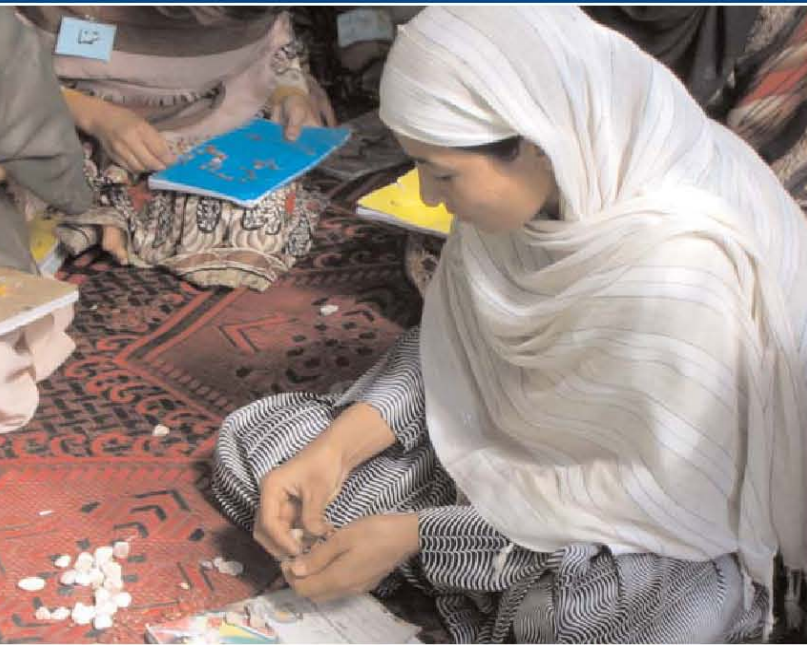




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# DELIVERING EDUCATION SERVICES IN FRAGILE STATES: LESSONS FROM FOUR CASE STUDIES



# **Delivering Education Services in Fragile States: Lessons from Four Case Studies**

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## I. Introduction

This study is designed to help USAID policy makers and program designers reflect on experience in designing and delivering education services effectively in fragile states. We use the term “fragile state” as shorthand for a period of fragility in a country’s political/economic history. Fragility is a temporary condition; it may be short, and it may endure for decades. The events that lead to fragility may be sudden or they may be gradual.

The root cause of fragility can be traced to governance issues. The legitimacy of a nation resides in its ability to deliver essential services to its population. When a fragile state is unable to deliver essential services such as education, either privately or publicly, the government of that nation loses legitimacy. Although basic education is considered by many to be a human right, and investment in education is positively associated with long-term economic growth, fertility reduction, and child health, a principal reason for investing in education in fragile states is that it lends short-term stability and legitimacy to weak governments and strengthens civil society.

Governments that have lost the will and/or the capacity to deliver education services require assistance from the international community in providing those services. The study analyzes four cases to derive lessons learned, strategic guidance, and practical recommendations for application within USAID and as part of the overall OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) fragile states initiative.

This study is not only about the achievement of educational outcomes in various types of fragile states; it also examines whether investment in educational activities can mitigate fragility through improved service delivery or other means. Political and social scientists have been paying more attention recently to the delivery of education services as a key factor in a government’s effectiveness and legitimacy. In addition to contributing to a stronger civil society, better governance, and economic growth, the delivery of education services, through either public or private channels, enhances the legitimacy of government, both local and national. When families in a post-crisis environment have access to schools, teachers and books, they credit government and feel some security. In a deteriorating environment, the decay of good schools signals that government is failing.

Education’s effectiveness is also beginning to be judged in terms of its contribution to the alleviation of patterns found in fragile states. Activities in the education sector can have a positive effect on reducing patterns of fragility. Such activities have been shown to do the following:

- Help to reduce or eliminate corruption in schools;
- Mitigate exclusion of some groups of people as a result of elitism or factionalism or ethnic rivalry;
- Extend services to ungoverned spaces where governments have lost control;
- Mitigate violence and insurgency;
- Target reasons for public disengagement from government services and forums;

- Mitigate effects of a sudden or gradual economic shock;
- Overcome the impact of a pandemic;
- Reduce the level of trafficking in humans or in drugs.

Interest in where and how education leads to these effects is recent, and most evidence of such effects is anecdotal and not systematically explained. Thus, they are not the focus of the case studies described herein, though such anecdotes do appear in the cases.

## Short- Versus Long-term Effects

The effects of education interventions that are described in the preceding paragraph are short-term. They are valuable in fragile states where immediate results are critical in order to improve government’s legitimacy and effectiveness. This paper straddles analyses of short- and long-term effects of education. It looks at education programs designed with long-term benefits in mind through a lens of events and their shorter-term consequences.

It may be useful to provide a brief background on the long-term benefits of basic education. Social science research has shown that educating men and women enhances governance, strengthens civil society and builds legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> Improvements in the population’s health status is related to growth, and a growing body of research literature reveals a positive relationship between education, particularly girls’ education, and healthy families, prevention of HIV/AIDS, and women’s security, including reduced domestic violence, and their role in the family’s economy. Economists have established a correlation between education and economic growth, but a correlation is not a cause-and-effect relationship. Does economic growth lead to greater investment in education, or does more and better education stimulate economic growth? It’s probably a bit of both.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Gene Sperling and Barbara Herz (2004), “What Works in Girls’ Education?” Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

<sup>2</sup> The intellectual framework of the research on relationships between education and economic growth builds upon the economist’s understanding of people as an economic asset—human capital—and shows that increased investment in health, skills, and knowledge provides future returns to the economy through increases in labor productivity. Education has both “private good” and “public good” dimensions. Individuals with more education are likely to fare better than those with less education. And a more educated society is likely to have a more productive workforce and the benefits that come from economic growth. Education increases workers’ average earnings and productivity, and it also reduces the incidence of social problems such as drug abuse, crime, welfare dependency, and lack of access to medical care, all of which can weigh heavily on the economy. While the growth/education linkage appears strong, it is important to acknowledge that there are genuine debates about the policy implications of this linkage and about the direction of causality between education and economic growth. Some development policy analysts maintain that while there is a clear correlation between growth and school attainment, there may not be a causal relationship—growing countries may simply use a portion of their wealth to buy more schooling. Some also argue that the estimates of the effect of schooling on growth differ significantly from what would be expected from the highly positive microeconomic relationship between individual earnings and schooling—possibly reflecting the failure to use education in socially productive ways. In other words, the private gains may not translate into commensurate public gains.

## Types of Fragile States

USAID characterizes fragile states as those that lack the capacity and/or the willingness to deliver on their core functions. Fragility is associated with four different types of conditions:

- Deterioration;
- Post-conflict transition;
- Arrested development; and
- Early recovery.

The four cases in this study cover each type of conditions:

- Afghanistan, a state in a post-conflict situation since 2002;
- Guinea, a chronically fragile state, moving toward collapse;
- The Mindanao region of the Philippines, a region in arrested development; and
- Uganda, a state with a recent history of recovery.

The types are not neatly divisible, however, so some cases spill over into other categories. Guinea seems to fit best into the “deterioration” type, though the development of the education sector has also been “arrested” for the past decade. Uganda is clearly in “early recovery,” though at the beginning of this case history, it was in a “post-conflict transition.” Mindanao, in the Philippines, is a case of “arrested development,” though “internal conflict” is a critical factor. Afghanistan, our case of “post-conflict” was also in a state of “arrested development” for years prior to the most recent conflict.

USAID sponsored these case studies in an effort to apply the lessons they teach to recent advances in research on social service delivery in fragile states. It is important to note that all of the case studies contained in this report pre-date the service delivery research and do not easily lend themselves to questions pertaining to the role of education in mitigating fragility. Although the case studies detail how these activities responded to a variety of fragile environments in order to deliver quality education to children, we attempt to extrapolate lessons learned on investing in education as a means of enhancing legitimacy, and, thereby, reducing fragility.

## Questions of the Study

Each of the four case studies describes how the basic education sector—the government education system, communities, private entities, NGOS, and international agencies—adapted to a fragile environment. The cases are limited to the provision of basic education, because this has been the focus of most governments during the past 15 years.<sup>3</sup> Each study addresses the following questions:

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<sup>3</sup> The Scope of Work includes education for out-of-school youth as well as primary education. But as only one of the four cases has any significant program for out-of-school youth (Philippines), the study is limited to primary education.

- During the period of fragility, what were the predominant models of service delivery used to improve provision of basic education services: Central and/or local government? Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? Communities? International agencies? How did these change or evolve?
- Who were the key actors in the sector and what were the dynamics among reformers and spoilers?
- How did international agencies intervene or adapt?
- In what ways did the government revise policies and priorities in order to restore and improve education services?
- What changes developed in accountability relationships among learners, families and communities, service providers, and policy makers?

The study concludes with a summary of lessons for the international community about working within fragile states to revive or sustain basic education services. The fundamental set of trade-offs it addresses is the need to build government capacity and willingness to provide sustained basic education services, on the one hand, versus the urgent need to educate children, especially poor children, on the other.



## II. Afghanistan

This study looks at the delivery of basic education services in Afghanistan in 2002 through 2005. It describes how, during the first four years of relative peace, following 23 years of conflict, the international community and government set priorities for repairing the education system and began to resume the delivery of basic education services.

This case study is categorized, in the USAID/DCHA/CMM typology of fragile environments, as a post-conflict state. Because the United Nations was given authority by the international community to help Afghanistan establish a new government, UN and other international assistance agencies have had a prominent role in rebuilding the education sector. The United States government has also been an important player and has used a variety of strategies to help provide education services. Other bilateral and multilateral agencies have also provided assistance. This is an account of what we know to date about the effectiveness of strategies used by government and international agencies.

The Afghanistan story is still a tentative one; not enough time has passed to show whether the new government will demonstrate the will and capacity to provide on-going education services or how foreign interventions have affected its capacity.

### Historical Context<sup>4</sup>

The U.S.-led military intervention in Afghanistan marked the fourth phase in the country's long civil war. Prior to 1973 Afghanistan enjoyed many peaceful years as a monarchy under Mohammad Zahir Shah, who had come to power in 1933. Then in 1973, in a national struggle backed by competing interests of the United States and Soviet Union, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin Daoud Khan. Daoud could not hold competing factions together and was assassinated in 1978, when the first phase of civil war erupted, between the Parcham faction of the ruling party, which drew its support from urban, educated Pashtuns and other ethnic groups, and the Khalq faction, which had the support of educated rural Afghans, also predominantly Pashtun. (Pashtuns comprise the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and have dominated the government for centuries. Other major ethnic groups in Afghanistan include Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks.) Alarmed by the prospect that a disintegrating Afghanistan would threaten its security on its southern border, the Soviet Union airlifted thousands of troops into Kabul on December 27, 1979. The Khalq president was assassinated after Soviet intelligence forces took control of the government and installed Babrak Karmal, a Parchami, as president.

