



EDC's projects in fragile contexts

The cases in this series are brief accounts of selected projects that Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), has carried out in extremely fragile contexts. In this introduction, we review briefly the significance of fragile contexts to the international community and the role of education in these contexts. We point out why the particular cases presented here are important.

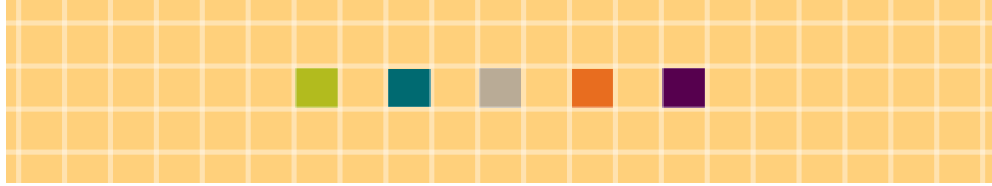
The significance of fragile contexts

Since 2001, interest has heightened in the international development community, among others, in “fragile states” as opposed to “less-developed countries” that have been the traditional recipients of international aid. As they are characterized, fragile states are those that have bred hostile movements and threatened to foster violent conflicts. Fragility is often defined using indices based on indicators. While there is no clear line between fragile states and others, indices help to rank countries based on a composite of conditions. The Fund for Peace Failed States Index,¹ for example, uses 12 indicators of social, economic, and political conditions to rank countries:²

1. Mounting geographic pressure
2. Massive movement of refugees or IDPs
3. Vengeance-seeking group grievance
4. Chronic or sustained human flight
5. Uneven economic development
6. Poverty or severe economic decline
7. Legitimacy of the state
8. Progressive deterioration of public services

¹There are at least 10 indices related to fragility. There is a large degree of similarity among their rankings (UNDP, 2009, *Users' Guide on Measuring Fragility*, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, Oslo, p. 30. [http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs09/Fragility_Users_Guide_\(web\).pdf](http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs09/Fragility_Users_Guide_(web).pdf)) We have selected the Fund for Peace index as an example because it is recent (2011), easy to access, and provides a clear description of indicators.

²Definitions or sub-indicators can be found at <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=indicators>.



9. Violation of human rights and rule of law

10. Security apparatus

11. Rise of factionalized elites

12. Intervention of external actors

The highest scoring countries in the 2011 Fund for Peace Index are Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Congo (D.R.), Haiti, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Pakistan, and Yemen.³ Each of these has, indeed, been the source of violent conflict, along with human suffering along other dimensions.

The role of education in fragile contexts

In the big picture and over the long term, each of the 12 indicators of the Fund for Peace Failed States Index, and other such indices of fragility, is affected by the robustness of the country's education services. While this relationship has had strong theoretical underpinnings as far back as Aristotle, recent empirical research has begun to support it as well. Stemming from the research of Collier and Hoeffler⁴ and others on the causes of violent conflict, there is new quantitative research literature on the role of education as a contributor to stability and resilience and an inhibitor of fragility and violent conflict.

The quantitative research, which began to burgeon in about 2005, is providing evidence of the causal effect of education on fragility, particularly violent conflict.⁵ A 2010 review of that literature summarizes findings relevant to policymakers, with selections quoted below:⁶

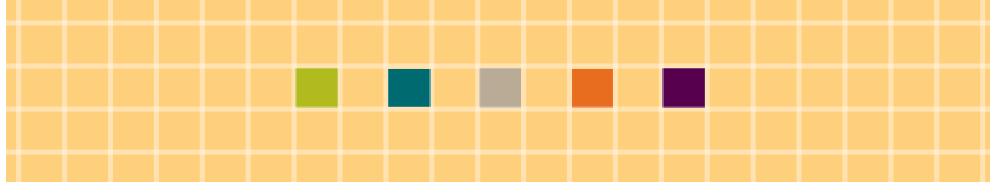
- The evidence “very clearly points to a pacifying effect of education,” thus supporting investments in education “at all levels.”
- “Lack of education has been identified as a particularly potent predictor in low-income countries and in countries with a large youth bulge, and recent efforts to increase education levels in the poorest countries may thus have a significant long-term pacifying effect.”

³The complete Index is at <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fsi-grid2011>.

⁴Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4), 563–595.

