to implement reforms that are 'prioritized, achievable, and appropriate to the context' (DFID 2005 (a), 20). Specifically, one of the criteria that should underpin the design of short-term measures to strengthen state capacity is to avoid 'the most politically or socially controversial issues' (*Ibid.*). For example, while the use of local languages in education has often been found to facilitate learning and promote social cohesion, in some contexts the adoption of local languages may heighten tension. In those cases it is crucial that the choice of language as a medium of instruction is carefully considered in relation to the specific context (Rose and Greeley 2006).

In fragile environments characterised by some political willingness but weak capacity, as with many Pacific countries, reforms to the school curriculum may be required to ensure that students acquire the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the local (and global) economy, while matching local culture and aspirations. In Samoa, enhancing curriculum relevance was a key education policy goal of the Ministry of Education (MoE) strategy during 1995–2005. At the primary level, for example, efforts were made to develop curricula which were closely related to the needs and

⁴ For a good overview of key elements of the school curriculum, such as language, religion, history and geography, see Smith and Vaux 2003 pp.28–35,

problems of the local community. The new curricula were also backed up by the provision of ‘an adequate supply of graded readers and basic textbooks in Samoan and English for every classroom; and provision of pedagogically sound, relevant, and physically durable curriculum materials in all subject areas, for teachers and students’ (World Bank 2006, 39).

The nature and characteristics of school curricula have also been the focus of peace education programmes that have been widely promoted by the international community since the 1990s to support education and peace-building initiatives before, during and in the aftermath of the conflict (see for example UNHCR⁵, UNICEF⁶, UNESCO⁷). In the literature on education and fragile states that was studied for this review, those initiatives are however only marginally discussed. Nonetheless, two issues can be highlighted. On the one hand, establishing whether (and when) is appropriate to teach the specific subjects associated with peace education remains a controversial topic. Moreover, the successful implementation of those programmes is seen as strictly dependent on the ability to secure teachers who are able and willing to teach these sensitive subjects (Rose and Greeley 2006, Smith and Vaux 2003). On the other hand, there are inherent difficulties in assessing the impact of these programmes because evaluations are rare (Smith and Vaux 2003, Sommers 2002), and, as with any education programme, it takes years before the effects of a curriculum that includes elements of peace education are known (Rose and Greeley 2006):

The INEE Minimum Standards (INEE Standards)

The Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a global network of NGOs, UN agencies, donors and practitioners working within a humanitarian and development framework to promote education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction.⁸ In 2004, the INEE published and disseminated the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early

Reconstruction (INEE Standards),⁹ with the hope that they will contribute to moving the world closer to reaching the Education For All (EFA) agenda¹⁰ and the Education MDG by 2015 (INEE 2004).

A study commissioned by USAID to review several initiatives in Uganda where a variety of organisations have begun to adopt the INEE Standards, concluded that those organisations were still at the ‘*awareness level* of implementation’. In other words, organisations and their staff have received training, or have learned about the INEE Standards through some other sensitisation activity, but are still in the early stages of deciding how best to actively ‘utilise’ the INEE Standards in their education programmes (Sullivan-Owomoyela 2006, 8). While the organisations that were part of this study welcomed the INEE Standards and felt that they were ‘a good general reference guide’ (*Ibid.*), it will clearly take some time before the INEE Standards are effectively mainstreamed in programme planning and implementation. Similarly, other studies confirm that governments, donors and local and international development partners generally perceive the INEE Standards as ‘extremely useful’ (Colenso and Buckland 2006, see also Burde 2005, Sullivan-Owomoyela 2006, Rose and Greeley 2006).

However, two qualifications need to be made with regard to the applicability of the INEE Standards to fragile states. First, the INEE Standards only refer to conflict-affected states, which are a sub-set of fragile states, but do not provide clear guidance and a set of principles on how to work in contexts where fragility is determined more by lack of will and/or capacity than by conflict (Colenso and Buckland 2006). Second, the INEE Standards do not make a clear link between education and state fragility, which may be seen as an important driver of donors’ engagement in the education sector in fragile states (*Ibid.* 1).

⁹ See <http://www.ineesite.org/toolkit/>.

¹⁰ Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The EFA was launched at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, when representatives of the international community agreed to universalise primary education and reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade (http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=47044&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

⁵ Baxter, P (2000) UNHCR Peace Education Programme, UNHCR Regional Services Centre, Nairobi. See also www.unhcr.ch.

⁶ http://www.unicef.org/pdeduc/education/peace_ed.htm

⁷ http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001263/126398_e.pdf.

⁸ See <http://www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1008>.

The remainder of this section addresses the processes through which education takes place, and discusses *how* education services are delivered and *who* delivers them.

Teachers

As front-line providers of education services, teachers play a key role in education service delivery. Even during the height of a conflict, and even if school buildings, materials and school curricula are not readily available, the presence and ability of teachers to work ensures the continuation of education service provision (Sommers 2002), and represents a source of stability, reassurance and continuity for children and communities at large living through crisis (Bird 2007, 6; see also Nicolai and Triplehorn 2003, OECD/OCDE 2006, INEE Guidelines 2008). Therefore, teachers' availability, capacity, motivations and compensation need to be seen as important determinants of effective pro-poor education service delivery in fragile states.

The regular and adequate compensation of teachers¹¹ is a problematic issue in many low-income countries, and indeed in fragile states, where teachers' salaries often consume most of the public spending on education (Sommers 2002, World Bank 2006, Rose 2007(b)). Teachers' compensation is understood as comprising both a monetary component (salary) and non-monetary support – which includes in-kind payments, such as the provision of food, shelter and health care, together with the provision of teaching materials and training to support and motivate teachers (INEE Guidance Note 2008).

The ability of the state to pay teachers' salaries is not only dependent on the availability of funds, but also on the capacity to manage the payroll: for example, having alternative payment mechanisms in place in areas where the banking system does not exist or may be disrupted. Even if budget support is an unpopular aid instrument in fragile states (see below), in order to ensure that salaries are paid and that education continues, an appropriate donors' strategy may be to provide budgetary support directly to the MoE (Rose and Greeley 2006, DFID

2005(a)). Another issue to consider is that, in many fragile states teachers, are paid too little (if they are paid at all), and during periods of rising inflation teachers may have to resort to alternative sources of income (World Bank 2004). The fact that teachers' compensation is inevitably shaped by market forces such as the cost of living, the rate of inflation, the demand for other jobs etc., is an important issue to keep in mind when designing compensation strategies. In order to be sustainable, donor interventions aimed at supporting teachers' compensation should therefore be underpinned by a sound market analysis, instead of merely relying on agreements between donors and the MoE (INEE Guidelines 2008).

