Helpdesk Research Report: Education Service Delivery by Non-State Providers in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
13.02.09

Query: Collect information on delivery of education services by non-state providers in fragile and conflict-affected states, highlighting any evaluations of effectiveness in terms of 1) how they contribute to supporting government policies, strategies and systems, and 2) the effectiveness of the delivery of the services. What lessons arise from these evaluations?

Enquirer: DFID Politics and State Team

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1. Overview

It has been very difficult to find programme evaluations and even general literature on the specific issue of education service delivery by non-state providers (NSPs) in fragile states. This lack of information is widely acknowledged, and various explanations have been offered. These include: the issue of service delivery in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is an under-researched area; in fragile and conflict-affected states education is often prioritised behind other sectors in terms of financial and political investment; non-state education in particular receives little attention, perhaps due to the difficulty of obtaining data; the focus on governments as primary service providers, etc. Therefore, this helpdesk report includes literature on the challenges of providing education in fragile and conflict-affected states; the role of non-state providers; and case studies which offer key recommendations and lessons learned.

In many cases, the relationship between governments and NSPs is fraught with tension and distrust, with each having often contradictory ideas about the other’s legitimate role, rights, capacity, and motivation. This relationship is further complicated by the fact that the category of non-state actor is itself very diverse and includes: political parties, national and international non-governmental organisations; community-based organisations; the private sector; and so on, all of which can be involved in the provision of education services.

It is clear that NSPs are playing an increasing role in both the financing and delivery of education in states affected by fragility. They 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. Some of their key advantages of NSPs include:

- Better access and reach to the most marginalised.
- Improved quality.
- Openness to lesson learning and innovation.
- An understanding of the local context and strengthening of civil society.
- The engagement of parents and communities.
Cost-efficiency. Providing the opportunity for capacity building and scaling up.

There are also drawbacks however. As NSPs often operate outside government regulation, there is a danger that some may be providing low-quality education. In addition, as local-level community-based organisations (CBOs), they can also be disconnected from policy development in the wider sphere. Gender issues – in terms of awareness of oppressive attitudes and exploitative employment practices – are also a concern.

A key issue is the way that NSP initiatives link in with governments. Many experts argue that while CBOs may be useful for scaling up initiatives and responding to the needs of the poorest, their activities should not be seen as a substitute for the state. Donors are therefore urged to support education services by aiming to address short-term education service improvements while also strengthening state capacity to enable state institutions, such as the respective Ministry of Education, to eventually take responsibility for service delivery in the long term. The literature below highlights several examples where NSPs and governments have worked in partnership to scale up small localised initiatives; develop and modernise curricula and provide teacher training; and incorporate hand-back mechanisms and transition planning into service delivery programmes from the outset.

2. Non-State Provision of Education

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155538e.pdf

This paper aims examine some of the issues surrounding non-state provision of education services. It examines a broad range of partnerships between the state and non-state sector and provides a synthesis of observations and recommendations. Particular attention is given to the contributions of the non-state sector (whether through direct provision or partnerships) to reaching marginalised or excluded groups. The paper provides a brief assessment of a number of key areas:

- **Access and reaching the marginalised**: “Many non-state initiatives serve populations that have limited or no access to government schools. Because they are often locally situated, the non-state sector is positioned to respond appropriately based on local realities. By design, many of their programmes aim to reach marginalized children, through innovative strategies that help to overcome the many constraints these groups face.” (p. 19)

- **Improved quality**: “The quality in state and non-state schools covers an enormous range – even within a relatively small geographic area […] Some studies do show that the learning outcomes of students in private or community schools are equal to or better than those of public school students.” (p. 20)