The Soviet occupation force of some 115,000 troops and the Karmal government sought to crush the uprisings with mass arrests, torture, and executions of dissidents, and aerial bombardments and executions in the countryside. These measures further expanded the resistance to the communist government in Kabul and fueled a flow of refugees out of the

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<sup>4</sup> This historical section is adapted from *Human Rights News* (October 2001), Backgrounder on Afghanistan: History of the War (<http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghan-bck1023.htm>).

country that soon reached 5 million out of a population of about 16 million.<sup>5</sup> Islamist organizations that became the heart of the resistance—and collectively became known as the Jihad fighters or Mujahidin (Freedom Fighters)—based themselves in Pakistan and Iran. Seeing the conflict as a Cold War battleground, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, in particular, provided massive support for the resistance, nearly all of it funneled through Pakistan.

Negotiations to end the war culminated in the 1988 Geneva Accords, whose centerpiece was an agreement by the Soviet Union to remove all its uniformed troops by February 1989. The communist government in Kabul held on to power through early 1992 while the United Nations tried in vain to assemble a transitional process acceptable to all the parties. In the aftermath of the failed agreement, the U.S. and its allies abandoned any further efforts toward a peace process. As the war dragged on, aid donor fatigue and the need to respond to other humanitarian crises left the assistance effort in Afghanistan chronically short.

The second phase of civil war began as scattered militias around the country joined forces in two loose and unstable alliances, the Northern Alliance of Tajiks and other northern ethnic groups and the Pashtun alliance, mostly of those in the southern part of the country. After the Soviets evacuated, the leaders selected to pave the way to a smooth election in six months began fighting among themselves and with others. The Northern Alliance forcefully supported Rabbani, a Tajik leader, who, in June 1992 became president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA), while Hikmatyar, a Pashtun leader, and his allies continued to bombard Kabul with rockets. Alliances continued to shift among the militia as fighting continued.

During this period, the rest of the country was carved up among the various factions, with many Mujahidin commanders establishing themselves as local warlords. Humanitarian agencies frequently found their offices stripped, their vehicles hijacked, and their staff threatened. It was against this background that the Taliban emerged and the third phase of civil war began. Former Mujahidin who were disillusioned with the chaos that had followed their victory became the nucleus of a movement that coalesced around Mullah Mohammad Omar, a former Mujahid from Qandahar province. The group, many of whom were madrasa (Islamic school) students, called themselves Taliban, meaning students. Many others who became core members of the group were commanders in other predominantly Pashtun parties and former Khalqi members. Their stated aims were to restore stability and enforce (their interpretation of) Islamic law.

By October 1994, the movement had attracted the support of Pakistan, which saw in the Taliban a way to secure trade routes to Central Asia and establish a government in Kabul friendly to its interests. In September 1996, the Taliban pushed the Northern leader Massoud out of Kabul, and the Northern Alliance was reconstituted in opposition to the Taliban.

In 1997, the Taliban renamed the country the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan; Mullah Omar assumed the title amir-ul momineen (commander of the faithful). In areas under their control, Taliban authorities enforced their version of Islamic law, enacting policies prohibiting women from working outside the home in activities other than health care, and requiring corporal punishment for those convicted of certain crimes. They prohibited women from attending universities and closed girls' schools in Kabul and other cities, although primary

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<sup>5</sup> In 1990, Afghanistan had 10 million refugees, the highest number of any country (UNHCR).

schools for girls continued to operate in many other areas of the country under Taliban control. The Taliban also enforced a strict dress code for women, and required men to have beards and to refrain from Western haircuts or dress. Fighting continued through 2001 in the northeast between Massoud's forces and the Taliban and in Kabul and other cities between the Taliban and other militia; combined with the effects of a severe drought across the country, the fighting drove thousands of civilians into relief camps and into Pakistan.

Following the attack of Al Qaeda on the United States on September 11, the U.S. attacked the Taliban and its foreign supporters as the protector of Osama bin Laden, and the fourth phase of war began in October and ended in November.

## **The Post-conflict Situation**

After 25 years of strife, the country had a defeated government, a ruined economy, and a wrecked physical and social infrastructure—in short, a failed state. Roads, businesses, homes, schools, clinics were either destroyed or badly neglected. Only small sections of urban areas had electrical power, and potable water was scarce. Every sector of the economy, including agriculture, energy, industry, and social services, was in dire need of rebuilding. Civil society institutions, including the parliament, the courts, much of the civil service, and most of the educational and health systems, had been destroyed.

A Human Development Report released in early 2005<sup>6</sup> ranked Afghanistan 173 out of 178 nations on the UNDP's 2004 Human Development Index. Life expectancy, at 44.5 years, is at least 20 years lower than in neighboring countries.

Years of discrimination and poverty had relegated Afghan women to some of the worst social indicators in the world. Poverty, malnutrition, exclusion from public life, rape, violence, poor health care, illiteracy and forced marriage are among their many human security concerns. A Gender Development Index calculated by the Report puts Afghanistan only above Niger and Burkina Faso and much below all of its neighbors. Maternal mortality rates are 60 times higher than in industrial countries. One out of five children dies before the age of five (among the highest rates in the world) from diseases that are 80 per cent preventable. An estimated one-third of the population suffers from anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. Some 40 per cent of the population in urban areas and 70 per cent in rural areas do not have safe water, and one in eight children die because of contaminated water. Since 1992, more than 300,000 children may have perished during the conflict.

The impact of the civil war on security has not dissipated. Political faction groups are still in power in many areas, with their own privatized security forces, outside of central government control. Physical violence by armed militias continues, as does torture by security forces, deadly attacks by Taliban, hostage taking, and street gangs. Afghans comprise the second largest number of refugees and IDPs in the world, after Palestinians. An estimated 3.4 million Afghans still remain outside the country and 200 thousand IDPs are in the southern and western sections. One positive development is that, since the fall of the Taliban, more than 1.8 million people have returned from Pakistan and 600 thousand from Iran. In addition, there were over 1 million IDPs in Afghanistan at the beginning of 2002, and now the majority of them have returned.

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<sup>6</sup> The following four paragraphs are based on that 2005 report.

The economy is recovering. Non-drug GDP rose to about \$4.05 billion in 2002, a yearly recovery of 25 to 30 percent. In 2002, agriculture made up 52 per cent of national output, with a value of about \$2.1 billion. Economic growth for 2003 was estimated at 16 percent. Over the next decade, non-drug GDP is expected to grow by 10 to 12 percent. Yet the opium economy equals 38.2 per cent of the country's official GDP, and Afghanistan is now the world's major producer of illegal narcotics, with some 76 percent of the supply. Anecdotal evidence suggests that economic growth so far has done little to alleviate inequality by income, gender or geography. A 2003 study found that the poorest 30 percent of the population receive only 9 percent of the national income, while the upper third receive 55 percent. One out of two Afghans can be classified as poor, and 20.4 per cent of the rural population consumes less than 2,070 kilocalories per day.

### **The State of Basic Education Services**

Before Afghanistan's war with the Soviet Union, government had provided education to all children and youth, in both rural and urban areas. With its centralized planning strategies, the Soviet-backed government made an effort to strengthen the education sector and introduce new systems and programs. While some of these innovations remained in place after the Soviets were sent home, upon the Taliban's defeat of its contenders, ultra-conservative values and threats to those who disobeyed their decrees shocked the system. By 2001, about 900 thousand students were in school, far fewer than in earlier years, especially girls and young women.

According to the Human Development Report, Afghanistan in early 2005 had "the worst education system in the world," and one of the lowest adult literacy rates, at just 28.7 percent of the population. Only Burundi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Sierra Leone fell behind. In some provinces, over 60 percent of children were not enrolled, and over 80 percent of girls did not attend school. Nearly 80 percent of the country's 6,900 schools were damaged or destroyed in fighting.

Other agencies report that in 2002 fewer than half of the teachers were high school graduates. Most used rote teaching methods and had not mastered the subject they were teaching. The teacher training system had totally collapsed, the management and policy development systems had broken down, and regular funding had stopped, leaving schools without textbooks and learning materials, teachers unpaid and schools unsupervised.

Although it was not much more than a shell, the structure of the government education systems that had been in place before the wars remained in place. This consisted of two ministries of education, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, which were responsible for education policies, programs, and services. The Ministry of Education had jurisdiction over primary and secondary school and primary teacher training colleges.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In late 2004, the Ministry of Education consolidated 22 departments into five divisions: Coordination and Control; Planning, International Relations, and Construction; Pedagogic Services (teacher training, curriculum, textbooks, publications, printing and distance education); Management Structures (personnel and administration); and specialized directorates such as primary education, secondary education, professional and vocational education, literacy, health, Islamic education, and sciences education.

The ministry barely functioned and could not manage the education system. It lacked the financial resources to implement programs, and it lacked technical expertise, because so many of its personnel who are still on the job had been detached from the international community and were still operating on 1980 knowledge. It also lacked information needed to manage schools: it did not have records of the actual numbers of staff working in the provincial offices, districts, and schools. The roles of education officers in the provinces and districts were no longer clear, and there was little if any coordination or communication among them.

As a result, most families had to rely on local initiatives in order to educate their children. International and local NGOs supported a small number of schools in some of the neediest communities, and teachers used whatever materials were available.

### **Eagerness for Schooling**

An important force moved the country toward increasing access to primary education. Anecdotal evidence that began to appear after the U.S. invasion showed a strong desire among communities for stability and, in particular, a return of children to school. Children living in awful circumstances and poorly paid and unprepared teachers were willing to go to school, where they sat in cramped tents on bare floors. Communities took adopted abandoned property or found borrowed facilities, including mosques. In one isolated village, for example, 160 boys and girls met in a mosque with one teacher; the community taxed itself 1 kilo of wheat per family to pay the teacher.

### **Rebuilding the Government**

Foreign powers had a huge vested interest in reconstructing the Afghan government and economy. They wanted to eliminate the treacherous conditions that had allowed terrorist cells to thrive in parts of the country. In December 2001, representatives of various Afghan factions met in Bonn, Germany, under the auspices of the United Nations to agree on how Afghanistan would be governed in the immediate term. They agreed on an interim power sharing arrangement, the creation of a new Constitution, and a calendar for elections. Following the Bonn Agreement, a loya jirga (supreme council) was convened in Kabul to appoint an interim president and high-level political leaders. The Afghan Interim Authority was inaugurated with a six-month mandate to be followed by a two-year Transitional Authority, after which presidential elections were to be held. In accordance with the agreement, the United Nations (UN) became a partner of government to help it re-establish structures, systems, and services.