The non-monetary element of teachers' compensation should also be taken into account when designing compensation strategies. Indeed, both monetary and non-monetary support are valued by teachers and are vital in 'ensur[ing] a safe and positive professional environment ... in motivating teachers, thus enabling them to ... remain within the profession' (*Ibid.* 21). In Afghanistan, for example, the MoE made a good effort to attract teachers to rural areas by offering monetary incentives such as bonuses and higher salaries. However, without a functioning payroll system and stable prices of food, utilities and housing, those incentives were unable to attract teachers to remote areas (Moulton and Dall, 2006). A good example of the use of non-monetary support to motivate teachers is the kit that Save the Children UK has put together in the DRC. The teachers' kit includes teaching and personal items, a daily snack for teachers and clothing and family items (INEE Guidance Notes 2008).

Donors' initiatives to expand training opportunities and professional development of teachers are also seen as important initiatives to motivate and retain teachers. These interventions have the potential to create an adequate supply of suitably qualified, trained education personnel, a well-known constraint to the improvement of learning outcomes and quality of education services in fragile states. At the same time, providing training opportunities is also seen as an effective strategy for keeping teachers motivated (INEE Guidance Notes 2008, World Bank 2006). In 2004, the MoE, with the support of UNICEF, established an internally-displaced persons (IDP) school in Darfur, Sudan. Initially, available teachers were mostly volunteers

¹¹ For an excellent in-depth analysis of this topic see INEE Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery (INEE Guidance Notes), 2008.

and were not paid salaries because this was seen as contrary to MoE policy. Since qualified teachers were not available in the camp, the MoE decided to send some teachers from a nearby town. The volunteer teachers went on strike and schools closed for over a month. In response, UNICEF proposed a government-owned in-service teacher training programme, working out the details of the training and budgetary requirements together with the MoE. To date, 18 volunteer teachers have been recruited as regular MoE teachers and have been deployed to rural schools. However, several challenges were highlighted, including: the absorption of volunteer teachers within the MoE payroll; government certification of volunteer teachers; the sustainability of the in-service training programme; incentives and lunches for volunteer teachers who have no salaries; and the criteria for the selection of volunteer teachers (INEE Guidance Notes 2008).

Finally, donors should pay special attention to hiring and training female education workers such as teachers, administrators and assistants as a strategy for creating a secure environment for girls at school and for addressing gender issues (Rose and Greeley 2006, IIEP 2006). For example in Guinea, the International Rescue Committee hired female classroom assistants for its refugee schools to prevent male teachers from exploiting female students by trading good grades for sex. Among other responsibilities, the assistants are in charge of providing confidential counselling and referral services, organising academic extracurricular activities and follow-up with parents who do not send girls to school (IIEP 2006).

Delivering education services through government structures

The provision of education services is a widely recognised public responsibility, and the state is seen as having the primary role in supporting universal access to basic schooling. Education can also have an important symbolic value in re(establishing) the legitimacy of the state. For example, the ability of the state to pay salaries to teachers can be an important indicator of state capacity, and may be crucial for restoring confidence in governing authorities and enhancing state legitimacy (Rose and Greeley 2006). Therefore, in contexts where there is some willingness and capacity at the central level and the government can be a partner, the 'first best' solution is to engage with and through government structures to deliver

pro-poor education services (OECD 2008, OECD 2007). However, in many dysfunctional environments, donors may find that partnering with the state may not be a feasible or appropriate strategy. In those cases the literature stresses the importance of finding alternative 'entry points' for building political will (OECD 2008). Donors should look for 'pockets of willingness' at institutional levels other than the central level, with the idea of scaling up and integrating initiatives into government planning processes when circumstances allow (Berry et al. 2004, Carlson et al. 2005).

The Tamil North East Province (NEP) of Sri Lanka is considered by DFID a 'difficult environment', in part because it has been affected by decades of internal strife, and in part because of the 'complex political emergency which ... dominates the State' (Sibbons 2004, 78). Education services in NEP have been severely disrupted by years of conflict and the Tamil population has been systematically excluded from basic services, including education (Carlson et al. 2005). Donors and international agencies have often faced the government's reluctance to engage in the NEP, for example to fully include it in its central education policy. During the conflict, instead of working directly with central government institutions, GTZ decided to work with the Provincial education department, thus exploiting pockets of willingness at lower institutional levels. While GTZ still sought government approval, this strategy was seen as an effective way of bypassing much of the reluctance of central decision-makers to get involved in those regions (Sibbons 2004). Moreover, the education services that GTZ delivered in refugee camps tried to follow the same curriculum as public schools so that the education services that were provided to displaced children would not be too disconnected from the public education system (Carlson et al. 2005).

In Somalia and Somaliland, Save the Children-UK is adopting different approaches depending on the possibility and feasibility of working with and through state institutions. Save the Children-UK is implementing its Basic Education Programme in close collaboration with a variety of stakeholders: the MoE in the region of Togdheer in Somaliland; with local authorities in Burao, the capital of Togdheer; and at community level, with teachers, parents and children wherever possible (Rose and Greeley 2006). It is hoped that this multi-level

approach will form the basis for state-managed educational programmes for any future national government that may be formed in Somalia.

Finally, it is important to highlight that support to education service delivery in fragile environments may require some level of engagement not only with the *de jure*, but in many cases also with the *de facto* authorities and structures (OECD 2008). For example, in highly volatile settings it may be necessary for donors and NGOs to undertake negotiations with armed groups who may exert significant control over basic services, on significant portions of the territory, and enjoy widespread popular support in certain areas of the country. Dealing with those groups may be necessary to guarantee access and continuity of service provision in those areas: for example to ensure that schools are protected and that education continues to be delivered without disruption (Bird 2007). In Nepal, school buildings were often the targets of Maoist attacks as they were viewed as government institutions and were therefore treated with hostility and suspicion. Support of public education programmes by Save the Children was in turn also viewed by suspicion by the Maoist rebels as it was perceived as implicitly supporting the prevailing political system. Save the Children started to work with local communities and supported the creation of education committees and community-supported schools. Initially the Maoists were not keen to support those schools, but local education committees were able to win them over by telling the Maoists that, if they refused support, they would have no right to ask for food and shelter in their villages. The Maoists became involved in auditing the funds that were channelled to the school by the District Education Office, (Rose and Greeley 2006, Bird 2007).