- **Innovation and testing strategies**: “Schools tend to be anti-change, often by nature of the bureaucracies in which they are located and the history and culture of public education systems […] Since they are not working at scale (at least not in the same way that national governments are), as “social entrepreneurs” many private sector and civil society agents are able to bring to the table outside lenses, and can provide stimuli for innovation and change at macro levels. Often, non-state actors take the best lessons learned from the private sector (e.g. focusing on impact, measuring success, seeking efficient solutions), and from civil society (e.g. being beneficiary driven, ensuring local empowerment, demanding transparency), and apply them to the social change and education agenda.” (p. 20)
Understanding of local contexts and strengthening civil society: “Through their projects and programmes, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) often have a grassroots reach that helps them to understand local contexts – what citizens want for their children; what the obstacles to education access, participation, and quality are; and how local institutions can be strengthened and decentralization processes supported – often better than national governments and donors do.” (p. 20)

Engagement of parents and communities: “This is an area in which NGOs have long been recognized as bringing clear “added value” [...] A study from Nepal examined the impact of Save the Children’s work with communities and local government schools on excluded dalit (untouchable) children. Dalit enrolment increases in the project “child-friendly” schools was more than double that in the control schools, drop-out rates were significantly lower and pass rates significantly higher. The most dramatic results of all were found amongst the children who had participated in the community-based ECD centres initiated by the NGO and managed by the community.” (p. 21)

Cost-efficiency: “Because many non-state institutions have limited access to traditional revenue streams and capital, they are quite skilled at mobilizing resources, and doing a lot with a little. However, as Rose (2006) points out, whether non-state schools are indeed more efficient remains to be seen. A handful of studies show that many community and NGO providers operate at lower costs than their government counterparts, while achieving the same or better results (in terms of learning outcomes and completion rates)” (p. 21)

The paper also addresses the issue of state/non-state partnerships: “Partnership is a powerful means of achieving collective goals, but only when there is a good strategic fit between collaborators, and when the benefits of partnership outweigh individual action. Social science researchers have concluded that there are three essential elements to effective partnership: vision, intimacy and impact (Ruggie and Barrett, 2003, and AED, 2006). Vision refers to the goals and structure: identifying collective objectives, agreeing on targets, clarifying roles and responsibilities of each partner, acknowledging core competencies, and developing strategies. Intimacy refers to the fact that successful partnerships depend upon trust and open communication, the presence of champions of partnership within each organization, transparency regarding risks and challenges, inclusiveness, sharing of best practices, and mutual accountability. Impact signifies the importance of being results-oriented. Partners might use existing frameworks (international and national) as a base, give attention to ensuring inclusion of key local issues and indicators, monitor and assess performance, and encourage analysis and institutional learning.” (p. 26)

The paper highlights the example of NGOs which start from a core of their own schools and then start to see the opportunities for wider-scale impact offered by working in partnership with state schools. “Their purpose is to build capacity, draw out lessons from both successes and failures, and influence practice and policy [...] In short, many NGOs focus their efforts on helping to ensure that innovations, many of which have emanated from the non-state sector, are taken up by the state system so that these can go to scale. Their purpose is systemic change. Some of the approaches, once considered “radical” which are now found within regular government plans include innovations that specifically address access issues for marginalized children. Examples include: ensuring that centres are located closer to homes; offering flexibility in the timing of the school day and year; bridge courses; training of para-professional teachers and recruiting teachers locally so that they speak the same language as the students. Others are focused on the quality of the learning opportunities being made available to children: child-centred teaching and learning processes, decentralized training, and in-class mentoring and support. Yet others have been concerned with school management and leadership, financial integrity, school-community partnerships and increased parental engagement with schools. Such public private partnerships can serve as a vehicle for building a stronger ‘performance culture’ into public sector institutions.” (pp. 26-27)
http://gsdrc.ids.ac.uk/docs/open/cc91.pdf

This report summarises the findings of research into the question of how service delivery interventions can be improved in difficult environments. Evidence was obtained from a series of desk-based case studies (Afghanistan, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda). Some of the findings from the case studies are below:

Southern Sudan: There is no state structure providing service delivery in most of Southern Sudan. Security, health and food security have dominated the humanitarian agenda for the last 20 years. In recent years, there has been some recognition of a gap in the provision of basic education, that is, providing adult literacy and numeracy skills to support skills-building in young people and adults who are no longer of primary school age. One innovative project is Education for Development’s (EdDev) work in one part of South Sudan. This programme focused on local capacity building and peace building as the underlying approach to developing literacy skills. Communities were involved in developing the curriculum for the training themselves, allowing them to conceive of taking a wider role in decision making more generally. EdDev has worked through a local NGO throughout its operations in South Sudan ensuring sustainability and the development of appropriate services. Lessons learned include:

- Working through community groups empowers members to be more demanding about access to different services, e.g. gives them greater voice.
- Being explicit about the inclusion of women as project staff, teachers and beneficiaries is vital to ensuring gender equity in community interventions.
- Local organisations can be hostile to greater inclusion of women, and so sensitive handling and advocacy is important, and can be achieved through external input.

Nigeria: In a number of states where education provision has been particularly variable, Nigerian CBOs have set up their own schools (e.g. in Kaduna, women’s groups have been very active in providing primary education for girls). Lessons learned include:

- “Experiences are showing that mobilisation of significant and diverse sections of civil society can be readily achieved through appropriate interventions; provision of counterpart resources is a considerable catalyst for this purpose;
- ‘Critical mass’ is an important element of success in creating sustainable outcomes for other projects (e.g. having enough activity in a focused geographical area);
- Federal government involvement appears to be a necessary bureaucratic level to include, rather than a driver of significant policy or standards. Funding of education service provision may be contributing to this as each State or locality responds to the demands/philosophy of individual funders and civil society organisations. Poor coherency may be a result of this approach to working in Nigeria.” (p. 10)

The paper offers a series of lessons learned:

- **Leadership and coordination:** Successful interventions (in terms of impact and accountability) were those where good local level interventions can be translated to national policy level, or where there is a national driver from the outset.
- **Identifying ways to involve state actors:** It is clear that state actors need to be engaged with wherever possible, and provided with an appropriate strategic role. Though still not well evaluated, the practice in Afghanistan and DRC of creating a strategic space for state actors to sit, in policy making, regulating and monitoring services, while non-state (and state) actors are contracted to deliver services within
the agreed policy framework, seems a rational way forward in countries where human capacity is low. Linking with state structures as well can help to dispel the image of the state disregarding its responsibilities towards its citizens. Where service delivery is provided by external agencies with no connections to local structures, a further erosion of state legitimacy occurs in the eyes of its citizens.

- **Improving the transition from relief to development:** Building the capacity of state and non-state actors should be integrated into all programmes of work in difficult environments. By including capacity building in service delivery strategies, organisations can incorporate the long term perspective even while providing short term interventions. The advantages of capacity building include: the empowerment of communities; ensuring continuity during unstable periods; and building the basis for scaling up.

- **Developing strategic planning and management skills:** As much effort may need to be put into developing the strategic planning and management skills of state actors and local NGO staff as is taken to develop technical skills for service delivery. This area appears to be particularly neglected by assistance provided in difficult environments.

- **Building sustainable systems:** Sustainable systems can be nurtured in difficult environments through a number of strategies, including genuine efforts to ensure community participation to creating greater capacity at local government level to working with national government to establish a more enabling policy environment for pro-poor service delivery.

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**Pavanello, S., 2008, 'Improving the Provision of Basic Services for the Poor in Fragile Environments: Education Sector International Literature Review', Overseas Development Institute, London**


This paper highlights that 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 the availability and continuity of education. These community-Based Organisations (CBOs) often operate through structures and mechanisms which are often parallel to the public service track. They 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.

However, while CBOs may be useful for scaling up initiatives and responding to the needs of the poorest, their activities should not be seen as a substitute for the state. “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’. 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.” (p. 16) The authors suggest the use of ‘blended approaches’ which combine the short and long route of accountability to address immediate education needs and longer-term state building. Some examples of this include:

- **Home-based schools:** In Afghanistan, 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.