The UN and other agencies poured not only money but also technical and material assistance into projects for which government is generally responsible, including education. The United States government was particularly determined to stabilize Afghanistan, and much of its effort was direct, outside of the UN.

### **Multiple Uncoordinated Initiatives in the Education Sector**

In relation to education, foreign agencies had diverse and sometimes conflicting goals.

- The UN agencies and NGOs wanted to provide education services as rightful entitlements to those who had gone without them for so long.

- The UN agencies and the bilateral and multilateral donors wanted to develop the capacity of government agencies to ensure the provision of services, including education.
- The U.S. Department of State, under close direction of the White House, wanted to demonstrate that reconstruction efforts were producing visible results, especially the provision of social services, including schools.
- U.S. agencies, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors, wanted to establish a democratic government; to move grass-roots leadership away from the warlords and other self-imposed leaders to elected leaders; one strategy here was to help communities set priorities and implement their choice of programs, education being one.
- The State Department wanted USAID to help rebuild the economic and social infrastructure—a goal that had added urgency as the economy began a rapid shift toward illegal opium production and trade; school buildings were seen as part of the infrastructure.
- The U.S. Department of Defense wanted to secure peace throughout the country, which entailed a strategy to “win hearts and minds.”

Among the strategies outlined to achieve these goals, only one engaged the Ministry of Education as the body responsible for direction and implementation. In the next section, we discuss the MOE-centered program. In the subsequent section, we look at the others.

## **MOE-centered Service Activities**

The most complex set of education activities took place under the direction of the Ministry of Education, with considerable support from external agencies. The goals and content of these activities evolved over time, within three discernable phases. The first phase began in mid-2002, with the appointment of an exceptionally strong minister of education. The next began around late 2003, as issues arose between the ministry and donors over priorities. The third phase was sharply demarcated soon after, in mid-2004, with a change in ministers and the beginning of the democratic selection of president and a legislature.

### **2002: A Strong Minister Implements a Shared Agenda**

Much of 2002 was devoted to emergency and relief efforts, which, by the end of the year were accompanied by a transition to reconstruction efforts. Community, clan, regional and national leaders began dialogue to re-build local and national government structures and services. Larger numbers of foreign staff arrived to carry out needs assessments, identify local partner organizations, hire staff and set up operations. Government ministries began the process of reconstruction and reform.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> VonHahmann, Gail (October 2005). “A Collaborative Model for Donor Funding in Post-Conflict Environments: TEP Afghanistan 2003-2005.” Kabul: Creative Associates International, Inc. (unpublished paper).

Between mid-2002 and mid-2004, under the Interim Authority and Transitional Authority governments, a strong minister of education led ministry staff and a collaborative group of donor representatives in the implementation of an agenda they all shared. Minister Mohammad Younis Qanooni joined the government as a prominent member of the Northern Alliance of Tajik and other northern groups of people who had challenged the Taliban for power following the retreat of the Soviets. He was a strong leader and politician, who found that his new position gave him opportunities for outreach to many people and to demonstrate that he was an able government minister. His priority was to get tangible items in place—classrooms, furniture, and textbooks.

In accordance with the Bonn agreement, the Minister of Education set up an internal Education Consultative Group, comprising the ministers of higher education, women's affairs, and labor and social affairs, as well as representatives of other ministries, including finance, and organizations such as the World Food Program and UNICEF. The Group was responsible for the donor coordination, NGO coordination, and technical support to the National Development Plan and National Development Budget. The Group was staffed by a Program Secretariat. It organized technical working groups to develop programs in higher education, curricula, teacher training, policy early childhood education, vocational education, literacy, and school construction. Each working group had a counterpart from one of the foreign technical assistance agencies. These groups did not function well, however, as ministry staff were reluctant to take initiative and lacked the skills to write credible proposals for donor funding.

As the UN agency appointed to work in education, UNICEF placed a lead advisor in the Secretariat. The minister chaired the secretariat and invited representatives of international agencies to participate regularly. These representatives, plus the minister's political advisors, helped him establish effective control of the ministry's development agenda. The ministry began to form agreements on policies and program priorities and to coordinate technical and financial assistance.

The minister and UNICEF made basic education a priority among the ministry's programs, and UNICEF staff members were embedded in the ministry as advisors and assistants. During 2002 and 2003, this agency dominated the donor community in the education sector. Other participants were the World Bank, USAID, DANIDA, and JICA.

### ***Narrowing Down a Broad Agenda***

What was the agenda of the ministry? Officially, the Education Program Secretariat identified three broad strategic areas for intervention:

- Expand access and raise the quality of primary and secondary education country-wide;
- Build a higher education system that responds to Afghanistan's reconstruction needs, creates new professional and income opportunities for Afghans, and meets international standards;
- Expand citizens' access to vocational and informal education, with special focus on improving livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations like widows and the disabled, returning refugees and internally displaced persons, demobilized soldiers and unemployed youth.

These comprehensive goals left out little. The first goal became the mandate of the Ministry of Education; the second was for the Ministry of Higher Education, and the third touched on responsibilities of several ministries, including the Ministry of Education. Within the MOE, however, a more focused agenda appeared in its “priority reform and restructuring process,” which zeroed in on school construction, teacher training, and curriculum development.<sup>9</sup> Among these three priorities, construction was top. The urgent need for new schools and for teacher training colleges was driven by the ministry’s Back-to-School campaign, kicked off in 2002.

### ***Back-to-School Campaign***

The minister was aware of the role that schools could play in bringing stability to the country and the political value of providing education. With technical help from UNICEF he launched a back-to-school campaign. As an organization that provides both emergency response as well as long-term assistance in stable communities, UNICEF was able to mobilize quickly, to help spread the word that schools would be open, and to get provisional teaching “kits” out to schools around the country, even during the winter months early in the year. UNICEF provided 10,000 temporary tent shelters for schools.

When schools began to reopen in 2002, young children flocked into the lower grades. The ministry and UNICEF had aimed to enroll 1.5 million children, but in 2002 more than 3 million enrolled in grades 1 through 12. Following a renewal of the campaign in 2003, enrollment increased to 4.2 million. Of these over 90 percent (nearly 4 million) were in primary schools, and 57 percent were in grades 1 and 2. This was by far the largest number of children in school in Afghanistan’s history. Girls’ enrollment was 34 percent of the total, exceeding the pre-Taliban period.<sup>10</sup>

To accommodate the rush of new pupils, the Ministry of Education projected the need for over 3,000 schools to be constructed or rehabilitated. An estimated 80 percent of school facilities had been damaged or destroyed, and most schools in Kabul lacked adequate physical facilities.

### ***Access Goals Compete with Quality and Equity Goals***

The back-to-school campaign was repeated at the opening of the school year in winter 2003, and UNICEF proposed to repeat it once more in 2004. The proposed National Development Budget<sup>11</sup> for 2004-05 directed 67 percent of the total proposed education funds to buildings and equipment and only 10.5 percent to curriculum and teacher development. And in the allocation to curriculum and teacher development, most funds were for teacher training facilities; very little money was reserved for teacher training or training materials.

The minister and some of his UN advisors began to question the continuing near exclusive focus on school construction when other components of education services remained weak.

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank Equip project.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, Technical Annex to Equip Project Approval Document, July 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Afghanistan, *Submission for the SY 1383-1385, National Development Budget*, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, 2004.



The quality of schooling was poor. The main problem was a shortage of about 40 thousand teachers and an even greater shortage of competent teachers.

Not enough attention was being given to the inequitable distribution of education resources. In a few of the largest cities, the enrollment rate was high for both boys and girls; in Kabul 92 percent of school-age boys and 81 percent of school-age girls were enrolled in school. Yet net enrollment rates were less than 20 percent in three provinces, and the net enrollment rate for girls was as low as 1 percent in a few.

Inextricably related to both these problems was the near collapse of the ministry MOE structure and systems outside of headquarters. Each province has an education office responsible for implementing national policies and administering finances allocated by the central government. These Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) are responsible for staffing schools and paying, monitoring, and supervising teachers; they are accountable to both the provincial governors and the central ministry of education. Each PED managed District Education Departments (DEDs), of which there are about 360 at the time.

In 2002, PEDs and DEDs were staffed largely by men who had been selected by cronies and hung on to their jobs for decades yet had been cut off from headquarters. The ministry had difficulty replacing them with qualified people, not only because qualified people were in short supply but also because of the tenacity of patronage practices. PED officials paid teachers from funds sent by the Ministry of Finance to the province. While the Ministry of Education and PEDs had little influence over the funds, they were able to influence who got paid. They had no capacity to support or monitor teachers.

### ***UNICEF's Assistance in Improving Quality***

In addition to managing the back-to-school campaigns, UNICEF helped the ministry begin to improve the quality and equity of primary schooling. It contracted with the Teachers' College of Columbia University's for technical assistance. TCCU had assisted the Ministry of Education between 1954 and 1978 under contract with USAID and its predecessor agencies. In that pre-war era it had trained high school teachers, developed a Faculty of Education at Kabul University, and developed curricula for all the primary schools of Afghanistan.

In 2002, under contract to UNICEF, TCCU helped teams of Afghan teacher educators develop national standards and a framework for the primary school curriculum, which became the basis for a teacher training curriculum. The new standards and curriculum required a radical departure from past teaching practice. UNICEF also sponsored a national in-service training for 50,000 teachers. It organized a mobile teacher training program, sending caravans to remote clusters of schools and using a cascade training model to give teachers brief sessions in basic pedagogy.

The back-to-school campaign relied to some extent to on provincial education offices to carry the message that schools would be in session and to get teachers back to school. This was a difficult task, considering the broken down state of provincial offices. UNICEF provided them with some support, including new furniture for the offices.

TCCU also worked with the ministry to establish a National Academy of Education, intended to be responsible for education policy that encompassed both ministries of education. But the highly politicized leadership of that council, among other factors, kept it from becoming a

significant force in the sector. TCCU focused instead on textbook development, curriculum reform, and teaching standards.

### **Late 2003: Growing Disagreement on Priorities: A New Focus**

In late 2003, there was internal discussion in UNICEF as to whether it should push for another back-to-school campaign in 2004. Some wanted to continue what had proven to be a successful activity with high, positive visibility for the ministry as well as UNICEF. The dramatic rise in school enrollment was one of the most proclaimed achievements of reconstruction in Afghanistan. Others wanted to shift more resources to improving quality, particularly curriculum reform and teacher training, and to making schools more attractive to girls.

Although the minister himself favored giving more attention to improving school quality before continuing to expand access, UNICEF leadership was reluctant to let go of the back-to-school campaign. Simultaneously, UNICEF experienced a significant drop in funding.<sup>12</sup> As a result, UNICEF's support for teacher training and curricula and textbook development diminished throughout 2004, and TCCU support was not renewed after the initial contract. The minister turned to other donor agencies for support for his agenda, particularly the World Bank. He transformed the Program Secretariat into a Grants Management Unit, with a ministry official in charge, and the Consulting Group's influence as an overarching body diminished.