Delivering education services through NSPs

As discussed above, supporting education service delivery through NSPs is a common and often necessary approach in fragile states. In contexts of low state willingness and/or low capacity, working through the 'short route' of accountability is seen as especially advantageous: by working closely with the communities they serve, NSPs (and international donors supporting them) have the potential to strengthen local accountability, both to influence demand for education and to ensure that the services provided actually reflect the needs and preference of beneficiaries (Rose 2007(a)). The line

between state and non-state provision of services in the education sector is however often blurred. Even when schools are owned and managed by NSPs, they may be subsidised by the state, or teachers may be employed in state schools and may at the same time work as private tutors (Moran and Batley 2004). Also, schools established by communities are often classified within non-state provision, as are the wide range of service providers that may offer education services from their homes, or on a voluntary basis. In this review, community-based initiatives or community-based associations (CBAs) are discussed as part of NSPs.

In many fragile contexts and often as a response to the failure of government provision, communities organise themselves to provide volunteer teaching on a small, localised scale to ensure availability and continuity of education. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) operate through structures and mechanisms which are often parallel to the public service track, and rely on communities' capacity (rather than on governments') to deliver services. CBOs are generally viewed as key service providers and as more pragmatic, flexible and adaptable than state structures. By allowing communities to identify their own priorities they are often seen as having the potential to empower communities, set up local governance structures and strengthen social accountability mechanisms (Slaymaker et al 2005, 15).

While CBOs may be useful for scaling up initiatives and responding to the needs of the poorest, it is important to keep in mind that communities' involvement in education services should not be seen as a substitute for the state (Moran and Batley 2004, Rose and Greeley 2006, Commins 2005). The guiding principle here is that '[t]he service delivery track, even at the earliest stages in the most unpromising contexts, should never be completely disconnected from the public institution track' (Commins 2005, 5). Therefore donors' support to education services should aim to address short-term education service improvements while also strengthening state capacity to enable state institutions, such as the MoE, to eventually take responsibility for service delivery in the long term (OECD 2008, Slaymaker et al. 2005). One possible approach for dealing with the above challenge is to implement education initiatives that are part of 'blended approaches' (Rose and Greeley 2006), which mix the short and long route of accountability

to address immediate education needs together with longer-term state-building efforts (*Ibid.*, see also Burde 2005). Some examples of this approach are discussed below.

In the absence of state support to girls' education during the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, women teachers started to teach girls clandestinely in their own homes, and **home-based schools** or **home-based learning** filled a gap in government provision by providing continuity of education to many girls. When it became feasible, donors started to build upon those small-scale, localised initiatives and efforts were made to integrate them into state systems. This was done either by changing their status to become officially recognised and supported schools, or by transferring students, and if possible teachers, to a government school. Where demand for education has increased (for example under UNICEF's back-to-school campaign), the transition from home-based schools to government schools has been very smooth and has resulted in an increase in girls' enrolment, from 3% to 30% within a year. Moreover, by framing home-based schools with the MoE's policy parameters, objectives and curricula, rather than setting up parallel structures, donors are contributing to strengthening government capacity (Rose and Greeley 2006, Bird 2007).

In many countries, **faith-based schools** (FBSs) have a long history of education service delivery: Islamic schools or *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*) are omnipresent throughout the Muslim world and Christian schools are widespread in former European colonies (Moran and Batley 2004). It is important that donors' initiatives harness the potential of FBSs as service providers with the idea of integrating them into the public education system. The region of Mindanao in the southern part of the Philippines is a fragile environment categorised as 'arrested development' by USAID. Inequalities in government education services between much of the country and the region of Mindanao are seen as partly contributing to the growing fragility of government's institutions in the southern regions, and to tensions between Muslim and Christian populations. Education for children living in the Mindanao jurisdiction is provided through a combination of public schools and *madaris*. A problematic issue with *madaris* education is the predominant focus on religious instruction and the usually poor quality of teaching.

Madaris students are disadvantaged as they do not receive instruction in key subjects that can enable them to attend high schools and universities or compete for positions in the larger society. In recent years, the government, with the support of donors, mainly AusAID and USAID, has made efforts to integrate *madaris* education into mainstream education, by encouraging and supporting *madaris* to expand their curricula to include subjects taught in public schools. A key element of USAID's programme in this region is the improvement of the quality of *madaris* education to facilitate their graduates' transition to the public system. For example, USAID is supporting the modernisation of the curriculum by integrating standard maths, science and English in the traditional *madrasah* curriculum. The programme is also providing teachers with training in these specific subjects and in effective teaching methods in general. These efforts are allowing students who choose a *madrasah* education to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to transfer to public schools, attend government universities or seek employment in the national economy (Moulton and Dall 2006).

Precisely because of governance deficits that characterise fragile states, donors often decide to work through **local and international NGOs** for delivering and scaling up education services to the poorest. In fragile states donors work with NGOs to support education delivery mainly in two ways: they either provide funds directly to a local NGO, or they provide funds to an INGO, which in turn works through local NGOs. Donors are most likely to support the first mode of engagement where there is low state political will and/or capacity, but civil society capacity exists; and the second where there is low political will together with low civil society capacity, for example in conflict-affected fragile states (Rose 2007 (b)).

It is also important to keep in mind that 'the approach used may also depend on the orientation of donors, with USAID generally favouring an approach of working directly with NGOs, while others, including those in the OECD DAC group supporting fragile states, taking a more cautious approach – with concern of the tension between supporting service delivery in the short term and longer term state building' (*Ibid.*, 33). When supporting service delivery in fragile environments it is important that donors harness NGOs to ensure expanded access to the poorest in the short term,

while ensuring that, in this process, they do not undermine state capacity by setting up parallel structures and mechanisms of delivery that are disconnected from the public delivery track. A key principle of engagement here is that hand-back mechanisms or transition planning from NGOs should be built into service delivery programmes from the very beginning (Commins 2005, OECD 2008).