- **Faith-based schools**: Education for children living in the Mindanao jurisdiction is provided through a combination of public schools and madaris (Islamic religious schools). A problematic issue with madaris education is the predominant focus on religious instruction and the usually poor quality of teaching. 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.

- **Local and international NGOs**: 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. “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.” (p. 18)

- **Public-private partnerships**: 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. For example, in Afghanistan the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in partnership with the Ministry of Education 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. (p. 18)

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This book explores co-ordination of education delivery in and after emergencies. Chapter 2 reviews the roles and responsibilities that key players tend to assume in the coordination of education during emergencies and early reconstruction periods. It also briefly examines humanitarian coordination structures, and how the education sector remains largely on the sidelines of such activity. It outlines the activities of various non-state actors in providing education in post-conflict contexts:

- **Non-state actors**: “The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, the largest opposition party, or movement, among the southern Sudanese opposition, for example, has an established education unit. The unit is writing its own curriculum, although its reach and impact in Southern Sudan remains limited. On the other hand, the unsanctioned ‘parallel system’ of education that Kosovar Albanians devised following severe restrictions in Kosovo by the Serb-dominated Milosevic regime, had broad reach and widespread impact.” (p. 44)
United Nations agencies: UNHCR and UNICEF are the largest international actors in the field of emergency responses in the education sector. "There are almost always more United Nations agencies in the mix, particularly those involving education for non-refugees. Some situations inspire unhelpful competition between different agencies. There are many reasons for this, but among them is the mandate overlap."
(p. 46)

Non-governmental organisations: NGOs control significant amounts of international aid; and governments and UN agencies often rely on NGOs to organize and implement school operations and non-formal education programmes. The most active international NGOs working on education in emergency and reconstruction are able to rapidly mobilize and manage resources, and provide multi-sectoral assistance, including educational services.


The focus of this paper is on primary school aged children who find access through (international) non-government organisations (NGOs). Based on a review of the available literature, the author argues that there have been fluctuations in attention paid to NGO provision by education researchers since the 1970s. The paper also shows that there has been a shift in the priorities of these providers over this period, from seeing themselves as supporting a parallel, alternative system of education independent of the state system, towards one aimed at being complementary to the state system, with the intention of ultimately supporting children’s access to a state-provided education. The paper highlights that much of the available literature suggests that NGO provision often aims to bring benefits in terms of the alternative forms of pedagogy and accountability. However, the author argues, there is very little systematic, critical analysis of who is gaining access to education offered by alternative providers, or what they are actually getting access to. As such, there is a need for analysis of educational access to pay greater attention to diverse forms of access – both in terms of who provides, and what is provided. Moreover, changes in priorities associated with the effects of the international economic and political agenda, along with the intention of integrating multiple providers of education into a system-wide approach, give rise to the need for an analysis of the implications for NGO-government collaboration to ensure sustainability of educational access to those who would otherwise be excluded.

3. Case Studies

Newell-Jones, K., 2004, 'A Review of Small Scale Educational Interventions on Literacy and Conflict Resolution/ Peacebuilding in Guinea, Sierra Leone and South Sudan', part of the 2004 DFID report on Service Delivery in Difficult Environments, Health Systems Resource Centre, London
http://www.dfidhealthrc.org/publications/SDDE/Guinea_Sierra%20Leone_South%20Sudan.pdf