### ***The Teacher Education Program (TEP)***

Prior to autumn of 2003 several large international agencies were embarked upon separate plans to improve teacher education in Afghanistan. In addition to UNICEF's support for emergency teacher training, other donor agencies and NGOs had been implementing teacher-training projects outside the MOE system.

It was not until that autumn that government and donors begin to collaborate on a strategy for rebuilding the teacher training system. The Teacher Training Department in the ministry was proving to be under capable leadership, and donor agencies were attracted to working more closely with that department. In September the MOE, MOHE, NGOs and donors, with support from UNICEF, USAID, the World Bank and DANIDA, organized a workshop with all stakeholders to plan a more coordinated approach to teacher training and support. The workshop led to the formation of a committee tasked with developing the Teacher Education Program.

The TEP began as an interim system for teacher training that allowed the ministry and international agencies to collaborate and share responsibility. The ministry established a TEP secretariat and appointed a TEP manager, a staff member of the Teacher Training Department, who shared oversight of secretariat activities with a consultant hired by the external agencies, who served as a mentor to the TEP manager. The secretariat staff were hired by the ministry, paid by the external agencies, and supervised by the TEP consultant and the TEP manager. The secretariat was located in a ministry facility but not in the

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<sup>12</sup> Except for some Swedish support earmarked for girls' education.

ministry proper. The TEP also set up an Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives of the international agencies supporting teacher training.

The agenda for TEP was to reform pre-service training, establish a new system of in-service training, and develop a system of teacher assessment and evaluation. The Teacher Training Department began to integrate plans and activities initiated by the TEP into its own structure and plans, which were remnants of the pre-war years and, except for external assistance from TEP partners, without resources.

The first order of business for the department was to ensure that all primary and secondary teachers in the country (approximately 110,000) were included in an initial in-service training program on basic pedagogical methods. To do this, it followed the lead of a USAID project, which was developing training modules to help teachers improve their basic teaching skills.

Minister Qanooni also pursued other means of assisting teachers. In March 2004 the Minister of Education approved a significant increase in teachers' base salaries to bring them in line with other civil servant staff.<sup>13</sup>

### **Mid-2004: Changes in Minister and Donor Collaboration**

2004 was an important year for Afghanistan, as presidential elections took place in September. The campaign leading to these elections had significant repercussions in the education sector. In addition, a waning of UNICEF support and new players in the donor community brought about changes in the sector's programs and priorities.

#### ***Presidential Campaign Elections and a New Minister***

Initially Qanooni had pledged his support to Karzai, the Pashtun who had been selected to lead the Transitional Authority. But a sudden switch in Karzai's choice of a vice-presidential candidate, perceived as an offense by the Northern Alliance, caused Qanooni to announce his own candidacy for president. Thus in summer 2004 he resigned his post as minister, and Karzai appointed a new minister of education.<sup>14</sup> The new minister had a short tenure and was replaced in January 2005 by the man who, one year later, still held the post.

The new minister, Noor Mohammad Qarqin, was a Turkman with little experience in leadership positions in government and none in education. Upon taking his new post, he did not appear to have either a political agenda or a technical one. He was not used to working with donor agencies and had to learn on-the-job how to negotiate with them. He also worked under the cloud of rumor that he would soon be replaced. Under these circumstances, power within the ministry leaked to his two deputies, both of whom were ambitious rivals and made work difficult for the international agencies, which sometimes had to get approval for actions from one or both, as well as the minister.

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<sup>13</sup> Spink, Jeaniene, Nazar Mohammad Karyar, and Zuhail Atmar (August 2004). *Teacher Education and Professional Development in Afghanistan: Situational Analysis*. Kabul: Afghanistan Research & Evaluation Unit.

<sup>14</sup> After the election of Karzai, Qanooni did not wish to return to the Ministry of Education. Instead, he ran successfully for parliament and in late 2005 became the head of parliament.

Qarqin, with encouragement from donors, began trying to decentralize decision-making within headquarters and thus to strengthen the authority of department heads vis-à-vis his deputies. But sensing the insecurity of his tenure, department heads and others were reluctant to make decisions that may be rejected—if not by the current minister then by his yet-to-be-identified successor. This situation dampened the momentum of the ministry’s leadership in reforming the education system.

### ***Shifts in the Donors’ Agendas***

Following the change of ministers, donor agendas began to shift as well. In 2004, UNICEF gave its strong support to the TEP, but as its funds dwindled, so did its influence. The World Bank and USAID came to capture more of the ministry’s attention.

In 2003, the World Bank was designing a large grant that supported primary school teacher training, school construction, and building the capacity of provincial and district education staffs.<sup>15</sup> Responding to the agenda of Minister Qanooni, the project funded TEP activities and construction of primary teachers’ colleges. In the conventional mode of World Bank assistance, the project provided a minimum of technical support, leaving the ministry to purchase its own expertise.

USAID, whose initial technical assistance project<sup>16</sup> was managed outside the education system, was an early supporter of TEP. In 2004 USAID added components to its APEP project to increase support to building ministry capacity in several departments and particularly to the TEP; it also began to develop a series of new education projects, one of which was to support TEP and its institutional environment—the Teacher Training Department and, more broadly, policy reforms that touched upon teachers. USAID also began to support the embedding of technical advisors within the ministry.

The Japanese JICA supported school construction and the development of teachers’ guides to the new curriculum. The Danish agency DANIDA also provided budgetary support for the ministry, with some funds directed to supporting TEP activities; it printed parts of the new primary curriculum.

### ***Changes in the Locus of Collaboration***

By late 2003, the locus of collaboration between the ministry and donor agencies had been repositioned several times. The National Academy of Education, which had been largely the creation of TCCU support, had become dormant. The Secretariat had seen much turnover in its membership and was no longer the inspired leadership group it had once been. Corrupt management of the Grants Management Unit kept donors at an arm’s length. The TEP had become the predominant multi-stakeholder forum and a TEP secretariat was formally established. A TEP manager and technical advisor were hired and an administrative staff appointed, with assistance from USAID and the World Bank. The TEP’s scope, however, was limited to teacher development; it was situated within the ministry’s Teacher Training

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<sup>15</sup> This project, which was approved in July 2004, followed a Bank project that provided emergency support for construction, which encountered considerable procurement and disbursement delays due to a weak administrative capacity of the Ministry of Education.

<sup>16</sup> Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) is discussed in a subsequent section.

Department, and could not replace the Consultative Group as an overarching consultative body.

## 2005

As Qarqin's reign continued, the new minister became more familiar with what was needed in the sector to improve education and how to work with international agencies. While Qarqin, like Qanooni, exhibited good will in improving education, his ability to manage the ministry and to negotiate with donors slowed down the delivery of education services. The ministry's capacity during his tenure grew more slowly than during Qanooni's.

### **Capacity Problems**

Programs continued to be plagued by infighting among Qarqin's staff and by the general expectation, which dated almost from his appointment, that he would soon be replaced. Anticipation of his replacement grew stronger as parliamentary elections approached in September 2005, but no change was made that year. As the period of emergency response evolved into a period of reconstruction, other weaknesses in the ministry became more apparent: poor management and shattered systems.

### **Shattered Systems**

At present the Ministry of Education's capacity still depends on the strengths of individual civil servants in leadership positions. Both ministers of education learned some of the technical dimensions of education on the job, and both progressed notably in their understanding of the sector. But, as the short history since 2002 reveals, a strong leader sets priorities and harnesses resources to implement them; a weak leader sets the stage for internal struggles and blockage of progress. The absence of functioning systems has, under weak leadership, undermined the ministry's capacity to improve education. Four examples illustrate the problem: transferring funds, employing qualified staff, deploying teachers, and, above all, building schools.

**Transferring Funds.** The TEP, which conducts teacher training at the provincial level, expects Provincial Education Departments to pay the expenses of training workshops. For this to happen, a functioning mechanism between the central office of the Ministry of Finance and provincial office (*mustofiat*) was needed to transfer funds to provinces for teacher training and support activities. The new Constitution prohibited separate bank accounts for ministries. All funds had to be administered through the central bank. Prior to the TEP, this system had not been put into practice. Many *mustofees* (the provincial agent of the Ministry of Finance) were known to take their cut of teachers' salaries and had a strong interest in remaining in control of all provincial financial transactions.

The World Bank had given funds to the ministry for training workshops, but the government could not channel funds to the PED for their disbursement. TEP had to establish procedures for getting funds, which it did through a pilot run by the World Bank, providing training to finance ministry and central bank staff in Kabul and to provincial-level staff. The relationship thus developed in spring 2005 between the *mustofiat* and the PED for disbursement of development funds was unique.

***Employing Qualified Staff.*** Many ministry staff members hold their office by virtue of longevity or patronage. As early as 2002 international agencies began working with the government to install transitional systems for employing staff based on qualifications, not political or personal influence. These included a Lateral Entry Program to permit ministries to employ short-term qualified staff and a Priority Reconstruction and Reform (PRR) plan, which guided each government ministry through a process to realign departmental structures and functions, designate a staffing structure, prepare specific job descriptions, and recruit and place staff. While the PRR was successfully implemented in other ministries, in the education sector it is still challenged by old practices, and there have been notable instances of critical posts held onto by unqualified individuals with strong political friends or relatives. Change is coming slowly within central offices, but in most provincial and district offices, it has not been felt.

***Teacher Deployment.*** The ministry made a good effort to attract teachers to rural areas by offering incentives such as pay bonuses and higher salaries. But without functioning payroll systems and stable prices of food, utilities, and housing, these incentives offer nothing.

***School Construction.*** This is where there is money to be made in the education sector. Without working systems of standards and inspection, construction contracts offer lucrative opportunities for both parties in the contract. When the ministry first began receiving external funding for construction, contracts were signed without sufficient approvals, and construction took place without supervision or inspection by government agents. Much money was wasted and many schools were shoddily built. By early 2005 the ministry had begun to put systems in place to gain control over this problem. Progress was made in coordinating building standards and a permit process, but not enough resources were put into monitoring or infrastructure development. The ministry's plan for a regional management system did not get funding or support, due largely to USAID's decision not to coordinate construction with the ministry.

### **Poor Management**

Officials at every level of the ministry lack even basic management skills. Systems for calendaring meetings are ignored, so much time is wasted in waiting rooms or in meetings where the chairperson is called away mid-meeting. Decisions of even minor importance require top-level approval, yet there is no system in place for sending documents requiring signature to and from those authorized to approve. The TEP was hampered by the absence of filing systems, records of meetings, and interpreters for meetings. Ministry offices did not have copying facilities, internet access or email usage. Communication within and among scores of units and departments and with outside agencies still rely on hand-carried notes.