Contracting arrangements with NSPs as a way of engaging with the government while allowing for alternative approaches to service delivery is not a common approach in the education sector. Rose and Greeley (2006) suggest that ‘contracting out technical and higher levels of education could be feasible and beneficial in supporting capacity development’ in fragile states, and is therefore an approach that could be further explored. The (limited) literature that discusses the modalities of donors’ engagement with NSPs, and specifically with local and international NGOs, points to the possibility of implementing **public-private partnerships** as a form of co-production of education service provision. For example, in Afghanistan the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in partnership with the MoE implemented an Education Program which aimed at improving the quality of the public education system by building up education training institutions and education offices at the district and provincial levels (OECD/OCDE 2006). The AKDN, which has implemented several public-private partnerships in the educator sector across Asia, finds that there is no particular model or approach that can be used as a standard policy; instead, ‘[m]ost public private partnerships are undertaken on a contractual basis, case by case’ (Rose and Greeley 2006, 18).

3.2 Alignment and harmonisation

Alignment with partner governments and harmonisation among donors are widely recognised to be of crucial importance for aid effectiveness in fragile states.

Aligning donors’ assistance behind a clear sector strategy and policy/financing framework is increasingly seen as crucial ‘for strengthening national ownership of donor-funded programs, induce greater use of existing government systems thus reducing transaction costs and building local capacities’ (World Bank 2006, 36). Building capacity

is at the core of the alignment agenda, and where possible, for example in states with some willingness but low levels of capacity, it is important that donors align behind government-led strategies and priorities. For example, in Fiji the MoE is receiving support from AusAID through the Fiji Education Sector Program (FESP), and has started to move towards a more integrated donor coordination mechanism. ‘All donors will plan their support within the sector policy framework, moving towards a system of budget support and using the Government’s own accountability mechanisms’ (*Ibid.*).

However, in some contexts, where the state lacks both the capacity and will to implement pro-poor educational policies, alignment behind government-led strategies and priorities may not be possible and donors may have to implement strategies that necessarily avoid state structures (DFID 2005(a), Christiansen et al. 2004). Nonetheless, approaches that avoid the state’s methods of service provision should make sure that existing state structures are still taken into account, and hand-back mechanisms for transition are included in programme design from the outset (Commins 2005). The idea of **shadow alignment** may be especially relevant in those cases as it is a state-avoiding approach, but future-proof, as it uses resources, institutions and structures that are parallel to but compatible with state structures and priorities, such as administrative layers, staffing structures and hierarchies, budget classifications and monitoring and evaluation systems (Rose and Greeley 2006, Christiansen et al. 2004).

The UNICEF-sponsored Child-Friendly Community Initiative (CFCI) in Sudan is a good example in this regard. The CFCI is an integrated programme that aims at improving the delivery of basic services to the poor, including primary education. The CFCI has undertaken several activities in the education sector including improvements in primary education enrolment, through the provision of school materials, classrooms and teachers; support of government capacity-building, through the establishment of a partnership with the MoE; and advocacy at the federal level for additional teaching staff and at the community level through initiatives to raise awareness amongst parents on the need to send their children to school. A DFID-commissioned study to review the CFCI

shows that enrolment in basic education increased by 15–20%, and drop-out reduced by 3–5% in 245 CFCI communities. ‘One of the main achievements of the CFCI approach is its “shadow alignment” or superposition of structures on government systems, avoiding setting up parallel CFCI mechanisms. This will be especially important in the south, where public administration structures are largely non-existent, or, where they do exist, are extremely weak’ (Moreno-Torres 2005, 24).

Donors’ **harmonisation** efforts are increasingly seen as a key component of effective and sustainable support to basic service delivery. Donors’ engagement in fragile states should be guided by the principle that assistance in these environments is a long-term activity, and to further this agenda ‘coordination and coherence must become central objectives of programming’ (OECD 2008, 40). Harmonisation becomes especially important in contexts where alignment is not possible because of lack of willingness and/or capacity (Christiansen et al. 2005, Berry et al. 2004). In these cases donors will have to explore non-state mechanisms for coordination and alternative arrangements on the basis of an appropriate contextual analysis (Berry et al. 2004). Given ‘the broad acceptance of the UN as universal, neutral, politically independent actor’ (Berry et al. 2004; see also DFID 2005(a)), UNICEF usually acts the ‘lead agency’ for coordinating projects in the education sector, and in some cases it has taken on the role as the *de facto* MoE (Rose and Greeley 2006).

In states with some willingness but low levels of capacity it is imperative that donors ‘harmonise to align’ with the aim of supporting longer-term state capacity for education service delivery. While this is not exactly the same as when a single agency (e.g. UNICEF) takes the lead, when donors work very closely together the end result may be very similar (Christiansen et al. 2005). For example in Samoa, AusAID and NZAID are coordinating a series of activities such as common administrative arrangements for scholarship management and joint funding for small projects (*Ibid.*). Similarly, in Somalia DFID is working together with UNESCO and UNICEF to develop a 3–5-year strategic partnership for education, to improve coordination in the sector, and move beyond a humanitarian response (FTI 2005).

A harmonised international response in fragile states can also send positive signals that funds can be managed and spent effectively. Thus it may be seen as a key step for overcoming the ‘trust gap’ between donors and recipient governments typical of fragile states situations, where the inherent financial management risks that donors incur when engaging in these environments often make donors reluctant to disburse aid (Save the Children 2007). Successful donors’ harmonisation has the potential to attract more donors and in turn raise more funds which, as discussed below, is of crucial importance, especially in the education sector. For example in Liberia, after aid resources had been repeatedly abused by government officials, donors came together to demand transparency and fiscal responsibility. In 2005, donors created the Government and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), a partnership between the government, civil society and several donors with the purpose of improving the government’s financial and fiscal administration. The GEMAP is supposed to provide the fiscal oversight of revenues, transparency and accountability that will support a national education programme. Donors have mandated that the current government of Liberia work towards the goal of 10% of national expenditure for education. In the meantime the creation of the GEMAP has led ten donors to commit funding to Liberia (Save the Children 2007, Women’s Commission 2006).