This review forms part of the 2004 Department for International Development (DFID) report on Service Delivery in Difficult Environments. It draws on a series of small-scale, non-formal education interventions in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan from 1999-2004, in conflict and post-conflict contexts. These interventions were undertaken by Education for Development in partnership with indigenous non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with the intention of developing the sector capacity in adult literacy and conflict resolution/peacebuilding together with providing opportunities for vocational training.
The author finds that: “The small scale education interventions undertaken by EdDev have had a significant impact in difficult environments in conflict / post-conflict environments at a local level largely because of their flexible nature, the commitment and community-based nature of the implementing local NGOs and the integration of two complementary sets of skills i.e. literacy and conflict resolution/peacebuilding [...] At the individual level of implementation the impact was high and included skills acquisition and probably more importantly increases in self-confidence and ability to play a role in community decision-making. However, the most significant impact has been in capacity building of local NGOs in transferable skills which have provided a strong foundation on which to ground larger scale interventions when the context turns more favourable. However, in order to be effective there needs to be coherence and effective two-way communication between these small scale initiatives and the larger, longer term interventions, supported by a recognition of the value of the enhancement of capacity in transferable skills for development as a significant outcome.” (p. 19)

Larbi, G. et al., 2004, ‘Nigeria: Study of Non-State Providers of Basic Services’, part of a Report on Non-State Providers of Basic Services for the UK Department of International Development (DFID), University of Birmingham
http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/research/pdfs/Nigeria_Report_23March05.pdf

This report highlights that in Nigeria, NSPs, particularly mission and community schools, have been a prominent part of the provision of basic and secondary education since the 1950s. The poor quality of some public schools, the inability of public schools to cope with demand, economic crises of the 1980s, the resistance of voluntary private schools to nationalisation, and the inability of government to enforce the law, have all served to ensure their prominence.

In terms of quality, standards and performance, three levels of NSPs may be identified in basic education: the élite private and voluntary schools; middle range schools which may be affordable to a large number of working class families, but often too expensive for children from poor backgrounds; and the poor, often unregistered schools. This third category of schools is usually located in poor urban communities. They provide access to a large number of children from poor backgrounds who are either unable to gain access to ‘free’ public schools or cannot afford to pay for a good private school. The state governments cannot afford to provide free and universal basic education to all children. NSPs therefore fill an important gap in the provision of basic education.

The paper offers some case studies, which have been selected as examples of NSP initiatives which may form a relationship with the government. The case study most relevant to this query is that of the Association of Formidable Educational Development (AFED), which represents profit-making membership organisations of unapproved schools. The purpose of this initiative is not specifically pro-poor, although have a potential influence on low-income households.

The author states that while it was difficult in the time available to assess the quality of service delivered in unapproved schools compared with government schools, a number of points stood out:

- Class sizes are considerably smaller and discipline in the classroom is apparent. School proprietors suggested that one reason for parents preferring to send their children to these schools is that teachers are available for longer hours, so schools continue to function as childcare centres, which is beneficial, for example, for mothers working as market traders.
- In addition, proprietors suggested that, unlike governments schools, their schools are not affected by teacher absenteeism. Private schools monitor their teachers closely.
However, many of these schools do not employ qualified teachers because they are not willing to pay the higher salaries demanded by qualified teachers. “Thus, while it is claimed by proprietors that teachers in private schools are more ‘motivated’, this motivation is likely to be a consequence of feelings of threat rather than related to job satisfaction.” (p. 49)

Moreover, it was evident from visits to a few schools that the infrastructure was in extremely poor condition.

Schools are often small scale (often with a small number of pupils, teachers and space), and owned by individual proprietors. Providers are mainly running schools as a business drawing on owner’s capital, motivated by profit (some might be educationalists).

For further case studies from the same project on Bangladesh, Pakistan and Malawi, please see: http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/research/Service_Providers.shtml#study

Balwanz, D., 2008, 'Meeting EFA: Afghanistan Community Schools', Educational Quality Improvement Program, USAID
http://www.equipl23.net/docs/e2-Afg_CARE%20Case%20Study.pdf

This case study examines the model and outcomes of the Community Organized Primary Education (COPE) programme, as well as the institutional and cultural context of the areas in which COPE schools operate. Since 1998, the COPE programme has operated successfully within the context of Afghanistan’s changing legal, political, and security environment. The goal of the COPE programme is to reach underserved regions and populations with quality, community-managed education opportunities. CARE initially designed the COPE programme to operate independently, outside the Taliban government, although the national conditions often required agreements with local Taliban officials. However, since the re-emergence of the Afghan Ministry of Education as a force in the education sector, CARE has shifted programme design to integrate COPE schools and students into the government-controlled public school system - a major component of the model’s success. The case study reports the following programme outcomes:

- **Access:** COPE school enrolments increased consistently each year from 1998 to 2003. In 1998, COPE schools enrolled 4,411 participants in three provinces. In 2003, COPE schools enrolled 45,514 participants in nine provinces.
- **Completion:** COPE schools have exhibited dramatically higher survival rates and lower dropout rates. Additionally, dropout rates for COPE schools are much lower than for public schools. The average dropout rate from 1998 to 2003 was 8 percent, ranging from 6 to 14 percent in any given year
- **Learning:** COPE schools follow the same curriculum and formal examination schedule as public schools. The range of pass rates between boys and girls and across grades over the period of 2000-2003 is consistently above 91 percent. COPE schools’ significant investment in teaching and learning materials likely supported the classroom learning environment. From 2000 to 2003, COPE provided 173,000 textbooks and teacher guides to COPE schools and provided 1.4 million pieces of stationery. Additionally, continuous assessment, high levels of student-teacher contact time, and the positive learning environment of COPE schools might have contributed to consistently strong test results
- **Integration:** In 2002, CARE began working with the Ministry of Education to implement a Gradual Activity-Based Phase-Out Strategy. The strategy laid out a plan for the incremental integration of COPE schools into the public school system. The strategy suggested that, as provincial and district education departments develop institutional capacity, the COPE program would transfer specific management activities to the government. By March 2004, COPE had fully handed over 112 and partially handed over 125 schools to the government. In addition to school transfers, CARE had also partnered with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan to develop
the capacity of Provincial Education Departments by training public school teachers and administrators on education management, teacher training, and monitoring and evaluation. However, in 2004-2005, COPE school enrolment fell by 50 percent as COPE schools were integrated into the public education system. No documentation definitively states whether the integrated schools include the features previously considered critical to COPE schools’ success.

http://www.equip123.net/JeID/articles/3/HomeBasedSchooling.pdf

This paper describes a home-based schooling program in Afghanistan that provides primary education for children in the Kabul, Paktia, Logar and Nangahar Provinces. The research finds that home-based schools provide many thousands of children – and particularly girls, who would otherwise be excluded from education - with a culturally acceptable education. Teachers have a vested interest in their pupils’ learning and happiness. They understand the context and can make education relevant to them. Home-based teachers need further training and support but they already possess many important teaching skills and attitudes. As the Ministry of Education expands and strengthens the education system in Afghanistan, the home-based schools offer some indications of positive pedagogical approaches that could be useful, particularly in rural communities. The paper argues that the policy implications in this case are similar to those in other countries where complementary schooling models provide support and also introduce new ideas and methods into traditional and often relatively dysfunctional systems.

The article argues that home-based schooling responds to the present needs within Afghanistan. It raises as number of policy recommendations for the Afghan government:

- Where possible, the integration of home-based schools into the government system;
- Sustaining and improving home-based schools where they are the only available school;
- Improving teacher training and support; and
- Recognising the "alternative qualifications" of home-based school teachers and finding ways to accredit them.

http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/Formal%20versus%20non-formal%20basic%20educationSB.pdf

This short paper reports on an evaluation in 2006 of two Alternative Basic Education (ABE) pilot projects in Somaliland. The evaluation reviewed the curriculum, teaching, community participation, institutional embedding and project management.

The projects outlined in this report address the very low enrolment rates in 'formal' primary education in Somaliland by piloting five different modes of delivery, four of which use an accelerated curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education. These target the disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access to schooling and offer a number of advantages over 'formal' schools: attendance is initially free, they are closer to the communities and in the case of mobile schools the school moves with the population; and teaching takes place at a time which suits the community.
The communities involved were made aware that the projects would end with a gradual reduction in support over the three years. The projects themselves enjoyed a great degree of involvement from the Ministry of Education, especially at the level of the Regional Education Offices (REOs), who were fully involved and saw the projects as almost entirely integrated into their own work. In addition, the pilot sites were originally selected taking a number of factors into account including the readiness and capacity of the local Community Education Councils (CECs) to sustain the school after the pilot, so a reasonably high continuation rate could be predicted.