Within the TEP, procedures for administrative tasks are being developed and documentation of and training in these procedures can be supported. The TEP secretariat staff members have received on-the-job training in these skills and have offered similar training to other ministry staff, especially during workshops for provincial education officers.<sup>17</sup>

Complex management skills are critically absent. Without systematic means of setting priorities, approving agendas, and making decisions, these are left to the minister's own preferences and those of his advisors. International agencies, whose procedures often require engagement of government officials in project designs, find that they must manage the design process in an upside down manner, rather than negotiating within a framework managed by the ministry.

### **Capacity Growth**

Despite the problems describe above, some progress is observable in the ministry's programs, particularly in the Teacher Training Department.

### **Persistence of TEP**

While the TEP benefited during 2003 and 2004 from growing support from USAID and other international agencies, in 2005 it began to feel the pain inflicted by infighting in the ministry. The TEP, however, had enough allies within the ministry and donor agencies to resist. Progress in training teachers was slowed down but not halted. Although the international agencies had agreed with the ministry to fully incorporate the TEP into the Teacher Training Department by 2006, the turmoil and consequent slowdown set back this handover. In addition, the director of the TTD retired from his post, and no replacement was appointed immediately.

As of early 2006, TEP still operated as an autonomous program, with its own staff, though in close working relationship with the ministry. The USAID-supported project staff described the TEP as an interim system, which provided for the delivery of services at the same time it build the capacity of teacher training staff and other ministry officials whose work related to teacher training. The TEP had an Advisory Committee, secretariat, and management team, each with ministry participants but driven by external agencies.

This and other interim systems, referred to by some of the APEP staff as "side roads," did not appear overnight. The collaboration that they fostered demanded discussion, clarifications on those discussions, meticulous planning and willingness on the part of ministry officials, consultants, local staff, donors and implementing organizations to take risks. Since they were seen as "interim," however, participants were assured that these systems were expected to evolve.

### **Provincial Education Departments**

Provincial Education Departments were key pins in the emerging system of teacher training, yet most lacked the capacity to take on that responsibility. In 2005, the TEP brought officials from the PEDs to Kabul to orient them to the system and to train them in finance and

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<sup>17</sup> VonHahmann, op. cit.

administrative tasks. This training would also help them carry out other responsibilities in line with teacher support.

### **Ministry Reconsiders Its Role**

According to the World Bank, the Ministry of Education’s view of its role in the sector has evolved since 2002. In earlier years, probably based on the centralized model supported by the Soviets, ministry staff intended to provide “vertical” services, including the production and distribution of textbooks and classroom furniture. Listening to advice from the international community, it is now focusing more on policy formulation and regulating and monitoring service delivery by others, including not only equipment and supplies but also teaching and school management services provided by NGOs and private organizations.<sup>18</sup> While this observation may be overly optimistic, it does appear that the current minister has gained a more sophisticated understanding of what is required to provide quality education. Negotiations with donors are no longer over “shopping lists,” but include discussions of systemic changes needed to improve service delivery.<sup>19</sup>

### **Initiatives Outside of the MOE**

In the previous section we described interventions that were led by—or at least engaged—the ministry. Other interventions took place outside the ministry.

In education as well as in other sectors, the response to Afghanistan’s post-conflict crisis included a diverse range of objectives and strategies to meet them. NGOs, whose tenure long preceded the U.S. invasion in 2001, provided humanitarian assistance as well as reconstruction aid. The U.S. Department of State came in with political objectives that reached far beyond the usual relationship between ministries of foreign affairs, and the U.S. Department of Defense was highly visible in its effort to reach security objectives. Finally, the World Bank initiated an Afghan government program to strengthen community-level reconstruction, which entailed education among other services.

### **USAID and NGOs: Direct Provision of Services**

USAID began its work in the education sector in 2002 with a mandate to provide education to children who had been denied access to schooling during the war years. While USAID did not work directly with schools, it did bypass central ministry offices to work at the local level training primary school teachers—a service normally provided by government. International NGOs, in contrast, worked directly with schools; they also gathered teachers together for training and support activities.

### ***USAID’s Primary Education Project***

The largest and probably most immediately effective project for delivering education services was undertaken by USAID and its contractors to provide an accelerated-learning program of primary education to children who had missed years of schooling. The Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) was initially taken with minimum

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<sup>18</sup> World Bank Equip proposal, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with anonymous source (whom I will protect even if called before a grand jury).



engagement of the Ministry of Education. When the project was conceived by USAID in early 2002, there was no functioning ministry of education, and USAID's mandate was to help children get back into school, not to revive the ministry. USAID's normal funding procedures also put it at a distance from the ministry's operations, as funds did not flow through the ministry. The project began in January 2003; by December 2005 it had reached 170 thousand students in accelerated-learning classes.

The APEP project also implemented a series of radio broadcasts for teachers, which was based on the same principles and lessons as the face-to-face teacher training program. In 2003 Radio Teacher Training was launched in three provinces and, in 2004, expanded to 17 provinces. By 2005, approximately 10,000 teachers had participated in face-to-face training, and an estimated 70 thousand tuned in to radio broadcasts. In addition, APEP paid for the printing and distribution of textbooks to primary schools.

### ***International NGOs***

About half a dozen international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worked directly with schools in some of the most inaccessible communities. These included CARE, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, among others. Some of their beneficiaries were government schools that had been abandoned as the system collapsed. Others were one-classroom home-based schools or larger community schools, which combined several home schools and, in some cases, using existing community buildings or something built to house the school; their teachers were paid something by the community and/or by an NGO.<sup>20</sup>

The ministry recognized the importance of home-based and community schools, though it did not have the resources to give them much support. While the ministry had little interaction with NGOs, it welcomed their support to these schools. The scale of NGO support, however, was comparatively small. The combined support of all NGOs probably reached about as many students as did APEP.

In 2005, the international NGOs began to participate in TEP committees so became an active part of that collaboration.

### **U.S. Government: School Construction**

Unlike the international assistance given to most fragile states, assistance to Afghanistan was not delegated to the development agencies. The U.S. government had a strong interest in restoring infrastructure and services. The U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan was closely tied to the administration, which directed the reconstruction agenda. Building schools and clinics, in addition to roads, was high on the list of priorities.

U.S. efforts were coordinated in Washington through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Office, a technical group that reported through a ladder of committees to the President. The U.S. embassy was in daily communication with the top level committees. The embassy's orders were to demonstrate visible progress in rebuilding infrastructure, which would ensure Afghans that their government was in control and foreigners that the Taliban and its terrorist

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<sup>20</sup> Other small schools were the madrasahs, held in mosques and taught by imams, but NGOs did not usually support these.

allies were being defeated. But the U.S. embassy was not able to get the desired financial commitment from other governments to support its rebuilding effort. The Ministry of Education's request for eight thousand new schools was met by promises among foreign governments to build only nine hundred, and the U.S. government was left with a large financial commitment to school construction.

The strategy of the U.S. embassy, closely monitored by the Washington-based groups, was to contract with a U.S. construction company to build the schools and clinics (along with roads and other infrastructure projects). Initially the contractor chose not to work through the ministry of education to identify sites for schools, design the school buildings, hire local builders, or monitor construction. These kinds of negotiations were viewed as time-consuming and avoidable. In fact, the contractor's decision resulted in delays so long that by the end of 2003, when the initial lot of 40 schools and clinics were to have been completed; only one was ready. The contractor was bogged down "on the ground," where approval of building sites was not forthcoming, local building contractors proved incompetent and pervasive corruption and a lack of monitoring made it nearly impossible to progress.

The strategy was faulted for failing to establish good relationships between the builders and the communities before commencing construction. In contrast, NGOs did not face these issues because they did work closely with communities. NGOs, however, were not interested in high visibility; the embassy, its technical assistance agency USAID, and its implementing contractual partner were under relentless pressure to show quick results. In 2004 USAID terminated its contract with the U.S. construction group and issued five smaller contracts with organizations that had already developed working relationships with Afghan government agencies.<sup>21</sup>

USAID had also asked its contractor to help build construction-management capacity of the ministry of education (as well as public works, irrigation, and health), but this effort fell flat and was discontinued in June 2004.

As time went on, the Afghans began to object to the large sums of money being spent directly on school construction by the U.S. government. Circumventing government agencies responsible for construction, they said, wasted money and curtailed local institutional development by luring competent agents away from government to vastly higher paying jobs with foreign construction firms.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The details of this story, as reported by the GAO in 2003 are as follows: In the initial infrastructure contract, USAID included the construction or rehabilitation of 40 schools and clinics as an illustrative target to be achieved by the end of 2003, with an additional 60 buildings to be completed by the end of 2004. The actual job orders signed in July 2003 show that the [contractor] agreed to complete 55 schools and 78 clinics. By the end of September 2003, only one building was completed. USAID reduced the [contractor's] responsibility to 105 buildings and in May 2004 provided grants to five additional organizations, with the goal of rehabilitating or constructing a total of 774 buildings by October 2004. In mid-2004, owing to, among other things, the education and health ministries' insistence on producing new as opposed to refurbished buildings and a lack of progress by all implementing partners, USAID, according to grant and contract documentation, reduced its expectations to about 530 buildings and extended the completion deadline to December 2004. By the end of fiscal year 2004, the implementing partners reported having refurbished 77 buildings and substantially completed new construction of 23 buildings.

<sup>22</sup> See BBC report, "The battle to rebuild Afghanistan," February 2006, by Toby Poston.

## Quick-response Projects to Win Hearts and Minds

A third strategy to build schools that took place outside the Ministry of Education was that of quick response projects to “win hearts and minds.” These projects aimed to provide visible benefits to rural communities and to facilitate the transition to longer-term reconstruction programs. They implemented small-scale, quick-impact projects, including school reconstruction as well as reconstruction of clinics, bridges, irrigation channels, and other locally determined projects.

This strategy was shared by two organizations whose fundamental objectives were quite diverse. The U.S. Department of Defense’s Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were intended to advance U.S. military goals through building goodwill among the people and turning them against insurgents. The National Solidarity Program was a creation of the World Bank, the Afghan government, and JICA. Its aim was to help engage people with their local governments and to see visible support to their communities from government.<sup>23</sup>

The projects of these organizations were not intended to build capacity but rather to persuade people, first, that their new government could respond to their urgent needs and, second, that it trusted communities to reach agreement on those needs and share in meeting them. In other words, the projects were expected to express government’s will if not its capacity to provide education services.

### **PRT Projects**

In late 2002, the Department of Defense transformed a small military humanitarian program into a growing number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which comprised Civil Affairs soldiers, a force protection unit, and representatives of U.S. government civilian agencies: State, USAID, and the Department of Agriculture. PRTs hired local contractors to construct schools, clinics, wells, and other small village improvement projects. These low-cost projects were financed by Defense and State Department funds. As revealed in a study by the U.S. Institute of Peace, the PRT projects faced the same problems as the U.S. government/USAID construction project did.