3.3 Instruments and funding mechanisms

The 9th OECD Principle for Good International Engagement in Fragile States (2007) points to the importance of flexible, long-term international engagement in fragile states, a necessary prerequisite for strengthening state capacity. If donor engagement in fragile states needs to take ‘a decade-long perspective’ (OECD 2008, 43), in turn the financing modalities and aid management arrangements in those environments should be predictable, reliable and long-term (OECD 2007, OECD/OCDE 2006). The literature on aid effectiveness, however, points to a problematic issue in this regard. After the initial humanitarian support, many countries experience a significant decrease in the level of aid, even though research and empirical evidence¹² demonstrate that early

¹² See for example the well-managed transition in several sectors in East Timor, where political will was at the core

recovery countries with some political will can provide excellent opportunities for using aid effectively to build state capacity and to aid sustainable recovery (Chauvet and Collier 2005, Collier and Hoeffler 2002). Weak transitional arrangements between emergency and long-term development are also affecting the education sector, where good practice in managing the post-conflict transition is currently lacking (Rose and Greeley 2006).

As discussed above, the neglected role of education in emergencies, the funding gap between humanitarian and development assistance and the ‘trust gap’ between donors and recipient governments mean that funding for education is especially problematic in fragile states (Save the Children 2007 and 2006, DFID 2006). In particular the following three main funding-related shortcomings in the education sector are highlighted:¹³

1. Aid for education is targeted at middle-income countries rather than fragile states: conflict-affected fragile states receive less than a fifth of total education aid.
2. Education is one of the least-funded sectors in humanitarian aid: in 2006 education received only 1.1% of humanitarian assistance globally, despite representing at least 4.2% of humanitarian needs.
3. When aid is provided to fragile states, education is not prioritised, either in development or humanitarian contexts (Save the Children 2007).

There is a growing recognition that aid to the education sector in fragile states should be increased and education made a greater priority, especially in emergencies. Financing arrangements therefore should be innovative, flexible and predictable (Leader and Colenso, OECD/DAC 2006, OECD 2008, Rose and Greeley 2006, Save the Children 2007).

This section presents an overview of the main instruments and funding mechanisms that donors are using for financing education service delivery in fragile states.

of the successful donor–national government partnership (Rose and Greeley 2006).

¹³ Note that the data given here refers to a specific sub-group of fragile states (conflict-affected fragile states).

The Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)

It has been estimated that nearly ‘a third of official development assistance now flows through partnership-based global and regional programs’ (Lele et al., 1). The EFA-FTI,¹⁴ a multi-donor global partnership, is one of the main international mechanisms for mobilising technical and financial resources for the education sector. The goal of the EFA-FTI is to enhance the performance of the national education sector¹⁴ to accelerate progress towards the Education for All (EFA) goal so that ‘aid for education is increased, long-term, predictable, co-ordinated and disbursed more quickly’ (Save the Children 2007, 10). In order to receive an FTI endorsement, countries need to have a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and a sound education sector plan in place. Once the country has received endorsement there are two main channels for receiving increased funds for education: either via in-country donors or, for countries with few donors, via the Catalytic Fund, which provides transitional funding until more donors come on board. For those countries without an education plan, the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) provides technical support and capacity-building to develop the education sector.

Broadly speaking, the EFA-FTI initiative seems to have fallen short of expectations as it has managed to mobilise ‘only a fraction of the resources originally envisaged’ (Lele et al., 6). Moreover, and especially relevant for this analysis, the EFA-FTI as currently designed is not contributing to addressing the funding imbalances that affect the education sector in fragile states. Clearly, many fragile states are automatically excluded from a full FTI endorsement because they often lack a PRSP and a credible education plan (Save the Children 2006). Since 2005 there has been increasing attention to the need to amend the EFA-FTI financing mechanism to include and increase assistance to fragile states and the EPDF is seen as the default and key mechanism that can be used for this purpose (FTI Partnership 2005, Rose and Greeley 2006). However, despite the potential that this initiative has for increasing funding to education in fragile states, as well as for improving donors’ harmonisation and quality assurance (Leader and Colenso 2005), progress is still needed to extend the EFA-FTI to fragile states.

¹⁴ http://www.education-fast-track.org/library/factsheet_basic.pdf.

Budget support

General the macro-economic instability, unacceptable levels of fiduciary risks, the absence of enabling conditions and inherent governance deficits that characterise fragile states are just a few of the reasons why general budget support is usually considered an inappropriate financial instrument in these environments (Leader and Colenso 2005). A more appropriate strategy is to 'ring fence' support to education programmes within the MoE. In other words, donors may provide sector budget support, earmarked for use in a specific sector or budget line. This funding can be especially useful for example to pay teachers' salaries and, as discussed above, to keep the education system functioning (DFID 2005(a), Save the Children 2007).

Multi-donor Trust Funds (MDTFs)

MDTFs are innovative financing mechanisms and are increasingly seen as effective tools to fund and manage a wide range of reconstruction activities in post-conflict fragile states. MDTFs have been used in several post-conflict countries and areas, including Afghanistan, East Timor, the West Bank and Gaza and Bosnia and Herzegovina. While currently MDTFs are less developed during the humanitarian phase, there is growing interest in using these mechanisms to ensure better resource management, better funding and improved coordination in emergency response (Leader and Colenso 2005). MDTFs are seen as especially suited to post-conflict fragile states, and if well-managed they have the potential to improve donors' response in several ways. MDTFs can be a key financial tool for raising funds to support sectoral interventions, including education. MDTFs are also seen as reducing transaction costs since the establishment of a single fund, with a single set of reporting and procurement procedures, is more efficient than a series of multiple funds (*Ibid.*). In contexts of limited capacity, MDTFs can also facilitate shared priorities and responsibilities for execution between national and international institutions, and can serve as a mechanism for coordinating funding of reconstruction activities in line with agreed priorities with the government (OECD 2007, DFID 2004, Christiansen et al. 2004).