The author highlights that while it is too early to assess the likely full impact of the pilot projects it is clear that they were making a significant difference to the communities and REOs with which they were working. The paper document highlights how the projects had a very positive impact on the communities, which had a strong sense of ownership of the schools. Local sustainability had been well addressed and project support for the schools reduced gradually. Even the poorest communities were finding the necessary funds and seemed committed to keeping the sites going after the pilots had finished.

The author argues that given the importance of making progress towards universal primary education in Somaliland, the evaluation raised issues around the 'formal'/‘non-formal' distinction and recommended that it would be in the country's interests to drop this unhelpful distinction and manage ABE and 'formal' schools as a single comprehensive programme of basic education provision, to be expanded as rapidly as resources will allow.


This paper defines a Community Learning Centre (CLC) as a local educational institution outside the formal education system, for villages or urban areas, usually set up and managed by local people to provide various learning opportunities for community development and improvement of people’s quality of life. The paper explores the establishment and development of CLCs for non-formal education in Myanmar, and describes the process that allowed the set up of these centres, the outcomes of the projects as well as their impact on individuals and communities in terms of people’s quality of life improvement. Some of the key findings include:

- Important impacts of the CLCs have been: increased confidence among learners to deal with each other and outsiders, as well as better collaboration and understanding among community members. CLC activities have also contributed to breaking the isolation, not only physical but mainly mental, many communities in Myanmar endure due to lack of education opportunities.
- Capacity building has received high priority and attention from the project and 817 members of the Community Learning Centre Management Committees have participated in 31 workshops, with 22% of these participants being women.
- The demand for CLCs is high: word of mouth has spread from successful CLCs to neighbouring villages, and this has resulted in requests to the project by other communities to organise CLC activities.

This paper looks at the private schooling sector in Pakistan. Using new data, the authors show that an increasing segment of children enrolled in private schools are from rural areas and from middle-class and poorer families. The key reason for this their low fees - the average fee of a rural private school in Pakistan is less than a dime or Rs. 6 a day. These schools employ predominantly local, female and moderately educated teachers who have limited alternative opportunities outside the village. Hiring these teachers at low cost allows the savings to be passed on to parents through very low fees. This mechanism - the need to hire teachers with a certain demographic profile, i.e. less educated, young women, so that salary costs are minimised - defines the possibility of private schools - where they arise, fees are low. It also defines their limits. Private schools are horizontally constrained in that they arise in villages where there is a pool of secondary educated women. They are also vertically constrained because this formula for success may not be replicable at the secondary and the higher secondary level, since the required skill and educational levels are not yet locally available in most of rural Pakistan.


http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/112728833/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

This article argues that while basic education is commonly seen as primarily a state responsibility, non-state providers (NSPs) can play an important role in expanding access to children underserved by public provision. Experience from five countries indicates that collaboration between governments and NSPs is closest when different forms of engagement interact (for example, facilitation or contracting of education services necessitating regulation which can lead to greater involvement in policy dialogue). However, more intense forms of engagement can result in tension, mistrust and even antagonism, particularly where dominant but ineffective centralised ministries of education attempt to maintain control over the sector, even where they are unable to support their own provision effectively. In such contexts, collusion between NSPs through umbrella associations is apparent, often with the aim of challenging restrictive government practices. However, evidence suggests that these associations tend to favour more established NSPs serving élite populations. The author argues that there is a need both to recognise the complexities of collaboration amongst a diverse group of NSPs, as well as between them and governments, to support the achievement of education for all.

4. Additional information

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Websites visited


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