*Rapid turnover among personnel, pressure from senior military authorities to demonstrate progress, and limited knowledge of local conditions often resulted in the hasty construction of buildings without reference to the Afghan government’s capacity to support these activities. Schools were built without teachers and clinics without doctors. With few, if any, technical criteria, some of the construction was substandard.*<sup>24</sup>

When the PRTs were established, the NGO community launched criticisms based on projected problems. They contended that the local people would confuse humanitarian efforts with military ones, jeopardizing the safety of humanitarian personnel. NGO personnel also

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<sup>23</sup> USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) also employed this strategy to help restore confidence in post-conflict governments, but there is little information on its school reconstruction projects, which were not a main focus of the Afghanistan program.

<sup>24</sup> Perito, Robert M., “The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Lessons Identified.” Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, Special Report 152.

argued, presciently, as it turned out, that the military did not understand the development process, and building schools without either the full compliment of education inputs, including community support, would not result in effective schools. PRT projects “often competed or conflicted with NGO projects, undermining relationships developed with Afghan communities. PRT projects were funded completely, while NGOs normally required Afghan communities to contribute materials.”<sup>25</sup> Neither the NGOs nor the PRT staffs were eager to work with one another.

By 2005, internal evaluations, public criticism, and the arrival of USAID representatives on the PRT teams had begun a shift toward a more thoughtful and coordinated approach to school reconstruction, though the PRT efforts remained far outside the Ministry of Education, and their school-construction projects continued to be criticized.

### ***The National Solidarity Program***

The National Solidarity Program gives technical assistance and grants to rural communities that plan reconstruction or development projects which they will manage themselves through a democratic process. The project is expected to build a foundation for democratic local governance of Community Development Councils. School reconstruction was undertaken by some communities, though there are no formal reports on the success of these projects in improving access to or the quality of education. The strategy is interesting, nevertheless, because of its strong intent to give people a voice in their community affairs, including education. The NSP was expected to give communities experience in making decisions about use of their resources and, to some extent, to prepare them for participation in local elections.

### **Slow Movement Towards Coordination and Cooperation**

For the most part, the education activities that began outside the Ministry of Education have not been merged into the ministry’s program. The exception was USAID’s APEP, which began working closely with the Teacher Training Department on the TEP and building the ministry’s capacity in strategic planning and management. USAID followed APEP with a basic education program centered on support to the TTD. Even within the U.S. government, there was little movement toward cooperation among its agencies in basic education. The exceptions were efforts to improve communication between USAID representatives on the PRTs and its education staff. And USAID intensified its cooperation with the international NGOs, helping to bring closer together their independent support of schools with efforts to build the capacity of provincial and district MOE offices.

### **Lessons Learned**

Though brief, the post-conflict experience in basic education in Afghanistan has taught some lessons. It is an interesting case of competing approaches to school construction, both through and outside of government. It shows that good intentions on the part of ministry leadership are not enough without some capacity to manage resources. It illustrates the ministry cannot deliver education services without the cooperation of other government

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

agencies and highlights the difficulty of holding ministry officials accountable to their superiors when the state is fragile.

### **Service Delivery Versus Capacity Building**

Both the ministry and international assistance agencies defined the urgent needs of the education sector as classrooms, trained teachers, and curriculum and textbooks. To some extent, international agencies helped the ministry rebuild its capacity to provide these inputs, particularly curriculum and textbooks and teacher training. At the same time, some of these agencies worked outside the ministry to build classrooms. Two sets of lessons about service delivery are especially enlightening, one derived from experience with classroom instruction, the other from the TEP.

#### ***Classroom Construction***

The events related to classroom construction are particularly instructive. In the abstract, the advantage of constructing classrooms without working through the ministry is that classrooms are built expeditiously and ready for use sooner than they would be otherwise, due to bureaucratic delays. In reality, foreign construction contractors found it impossible to build classrooms without negotiating with the ministry. Permits for land use, adherence to construction standards, school staffing and furnishing, community cooperation—all proved to be inextricable steps in the process, and without cooperation of the ministry, much more difficult to take. What seemed like time saved upfront by circumventing ministry procedures turned out to be time wasted later on.

#### ***TEP Experience***<sup>26</sup>

A second instructive episode was the development of the Teacher Education Program. The TEP was designed as a transitional strategy, bridging the gap between completely externally driven projects and the ministry's taking full responsibility for planning and management of operations. It was complicated by the presence—not unusual—of multiple international agencies giving support to the ministry, each with its own mandate, constraints. Collaborative educational programming in such a volatile environment requires flexibility in design, a tolerance in management style and an extra margin for risk.

The TEP experience offered lessons in structures and practices that work effectively in the transition phase. These include temporary structures, shared decision-making processes, flexibility in funding, and staffing with education generalists.

**Temporary Structures.** The TEP Secretariat is an example of a temporary structure that functions like a side road while long-term systems are put in place. (When roads are constructed the engineers plan to have a temporary road that parallels the road under construction. This road may remain in use after the main road is built but it is not intended to substitute for the main road.) This would create duplicate or parallel systems and that is not the intent.

**Shared Decision-making.** The TEP Advisory Committee was the forum in which international agencies supporting teacher training could collaborate with each other and work

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<sup>26</sup> This section is adapted from VonHahmann, op. cit.

in a coordinated way with the ministry. The committee made an effort to communicate in a manner that promoted shared decision-making. It took into account the inevitable turnover among donor representatives and made clear its values of open communications and follow-through on commitments.

**Flexibility in Funding.** Flexibility in funding ranged from adjusting a line item to allow for larger expenditures than anticipated to amending contracts to allow for a major added initiative. Flexible funding included maintaining a firmly accountable system while being able to handle unanticipated expenditures.

**Staffing with Education Generalists.** Because the transition phase is characterized by flux and unexpected demands, international agencies are most effective when those hired to implement projects are generalists able to guide a range of technical tasks. In Afghanistan, consultants who were hired to produce training materials were also needed to manage support staff. Consultants who were hired to manage also helped design lesson plans.

Using these mechanisms, international agencies were able to help the ministry build structures and systems as they—the agencies—took the lead in delivering services. The agencies began to help the ministry build structures and develop systems and procedures even during the emergency phase, knowing that these would change but that officials would benefit from practice in their development. The officials learned by doing.

The TEP transitional strategy was seen as a five-year program, anticipating that the ministry would not assume full responsibility for managing teacher education for twenty years. It gave the international agencies some autonomy in funding, staffing, planning, and implementation but it also engaged the ministry in the process and ensured that the program was in line with ministry policies. This has proven, so far, to be an effective strategy for handing over responsibility to the ministry as it becomes capable of taking charge.

## **Will and Capacity**

The Ministry of Education has demonstrated the will to deliver education services, but it has been incapacitated by inconsistencies in leadership and a breakdown in systems needed to support the development and implementation of policies. Only two ministers of education have had tenure of longer than a year (two others were in office for less than six months). Neither of the long-term ministers is an educator, but one has had considerably more political and ministerial experience than the other. Both seem dedicated to doing their job well and improving education services. The biggest difference experienced by international assistance agency representatives in working with the two ministers is that the strong leadership of the veteran minister provided a unified voice in policy-making, which facilitated negotiations between the ministry and aid agencies on the latter's projects. Under the weaker leadership of the more recent minister, power struggles inhibit decision-making among those in the lower ranks, who fear reprisal if they come into conflict with one or the other. While this may not dampen their will to do their jobs and deliver services, it forces them to consider their own survival first.

What is missing are the systems and processes that facilitate decision-making throughout the ranks and make the entire ministry less dependent on the quality of leadership at the top. As described above, the TEP and other aid agency activities have begun to help the ministry rebuild these systems at the same time as they play a strong role in delivering services.

## **Impact of Education Projects on Other Branches of Government**

The TEP, with the concurrence of the ministry, attempted to decentralize teacher training activities and authorize Provincial Education Departments to authorize payments for workshop expenses. This required the cooperation of other branches of government: the Ministry of Finance and its provincial agent, the *mustofiat*. Although getting this cooperation took time and demanded persistence on the part of international partners, the result was a systematic procedure involving the education ministry, the finance, ministry, and local government agents. This is a specific instance of how the Ministry of Education's delivery of services depends on and has an effect on broader government capacity and will.

## **Accountability**

The Teacher Education Program (TEP) introduced a number of processes to improve accountability. Regular meetings of the Advisory Committee and the secretariat staff helped keep track of assignments; in particular, TEP encouraged the practice of written summaries of meetings, translated and shared with stakeholders. It created a reporting schedule and assigned reporting tasks. To strengthen accountability to a broader group of stakeholders, external to the central offices of the ministry, the TEP scheduled quarterly or more frequent roundtables, seminars, and workshops, and it began to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for its teacher training activities. Extending beyond teacher training, it planned to assist the ministry in creating a translation and interpretation unit so that these services could be provided regularly.

Within the ministry, more broadly, Minister Qanooni managed to hold his staff and international agencies accountable to him, insofar as he set the agenda. His replacement has not yet been able to exercise such strong leadership, resulting in jockeying among his senior staff and international agencies for setting the agenda. The Program Secretariat established in 2002 lost its force as an accountability mechanism when it was turned into the Grants Management Unit and managed by someone whom international agencies could not trust.

## **Redistribution of Resources**

One big issue concerning resource distribution within the education sector is not within the primary education sub-sector but between primary education and higher education. In 2004 the U.S. embassy decided to channel over \$15 million to a new American University of Afghanistan. The president of Kabul University and a former minister of finance were vocal in their opposition to this decision, and some Americans working within the education sector saw this as a poor use of dollars, since the country's own universities were in dire need of resources, the primary sub-sector was under-funded, and there was still an acknowledged need for support to youth and adults who had no access to the formal school system. But the embassy's decision was not challenged by other agencies of the U.S. government in either Washington or Kabul, and since it was U.S. money, the Afghans had no say in the matter.

### III. Guinea

The case of Guinea is one of a country that has been relatively stable among those in the West Africa region, and the goals and programs in the education sector reflect that stability. In the past two years, however, conditions have begun to destabilize, and government has undertaken political and economic reforms to avert a serious crisis. Thus, in terms of the USAID/DCHA/CMM typology of fragile states, Guinea is one that is “deteriorating.”

Maintaining stability in Guinea has become a U.S. government priority, since the country is bordered by four of West Africa’s most conflict prone and unstable countries, namely, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d’Ivoire, and Liberia. USAID’S 2006 Guinea Strategy Paper states that

*An unstable Guinea could create massive disruption throughout the entire sub-region, impair progress made to date in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and exacerbate the situation in Côte d’Ivoire, requiring significant investments in humanitarian assistance.*

In 1990, when the Education for All campaign was launched in Jomtien, Thailand, Guinea showed high potential for commendable increases in access to education, especially for girls. In 1989, a series of reform policies was introduced that promised to improve basic education services. By 2005 there has been mixed progress in the basic education sector, which is somewhat surprising in light of relatively low investments in the sector.