The MDTF for East Timor (TFET) was established as part of the international response to address the large-scale post-conflict reconstruction needs in the sectors of health, education, agriculture, private sector development and economic capacity-building. Several studies and evaluations (Schiavo-

Campo 2003, Scanteam 2007, Rohland and Cliffe 2002) conclude that the TFET has been instrumental to the successful reconstruction of East Timor. TFET succeeded in mobilising substantial resources for reconstruction and was an efficient funding mechanism thanks to the adoption of uniform procedures for project processing and implementation. In addition, according to Schiavo-Campo (2003), the 'TFET's first projects were prepared in near-record time, with reliance on local communities and NGOs, and gave quick results on the ground. This contributed to preventing the gap frequently found between humanitarian and reconstruction assistance' (p. 22). The TFET also achieved good donor coordination and promoted strong and continued policy and sector strategy discussions, while ensuring integration and alignment with government priorities and structures. For example, Project Management Units (PMUs) were established to help implement sectoral projects and ensure local Timorese participation in decision-making processes. The PMU that was established in the MoE to support the Fundamental School Quality project was subsequently integrated into the ministry as a permanent capacity under its direction (Scanteam 2007).

The financing gap for reaching the education MDG

When supporting reforms to the education sector donors face the challenge of having to quantify the resources that low-income countries need to mobilise in order to reach the education MDG. Attempts to estimate the cost of reforms to reach the education MDG rely on studies, mainly led by the World Bank, on financial simulation models. Cost estimates are important tools for projecting costs, for helping establish education performance targets and for identifying the cost drivers of education in a specific country (Gurria and Gershberg 2004). While an overview of the different cost estimates is beyond the scope of this analysis, it is important to point to a number of technical shortcomings and limitations that the literature has highlighted:¹⁵

- Generally, in low-income countries accurate spending data on education are often not readily available and/or inaccurate. Similarly, other indicators such as estimates of the school-aged

¹⁵ For a comprehensive review of the financial simulation models and methodologies to estimate the resource requirements for achieving the education MDG in 2015, see Gurria and Gershberg 2004, and Rose 2003.

population, national enrolment and repetition and completion figures, often suffer from widespread data problems. Inevitably, the outcomes of the models will be constrained by the poor quality of data available. This means that '[e]stimates should not, therefore, be taken at face value but need to be carefully interrogated' (Rose 2003, 20).

- Simulation models usually focus on several quantitative indicators without taking into account a range of other important qualitative indicators which differ from country to country (*Ibid.*).
- Different models are based on different economic assumptions, such as the GDP growth rate, which have important effects on different results. Some models for example have been criticised as overly optimistic where 'many countries would need enrolment and GDP growth at rates beyond the fastest achieved in the history of the developing world' (Gurria and Gershberg 2004, 9).

One issue that clearly emerges from a review of the (limited) literature on this topic is the fact that different studies propose different methodologies for estimating the funding gap in education (Rose 2003, Gurria and Gershberg 2004). This means that, currently, there is no agreed methodology or a single planning tool for estimating the 'price tag' of the education MDG in low-income countries. Moreover, there does not seem to be a model that has been specifically developed to address the funding gap in fragile states. In conclusion, rather than strict guides for policy-making, donors should take those estimates as an indicative framework for action.

3.4 Approaches to reaching the poorest

Promoting initiatives that aim at removing obstacles to educational opportunities for vulnerable and poor children and youth should be a key priority of donors' engagement in fragile states. The 6th OECD Principle for Good International Engagement in Fragile States (2007) points to the need to support international interventions in fragile states that promote social inclusion from the outset. Reaching the poorest, minorities and other excluded and disadvantaged groups in fragile states is perceived as a key step for strengthening the long route of accountability and the social contract between state and citizens.

In this section, donors' approaches to reaching the poorest in fragile states are discussed by investigating strategies that address both the supply and demand side of access to education services.

Supply-side issues

A recurrent feature of fragile states is the discrimination of certain groups of the population which translates in their exclusion from, or difficult access to, basic service delivery, including education. **Targeting** and tailoring specific interventions to those groups is therefore increasingly seen as an effective way to address inequities in educational access and enhancing the educational opportunities of disadvantaged groups (World Bank 2006).

The provision of education services to children and youth with **special needs** is a complex and challenging task for many governments. Lack of policy, lack of teachers trained in special needs education, physical constraints of buildings, attitudes and prejudices are just few of the barriers that often exclude or severely hamper students with special needs from accessing education services. Experience demonstrates that, rather than segregated special schools, the promotion of integrated or inclusive education provides the best educational opportunities in this regard. Initiatives to support integrated education may include financial subsidies, per capita grants, funding targeted directly to families with special needs, specific teacher training and initiatives to raise awareness of children's rights to education among families with children with disabilities (World Bank 2006, 45). 'The Department of Education in Samoa provided in-service training on special needs education to all teachers, established special needs units in village schools and a special needs education coordinator in the curriculum development unit of the Department of Education. In addition, two NGOs in the country are focusing on linking education and training for people with disabilities with income generation opportunities' (*Ibid.*).

Achieving equal access to service delivery in fragile states also requires developing and implementing gender-sensitive interventions. Indeed, addressing gender and social exclusion is imperative for a sustainable transition out of fragility (OECD 2008). Gender inequalities, seen as discrimination on the basis of one's sex in terms of resources, benefits,

basic services and decision-making power, may act as significant obstacles to the educational opportunities of girls and boys.

Gender inequalities in education, reflected for example in the significant imbalance between girls and boys who enrol in, attend and complete primary and secondary education, are a well-known problem in many low-income countries and indeed in many fragile states. Donors need to take active steps to target disadvantaged girls and diversify the supply of education services to address their specific needs, to increase their participation and reduce their drop-out rate. There are many practical and cultural barriers to equal access for girls, including threats to safety in school, and travelling to and from school (such as rape) (IIEP 2006); lack of separate latrines, soap and sanitary towels; and parental concern over allowing adolescent girls to mix with boys (Lewis and Lockheed 2008). There are several initiatives that donors could support to target girls, such as designing or improving facilities to make schools more accessible and inviting for girls (IIEP 2006); creating incentives for households to send girls to school (Lewis and Lockheed 2008, see also the example of Cambodia below); and making schooling safer (IIEP 2006, see also the example of female assistants in Guinea above). It is crucial that donors see the promotion of gender-sensitive interventions not as having a focus solely on girls, but also on boys. While in many cases boys may not be as vulnerable as girls, and may not face the same significant practical and cultural barriers, it is still important to remember that boys are also seriously affected by state fragility, but in different ways. Gender-sensitive interventions should therefore target both girls *and* boys (Baranyi and Powell 2005, IIEP 2006).