⁵ See, for example, (1) Barakat, Bilal, & Urdal, H. (2009). Breaking the waves? Does education mediate the relationship between youth bulges and political violence? *Policy Research Working Paper* 5114, Washington DC: The World Bank. (2) Thyne, & Clayton. (2006). ABC's, 123's, and the golden rule: The pacifying effect of education on civil war, 1980–1999. *International Studies Quarterly* 50(4), 733–754. (3) Østby, Gudrun, & Urdal, H. (2010). *Education and civil conflict: A review of the quantitative, empirical literature* (p. 26). Background paper prepared for the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011.

⁶*Education and Civil Conflict*, 2010.



- “Policymakers should further be particularly committed to reduce educational inequality. Systematic differences in access to education between religious and ethnic groups appear to fuel conflict, whether they are caused by ‘grievances’ or simply by few opportunities among young people in the disadvantaged groups.”

These quantitative studies generally use enrollment and spending as indicators of the provision of education. They do not look at the strategies used to provide education. What this mostly macro-level research cannot show is how education mitigates fragility and conflict and what strategies are effective in doing so. A key challenge now is to provide evidence of strategies that reach marginalized people—children, youth, and adults—with effective education services. The strategies that concern us here are at the meso level: the country, the cross-national region, and the zones within a country.

Why these cases are important

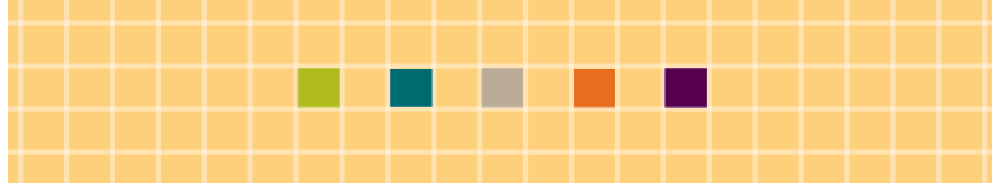
The six EDC projects (in four countries) presented in these cases are important for three reasons.

1. The contexts in which these projects were undertaken are in countries high on the 2011 index of fragile states: Somalia is #1, Sudan, #3, Haiti, #5, and the Philippines, #51. Not all of the projects aimed to reach the entire country. One project in Somalia started in Somaliland and later moved to Puntland and the South-Central area of the country. The project in the Philippines took place in the region of Mindanao—a region that would undoubtedly rank higher than the whole country on a fragility index.
2. These are cases of successful projects. Their achievements have been measured, using quantitative and/or qualitative evaluation research methodologies.
3. The projects are exemplary of strategies that EDC has practiced over time and in other contexts, some in fragile states and others in less-developed countries.

The cases

These cases provide some evidence of how education can mitigate fragility:

- In **Somalia**, consistently ranked as the world’s most fragile state:
 - For children whose chances for schooling have been threatened by ongoing violent conflict, high-quality radio lessons in reading are designed to be sensitive to tensions among sub-tribes and families and are adaptable to the taboos and needs of the various groups.



- Networks—both face-to-face and electronic—among youth seeking jobs and employers seeking workers help the two connect and provide specific job and life skills training and support to youth.
- In the **Philippines**, where decades of unease and hostility in minority Muslim Mindanao continue to heat up, alternative basic education and skills training programs build social capital with community members and government officials to help youth move toward productive jobs and responsible roles in their communities.
- In **South Sudan**, where recent independence has come to a socially, politically, and economically fragile nation:
 - Sudan Radio Service broadcasts news, information, and discussion of critical issues in local languages to people who otherwise must rely on fragmented bits and rumors.
 - Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) give children direct access to high-quality lessons in reading, math, and English and support to their teachers, who are unlikely to have more than a few years of schooling themselves.
- In **Haiti**, IDEJEN, an NGO that strives to integrate youth socially into their communities, learned from the 2010 earthquake that the job skills training it provides to youth allowed them to help rebuild their communities, giving them a lift in self-confidence that turned many away from defeat and toward constructive opportunities.

Each of the cases briefly describes the fragile context, the project's strategy and activities, special measures taken to operate securely and efficiently, and evidence of success. With the understanding that education can affect fragility, these projects should contribute substantially to shifting the balance from conditions of fragility to conditions of greater resiliency.