The study describes the progress in delivering basic education services in the context of economic and political changes over the past twenty years. It looks at the impact of state deterioration on education and the role of education in efforts to stem fragility.

#### **Falling Toward a Failed State**

Due largely to a failure to implement economic and political reforms over the past fifteen or so years, Guinea soon risks becoming a failed state.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Social Conditions**

Guinea has some of the lowest social indicators in the world, and they are gradually worsening. The UNDP 2004 Human Development index places Guinea at 160 out of 177 countries. With an annual population growth rate of about 2.37 percent, Guinea has a median age of 17.7 years, making it demographically one of the “youngest” in West Africa. The life expectancy rate is only 49.4 years. The national HIV prevalence rate is estimated at 3.2 percent and in some parts of the country reaches as high as 7 percent. About 140 thousand persons are registered as HIV positive (2003). Only about 50 percent of the population, and 14 percent of the female population, can read and write.

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<sup>27</sup> International Crisis Group (2005), “Stopping Guinea’s Slide.” Africa Report #94; USAID/Guinea (2005), Strategy statement.



Rural dwellers represent about 80 percent of the population, of which 60 percent live below poverty level. Poverty, which used to be mainly a rural phenomenon, is now also a serious problem in urban centers, particularly in the crowded capital, Conakry.

Although interethnic tension has not been an overt internal problem in recent years, Guinea is still a tribally divided society. Religious and tribal affiliation continues to play a critical role in the way social and political decisions are taken, since membership in many of the most viable political parties often involves tribal and/or religious considerations.

As a result of interethnic conflict in the region, Guinea hosts over 600 thousand Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees (2005). The current high net immigration rate is a significant factor in national instability.

### **Economic Conditions**

Rich in bauxite and iron, and possessing diamonds, gold, and other minerals, yet only a handful of people have gotten rich while most Guineans continue to live in abject poverty. The country has also failed to develop its agricultural potential, fed by good soil, abundant rainfall, and a system of rivers.

The GDP has declined steadily from 1990, when it grew at a rate of 2.4 percent. By 1995 the growth rate had fallen to 1.47 percent; in 2000 it was at 1.21 percent, and in 2003 at 1 percent. At the same time, the population has grown from 5.83 million in 1990 to 8.13 million in 2003.<sup>28</sup>

Faulty economic policies, which allow tax exemptions to those who extract natural resources and run profitable commerce, and negligent enforcement of trade and business rules, which permit high levels of corruption, have diverted revenues from the government's budget.

The government budget was 25.8 percent of GDP in 1990. By 1995 it had fallen to 18.2 percent; in 2000 it was 17.3 percent; and in 2003 it was 14.6 percent. Because the GDP has grown so slowly and the portion of that going to the public budget has been declining steadily, the actual budget fell from 1.154 million Guinean francs in 1990 to less than one tenth of that (1.055 million) by 2003, slowly but surely squeezing government's capacity to provide services.

By 2004, the public coffers were nearly empty, and the government was heavily indebted to the international banks and other lenders. Inflation has risen to double digits, and basic commodities have risen in price. One source indicated that from January to November 2006, inflation was running at 60 percent.

Yet, according to the International Crisis Group there is a "curious gap" between how diplomats view the situation and how most Guineans see it. In December 2005, an IMF-led mission to Guinea suggested that while there are still some outstanding macroeconomic issues that need urgent attention, Guinea's economy is in better shape than it was four years

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<sup>28</sup> World Bank (2005), *Le système éducatif Guinéen*, Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series. Washington, DC: World Bank Development Research Group.

ago.<sup>29</sup> This assessment may reflect robustness in the modern economy and the mining sector and ignore the situation of the majority of the people, who are poor.

*The latter see matters becoming worse and worse. Electricity and water are scarce, the roads are ripped up, and construction seems to be progressing slowly, while basic items like rice and kerosene increasingly become unobtainable. These are the indicators that ordinary Guineans watch, and the indicators continue to get worse.*<sup>30</sup>

In 2004 and 2005 there were isolated uprisings in cities and towns across the country. Early 2006 saw a general strike that moved beyond public sector employees to include sympathizers in the private sector. Some analysts, including the IGC, use the term “anarchy” to describe Guinea’s political condition.

### **The Political Situation**

Hand in hand with the failing economy, Guinea’s political system has deteriorated. After seizing power in 1984 as a military officer, President Lansana Conté has gradually consolidated his authority, jailed competitors and pushed through an amendment to the constitution extending the president’s mandate, thereby enabling him to remain in office for a third six-year term. Though ostensibly a democracy, Guinea’s elections in 1993, 1998, and a referendum in 2001 were widely judged to be rigged. Elections in 2003 were boycotted by the opposition.

Conté is under pressure by the international community to implement political reforms. Deeply in debt and facing riots in several cities in 2004, Conté appointed a new prime minister in early that year, François Lonsény Fall, who called for a series of political and economic reforms. Finding no support from the president to implement them, he resigned. Months later, another prime minister, Cellou Dalein Diallo, was appointed with a mandate to eliminate tax exemptions on monopoly exports and stabilize the macroeconomic situation, improve the delivery of public services, improve governance and reduce corruption, and fight against HIV/AIDS.<sup>31</sup> The governance reforms are concerned with ensuring fair elections and supporting open access to broadcasting on radio and television.

Pressure to implement reforms, however, has been confronted over the years by strong resistance. This comes particularly from the military, many of whose officers benefit from a close alliance with the president, and from party leaders and businessmen.<sup>32</sup>

A critical destabilizing factor in the political situation is Conté’s failing health. His backing of a new prime minister to oversee reforms has fueled speculation about who would take over when Conté dies. The growing uncertainty strengthened opposition groups jockeying to

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<sup>29</sup> Private conversation with World Bank official, February 2006.

<sup>30</sup> International Crisis Group, *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> USAID/Guinea, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> International Crisis Group, *op. cit.* “The handful of businessmen who have achieved tremendous wealth from the president’s favor will also seek to thwart transition toward a new, more transparent politics.”

fill the void. Public tension, rumor and uncertainty distracted attention away from public service reforms.

As of late 2005, the international community was encouraged by indications that the government is pursuing the economic reform agenda and working toward qualifying for funding under a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility. Under the direction of Prime Minister Diallo Guinea has been implementing the political reforms it agreed to with the international community. A municipal election that had been postponed from June 2005 was held in December and judged by observers to be reasonably free and fair.

But amidst current economic turmoil and a lack of a clear presidential succession process or successor, observers fear that Conté's failing health could soon lead to a breakdown of government.<sup>33</sup>

## Basic Education Reforms

In spite of the decreasing public service budget since then and rather insignificant increases in the education sector's share of that budget, indicators show that the basic education sector has made remarkable progress in terms of access (enrollments).<sup>34</sup> Other indicators of the system's performance, though not as positive, are in line with those found in other West African countries.

## Historical Background

Upon granting Guinea independence in 1958 the French left a small education system designed to train the elite for administrative positions. The country's first president, Sékou Touré, aimed to create a system that served the needs of the broad population, but for various reasons, including his embracement of socialism, found himself trying to do so without assistance from the West, which led to that provided instruction up to grade 10 in local languages.

When Conté replaced Touré in 1984, he made French the language of instruction, necessitating a complete rewriting of the curriculum. For this he received support from the West. With significant financial assistance from multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, in 1989 the government introduced a series of reforms in basic education.<sup>35</sup>

An account of Guinea's programs in basic education since 1989 is largely an account of programs supported by international agencies and IDA credits from the World Bank. Since 1990, international investments in basic education have been significant, as has technical assistance. The World Bank is the largest donor, having invested more than \$50 million by 2000 and planning to invest more during the following five years. USAID provided about \$43 million in technical assistance between 1997 and 2005. European donors (France, EU, and Germany) gave in the order of \$10 million each during that time period.

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<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, *op. cit.*; USAID/Guinea, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Education services in the secondary and tertiary sectors, in terms of enrollment, have also been steady, in fact better than those of most countries in the region. This study, however, focuses on basic education.

<sup>35</sup> This report is about basic education at the primary school level; it does not discuss basic education for other age groups.

In 1989, with considerable assistance from the World Bank, USAID, and other international agencies, Guinea's Ministry of Pre-University and Civic Education (MEPU-EC) began a series of comprehensive policy reforms. These were known as the *Programme d'Adjustment Sectoriel en Education*, or the Education Sector Adjustment Program (PASE). The first phase of PASE ran from 1990 to 1994, and the second phase from 1995 to 1999. In 1997 a USAID project called Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels (FQEL) continued some of the initiatives begun in PASE II and started others. FQEL ran between 1997 and 2005. In 2002 the ministry began a five-year program, designed with help from the World Bank. As they had done in PASE, other donors agreed to participate, though not all contributed to budgetary support. A five-year ministry program, like PASE in that it was to re-establish collaboration among donors, began in 2002; the program is called Education for All, and it is designed to run through 2015. The first phase is five years.

### **PASE I (1989-94)**

National demand for improved access to quality educational services, unmet by the Touré regime, now spilled over, generating a political momentum that couldn't be ignored by Conté's government. Conté's initial efforts to ride the wave of public demand to mobilize political support for national educational change in favor of modernizing the education system provided a kick-start of the Guinean education reform process.

#### ***PASE I Goals***

PASE I was initiated by the World Bank's first Education Policy Declaration (1989) and the setting up of an Inter-ministerial Preparatory Committee (COPASE). It ran from 1989 to 1994. Conté's government agreed with the World Bank to reprioritize public funding allocated for education. It would increase education's share of the government budget from 14 to 20 percent by 2000 and increase the proportion given to primary education; approximately 75 percent of education's investment budget was to go to primary education. This rise in expenditures on primary school would help government dramatically increase enrolments in order to meet the popular demand for better basic education services. The aim was to increase average gross enrolment rates to 53 percent by 2000.

In order to meet growing demand for primary education, the ministry was to use funding from the Bank to build 200 classrooms per year, with a view to reaching the level of 800 per year to reduce double-shift teaching; increase spending on learning materials from 150 to about 1,000 Guinean francs per student; and reduce student teacher-ratios by hiring teachers while improving their working and living conditions. To increase the number of trained teachers, it would build the capacity of teacher training colleges, raise standards and modify the curriculum. To make education more relevant to economic needs, it would modify the curriculum to prepare students leaving primary school to enter the labor market.

Government agreed to restructure education administration by providing the ministry with an improved management capacity, an education management information system (EMIS), and a strengthened planning capacity.