As discussed above, choosing whether and to what extent partnering and support should focus on central government institutions or on district, provincial and local-level institutions is a key challenge of donors' engagement in fragile states. **Decentralisation** is a common feature of the education reform proposals that are increasingly sponsored by major international donors. Decentralisation efforts, such as devolving the planning and the allocation of resources from central to regional or local authorities, are underpinned by the need to bring basic services closer to people. Lower levels of government are often seen as more responsive and able to tailor

services to better respond to the needs of the population. At the same time decentralisation is seen as a crucial reform for enhancing citizens' voice: if users are able to make their demands for the services that they want, in turn this should result in improved, more effective pro-poor service delivery (World Bank 2004). This is especially relevant in fragile contexts, where weak capacity and/or low willingness at the central level may significantly hamper the scope of central service delivery initiatives (OECD 2008). Lower levels of government, such as districts or provinces, may instead have the potential for improved governance and capacity to deliver services, and therefore represent an important entry point for pro-poor service delivery interventions in fragile environments.

Indeed, while in many dysfunctional settings the best option for ensuring service delivery may be the option '*farthest* from (central) government provision' (*Ibid.*, 24, emphasis in the original), it is also important to keep in mind some problems that may come with decentralisation. For example, when services are decentralised to local governments, elite capture, where resources are stolen or used to favour the elite at the expense of the poorest, may represent a serious challenge to pro-poor service provision. Moreover, simply decentralising service delivery is not enough: 'the political, administrative and fiscal systems must be sufficiently devolved for sub-national governments to take independent initiative with their own resources' (*Ibid.*, 38).

In Nigeria, education policy is determined by the Federal government, and implementation of policy is left to the States. State willingness to support education is variable and highly dependent on the Education Commissioner for each State. The local government level and traditional leaders have shown a much greater willingness to support education. When the WB has provided a loan to the Federal government to support the Universal Basic Education programme, the selection of local governments that could benefit from this additional resource has been politically driven rather than decided on the basis of poverty and inequalities. In this case, more successful outcomes have been achieved in smaller-scale programmes that have worked directly with CBOs to support local education services (Meagher 2005, Carlson et al. 2004).

Demand-side issues

A key challenge that donors face when engaging in pro-poor service delivery in fragile states is the ability to generate demand for services, an issue that is especially relevant in the education sector. Many poor households do not send or keep their children in school because they cannot afford the cost of services, both direct such as school fees, and indirect such as school uniforms, meals, books and transportation (DFID 2006, Slaymaker et al. 2005). Low participation in the education system and high drop-out rates among poor children are also related to the need for child labour, which often represents an indispensable contribution to the household economy (Levis and Lockheed 2008).

In recent years, many studies have focused on the potential that reducing the cost of services has for increasing access opportunities for the poor in low-income countries. Several studies have demonstrated that in the short-term, participation levels seem to be more dependent on reduced cost of access to education rather than on improved quality of education services (Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, and Linden, 2007; He, Linden, MacLeod, 2007; Muralidharan and Sundararaman, 2006; Angrist et al 2002, 2006; Barrera, Linden, Urquiola, 2007 in Barrera-Osorio et al. 2008). Specifically, these studies show that poor households respond well to direct reductions in the costs of access such as scholarships, reduced user fees and subsidies to attend private schools, as well as to direct induction mechanisms such as conditional cash transfers (CCTs), direct cash incentives and school meals (Barrera-Osorio et al. 2008). The growing recognition that donors' support to education should prioritise the needs of the poorest and that efforts should be made to expand their access to education services has led major international donors to experiment with innovative instruments to reduce barriers to the demand-side of access.

Given that a comprehensive discussion of the various demand-side instruments to address the financial barriers to access to education services in fragile environments is beyond the scope of this analysis, this review focuses on two instruments that are prominent in the literature: user fees and CCTs.

There are arguments for and against the removal of **user fees** in the education sector. On the one hand, supporters of user fees argue that, as long as locally

collected fees are retained by the school, fees are a good thing. This is because empirical evidence suggests that resources collected at the school level may raise school quality, while resources collected at the state level are usually devoted to payroll. Moreover, if communities are to feel pride in their school and empowered by their participation, then parents are expected to make some contribution, which can be in cash and/or in-kind. On the other hand, those who argue for the removal of user fees argue that it is important to weigh the above benefits against the negative effects that even low user fees have on enrolment and in increasing inequalities (World Bank 2004, 126).

When defining social protection objectives and when determining whether user fees are an appropriate instrument, donors should analyse the specific context and take into account factors such as efficiency in allocation, quality of services and the ability to guarantee that education services can be delivered and sustained.¹⁶ According to DFID, '[t]o be successful, and to protect standards, the abolition of fees must be part of a comprehensive, long-term plan for universal primary enrolment' (DFID 2006, 10). This includes the implementation of complementary measures such as teacher recruitment and training, the provision of teaching and learning materials, as well as efforts to ensure that additional financial resources are available to compensate for the loss of revenue. For example, the abolition of education fees in Uganda in 1997 had a remarkable effect on enrolment, which rose up to 70%. At the same time, however, the dramatic increase in enrolment led to a parallel drop in the quality of education, followed by a decline in average test scores, which in turn led to an increased proportion of students repeating school years (DFID 2006, Moulton and Dall 2006).

Empirical evidence also shows that, in order to be effective, interventions aimed at removing the direct cost of education need to be complemented by interventions that address the *indirect* cost. For example, the costs of schooling constitute a relatively large share of a poor household's income in some Pacific countries. Even where user fees in primary education have been abolished formally, for example in Fiji and Vanuatu, obligatory

¹⁶ For a helpful tool for assessing the pros and cons of user fees in basic service delivery, including education, see World Bank 2004, Chap 4, p. 71, box 4.4.

contributions such as school uniforms remain high (World Bank 2006) and still represent a significant barrier to access for the poorest. A successful initiative can be seen in post-conflict East Timor, where the World Bank supported a range of pro-poor policies in the education sector, including the removal of school and examination fees. Crucially, this initiative was complemented by the removal of school uniforms which, together with school and examination fees, had been identified as the main drop-out factors for the poorest. In addition, the school year was synchronised with agricultural cycles so that children could support their parents during critical times of the year without having to miss school (Vaux and Visman 2003).

Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) have been successfully deployed in several low-income countries in Latin America and are increasingly used for expanding enrolment and reducing school drop-outs among poor children. CCTs are incentives in the form of funds that are offered to poor households on the condition that their children are, for example, enrolled in school (World Bank 2004 and 2006). Experience from countries that have successfully implemented CCTs¹⁷ (and also vouchers) demonstrate that, if education services are not in place and if administrative and institutional capacity is lacking, CCTs are not an appropriate instrument for expanding school enrolment (DFID 2005(b)). In addition, 'school fees should be eliminated before implementing [CCTs] programmes or else the fees themselves will consume much of the transfer

' (*Ibid.*, 11). Therefore, inherent governance deficits and poorly functioning education systems typical of fragile states may be significant constraints to the successful implementation of CCT programmes in those environments. However, CCTs may be an appropriate strategy for expanding enrolment and reducing drop-out rates in post-conflict environments, as the example of Cambodia below demonstrates.

The Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) financed a CCT programme which sought to increase the proportion of Cambodian girls who make the transition from primary school to lower secondary school and to encourage girls to complete the lower secondary school cycle. Families receive a CCT provided that their daughter is enrolled in school, maintains a passing grade and is absent without 'good reason' for fewer than ten days in a year. A recent WB evaluation concluded that this programme 'had a large, positive effect on the school enrolment and attendance of girls in Cambodia' (Filmer and Schady 2006, 2). Specifically, a set of estimates suggested 'program effects on enrolment and attendance at program schools of 30 to 43 percentage points, [CCT] recipients were also more likely to be enrolled at any school (not just program schools) by a margin of 22 to 33 percentage points' (*Ibid.*). This intervention was also pro-poor in that it had the largest impact among girls with the lowest socio-economic status at baseline (*Ibid.*).

¹⁷ The PROGRESA programme in Mexico, subsequently renamed Oportunidades, is a textbook example.

Section 4: Conclusions

This report reviewed international literature on education service delivery in fragile states. It discussed some of the key challenges facing donors' engagement in pro-poor education service delivery in fragile states; the link between education and state fragility; and donors' approaches to supporting education services, specifically discussing donors' strategies and modalities of engagement, alignment and harmonisation, funding mechanisms and supply- and demand-side approaches to reaching the poorest.

The review has highlighted a point which is especially relevant for service delivery in this sector: while there is an increasing recognition of the importance of education both in humanitarian and development settings, education is still a marginalised element of the international humanitarian response. This has clear implications for funding which, especially in conflict-affected fragile states, is still inadequate. Education interventions in fragile states are crucial to state-building: rebuilding the education system can contribute to strengthening and maintaining a legitimate authority and promoting pro-poor development.

The review has also pointed to the fact that, both for reasons of long-term sustainability of service delivery programmes and the need to build accountable public institutions, donors should involve national actors, such as the MoE, in their education service initiatives rather than bypassing them. However, it has confirmed a central issue that

is widely discussed in the literature: building state capacity is especially problematic in fragile environments, precisely because of the existing governance deficits. In those contexts NSPs can provide a key contribution to pro-poor service provision and can be very effective in scaling up services and ensuring continuity of education. Pro-poor education service delivery interventions should therefore aim at harnessing NSPs. But again, it is crucial that donors find appropriate strategies and mechanisms to deploy NSPs so that their interventions do not bypass the state altogether. Ultimately, education service delivery is a public responsibility and interventions should therefore be planned from the outset in a way that that can be integrated into the public service delivery track.

Inevitably, donors' engagement in fragile states will be fraught with challenges, difficult choices and trade-offs. Nevertheless, focusing on state institutions, in this case the MoE, to build and strengthen their capacity should be the central objective of donors' interventions in fragile states. To be sure, engagement with the state must not be a question of either/or but of degree (Leader and Colenso 2005). This is a difficult exercise, but the literature and examples of successful interventions demonstrate that, even in the most difficult cases, there is room for manoeuvre and for experimenting with innovative approaches that mix the short and long route of accountability to address immediate education needs *together* with longer-term state-building efforts.

Appendix 1: Working definitions

This paper understands ‘fragile states’ and ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ education in the following way:

Fragile states

According to the widely used OECD-DAC definition, states are fragile when governments and state structures lack capacity – or in some cases political will – to deliver public safety and security, good governance and poverty reduction to their citizens. This review focuses on countries where the ability of the state to provide basic services is seriously compromised by the weakness of state institutions, lack of capacity and/or disruption related to ongoing or recent armed conflict or violent insecurity.

Primary and secondary education

In this review, *primary* education refers to ‘the beginning of systematic studies characteristic of primary education, e.g., reading, writing and mathematics’. Primary education usually begins at ages five, six or seven and lasts for four to six years.¹⁸ *Secondary* education ‘is a step for pupils

between the ages of 11 or 12 and 18. At this level, pupils are expected to broaden their knowledge and experiences from the basic level and prepare for work or higher education’. Secondary education lies between basic education and higher education.¹⁹

In fragile states, the education system and the delivery of education services are often disrupted. While primary education often continues to be supported by community-based initiatives, the delivery of secondary and higher education requires more qualified and skilled teaching staff, complex and expensive infrastructures, learning materials, etc., and is therefore more difficult to re-establish (Rose and Greeley 2006). However, improvements in *both* primary and secondary education are considered crucial in fragile states. Better educated citizens, it is argued, will be better able to formulate a coherent demand for services and advocate it convincingly to policy-makers so that service delivery reflects the actual needs and preferences of its beneficiaries.

¹⁸ <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=5411>

¹⁹ http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6343&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Appendix 2: Sources, search methodology and bibliography

Sources and search methodology

The documents for this review were collected from English-only sources. Papers were identified through Google and academic databases. Keywords that were used in the search include: fragile state*, state fragility, difficult environments, education, education services*, education service delivery, education service provision, conflict, post-conflict.

Policy documents and research studies were collected from the websites of various multilateral and bilateral donors (AusAID, USAID, DFID, WB, OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF), in addition to websites of organisations and international forums concerned with education systems and education service delivery in developing countries, such as the INEE and the IIEP, as well as the websites of INGOs which are prominently involved in education service delivery, such as Save the Children, to select specific programme documents.

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