#### ***PASE I Achievements***

The most encouraging achievement of PASE I, which pleased government, families, and donors, was increased enrollments in primary education and, in particular, increased

enrollments of girls. Whereas the gross enrollment rate (GER) in grade 1 was 39 percent in 1991, it had risen to 48 percent in 1995. It continued rising, reaching 86 percent by 2003.<sup>36</sup>

The GER for girls rose from 21.8 percent in 1990 to 36.5 percent in 1995. It continued to rise, reaching 57 percent in 2000 and 69.2 percent in 2003. In the context of messages around the globe that girls' education has a key role to play in improving family health, children's access to education and family income, this was an important achievement for Guinea. In 1992 Minister of Education Aisha Bah formed an Equity Committee of senior government officials, public figures, and men and women from the entertainment and sports worlds. One of the committee's first recommendations, against the public trend, was to reverse the policy that school girls who became pregnant must leave school. The committee supported and promoted many aspects of girls' and women's education. It was a strong supporter of media campaigns to raise public awareness about the plight and rights of girls and women in Guinea, especially about girls' and women's rights.

In addition to effective advocacy for girls' education, a significant achievement of PASE I, which continued in PASE II, was the construction of schools and classrooms, so that more rural children could attend schools near their homes.

### ***Enablers and Barriers to PASE I***

Three factors seem to have contributed to the forward momentum of PASE I: the political and economic context, collaboration among international agencies, and strong leadership in the ministry.

### **Political and Economic Context**

The success of the PASE I reforms was credited in part to prevailing social, political, leadership and economic factors in their favor. PASE I began in 1989 during a period when social and political expectations were still high, bolstered by the need to move from a period of isolation and stagnation created by the previous regime to one in favor of an open door policy backed by modernization. Positive macroeconomic indicators fueled by buoyant international commodity markets provided the financial confidence needed to embark on structural reforms. Guinea's economy was still determined by the world price for mineral and agricultural commodities, which are prime sources of revenue. During the first couple years of the reform, when money flowed to government from exports, government funds as well as those from donors bolstered the budget of the education sector.

### **International Agencies' Support**

Success was also attributed in part to support of the international agencies. Lenders and donors were positive about Guinea's potential to grow, given the recent change in regime, the vast pool of available natural resources and a growing, if untrained, young labor force. For the first time in Guinea's history a willing government was able to bring donors to the table to agree on a clear plan of action around financial principles established by the IMF's

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<sup>36</sup> In fact, however, primary enrollment rates had been growing steadily since 1970. Enrollments in grade 1 increased dramatically between 1991 and 1992, but then they leveled off somewhat until 1997. (see Graphiques II.2 and II.3 in *Le système éducatif Guinéen, op. cit.*)

policies which had had some prior successes in neighboring African countries. In its desire to re-establish a working relationship with international financial institutions, the government eagerly accepted many of the conditions that came with the educational reform package presented by major donors. Clear responsibilities were given to each donor, and implementation was managed in the context of a well monitored results-driven framework, which helped to insure effective controls over funding. The discipline and unity of intent reinforced in donors, by the ESAF formula, which under girded the PASE I reforms, helped to insure the financial support needed to achieve the ambitious structural scope of the proposed reforms. Government willingness in the initial stages to submit to stiff conditionalities applied through the IMF policies helped to restore international confidence in the reform process.

### **Ministry Leadership**

In addition to the central government's willingness to reform and donor's willingness to provide support, a third factor in the reform's early success was the selection of a minister who was able to promote educational change within the ministry and among communities and to facilitate many of the more politically sensitive aspects of the new reforms. The appointment of Aicha Bah brought credibility and the level of trust needed to persuade international donors to continue investing significant resources in support of ambitious education reforms during a challenging period in Guinea's recent history.

### **Goals Not Achieved**

While PASE I succeeded in changing budgetary policies in order to allocate more funding to primary education, implementation of these reforms did not last long. Government agreed in PASE I to raise the share of the public budget going to education to 20 percent by 2000. But that share actually fluctuated between 1994 and 2000, when it reached only 16.4 percent.<sup>37</sup> Government also agreed to raise the share of the education budget for primary education to 75 percent by 2000. In 2003, the MEPU-EC, which includes primary and secondary education, only received 44 percent of the total education budget. Though a 75 percent share may have been politically unachievable, the 44 percent rate is low, according to regional standards, where the average share in West Africa of public budget going to primary education is 50.4 percent.

In spite of gains achieved in access to schooling, PASE I was criticized for its failure to tackle the real classroom learning and teaching issues. The ministry's ability to keep up with growth in the provision of textbooks, classrooms and trained teachers was hampered by a declining allocation of government funds to basic education. A number of quality-related components achieved far less than what they aimed to do. Efforts to set standards, improve the curriculum, and in build the capacity of teacher training colleges would become the focus of PASE II and stretch well beyond even that program.

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<sup>37</sup> *Le système éducatif Guinéen, op. cit.*

## **PASE II (1995-99)**

PASE II was announced when MEPU-EC issued a new Education Policy Declaration, which was officially adopted in 1993. The declaration was intended to make PASE II an extension of PASE I, with a stronger emphasis on school- and classroom-level quality reforms. Yet there were important shifts in strategy. Lenders and donors, including the World Bank, IMF, USAID and to a lesser extent French Cooperation, wanted to move away from the conditionality-driven approach of the PASE I reforms, which had emphasized systemic change at the policy level. They favored bringing in activities that would result in visible results in schools so that increased learning could be measured by educators and viewed by parents.

### ***PASE II Goals***

In addition to maintaining budgetary and enrollment targets, PASE II attempted to improve the quality of instruction, introducing several new strategies. It introduced action research methods involving teachers and set up a small grants program to support classroom innovations. It also focused on equity. To distribute education resources more equitably among girls and boys, the program aimed to promote schooling for girls at the community level. To improve rural-urban equity, it would extend multi-grade classrooms to rural areas so that schools in these areas could operate more efficiently. Another aim was to move decision-making closer to the local level. To this end, the program would increase community participation in the financial management of schools and reinforce decentralized services.

Another set of objectives was to continue strengthening the central ministry's capacity to provide services. The program would increase access and efficiency by reorganizing the ministry and computerizing the personnel management system.

Finally, PASE II reached beyond core activities to improve basic education; it aimed to build additional secondary level facilities and to work with the Ministry of Health to improve student health. PASE II, like PASE I, promoted private schooling as a means of private-public sharing in the financing of basic education.

### ***PASE II Achievements***

PASE II made only limited progress in improving ministry systems that provided instructional inputs—teachers and learning materials. The goal of recruiting and training 6,000 new teachers over the 1998-2001 period was not achieved; in fact, the shortfall grew from 24 percent in 1998 to 42 percent in 1999.

Several innovative programs were introduced to train and support teachers. In 1998, the World Bank introduced an innovative school-based action research program borrowed from a successful experience in Burkina Faso. Teacher teams were asked to analyze their needs and propose activities to meet those needs, using small grants. They had to manage the activities, account for their funding, and evaluate the results of their initiatives. Results suggest that this approach successfully stimulated creative thinking in the schools about classroom teaching and learning problems. There was a period when no new activities were funded, because the World Bank had questions about financial management and reporting. In recent years activities are again underway and have been expanded to include a pilot program of direct

financing to schools. A second training program coordinated by the USAID-funded FQEL project reached at least 80 percent of the teachers in the country in one-day face to face pedagogical day four times a year and in annual five-day workshops. In-depth work in teacher training was also done in the Labé region with assistance from GTZ. These innovations, however, did not become institutionalized nationwide and in many places did not survive beyond the end of PASE.

The World Bank and other agencies worked with the government, without much success, to find creative strategies to make books readily available at an affordable price. They first put a stop to a crony-controlled process to competition. Then three new approaches were tried with varying degrees of success. The first contracted out the publishing, production and distribution of textbooks to a sole source private sector provider, but with mixed results. Second, the ministry produced and printed books but sold them through a number of private-sector distributors. This worked better than the first option, but the control of the proceeds and unsold books remained a problem. Then, in 1997, the World Bank and the African Development Bank persuaded the government to reverse course, and books purchased with a World Bank loan were rented out to children and parents. Large quantities of textbooks that were provided to schools to be distributed to students never reached their intended target group, and few parents could, or would, pay the 1,000 guinea fee needed to rent sets of books. Owing largely to inadequate monitoring and management systems, the many materials that have been put into the schools over the years have mostly disappeared.

Another difficult problem was supplying enough trained teachers to keep up with enrollments. The rush to construct more classrooms and build new schools in the rural areas produced an unexpected problem. Midway through PASE I, the government noted that more than a thousand classrooms were empty because the ministry could not produce teachers at the pace required. The ministry undertook to break with civil service regulations by adopting two controversial strategies to deal with the teacher deficit.

First, working with the teachers' unions and regional and district administrators, Minister Bah instituted a policy of redeployment. This entailed moving teachers from areas of oversupply to areas of need using a package of inducements like fully paid moving costs, better housing and remote post benefits. It also entailed moving surplus primary school teachers to the secondary level to meet the dearth of secondary school teachers. The ministry launched a successful media campaign to win teacher and the public support for this change. But this triumph was accompanied by a measure that led to problems.

In an attempt to make up for the deficit that still existed after the redeployment exercise was completed, the government persuaded the European Union to support a policy of hiring 1,600 contract teachers. These teachers were not hired as civil servants and received lower pay, less favorable benefits and of course, no job security. These inequitable conditions and a faulty hiring process led to unrest that eventually resulted in teacher strikes. The policy on hiring contract teachers stuck, nevertheless, and eventually became the ministry's sole means of employing new teachers to this day.

### ***Enablers and Barriers to PASE II***

During PASE II, however, the ministry and its international supporters did not see as much progress as they had reported during PASE I. Although enrollment continued to increase



steadily, government's budget for primary education, did not grow at the rate agreed upon and was not enough to support enrollment increases with good-quality education. The shift to goals of improving quality, such as training teachers and providing instructional materials, proved more difficult to implement. A number of factors contributed to the slowdown of reforms, some within the MEPU-EC, some beyond it.

### **Decreasing Budget**

The increases in the primary education budget agreed upon by President Conté in PASE I had steadily failed to appear after the early years of PASE I. Due to weakening international commodity markets, lax financial management, corruption and a lack of transparency in the way funds were allocated, Guinea's government experienced economic budget crunches in 1992 and 1994. These made it difficult to fund basic education in keeping with the conditionalities set up by the IMF and World Bank. The government also reversed some policy decisions, depriving the reform process of the resources needed to continue. Rather than follow the conditions it had agreed to for reducing the size and cost of public services, the Conté government increased public service and military salaries and began spending beyond parameters set by the IMF.

### **Flagging Trust by Donors in Government**

By the mid-1990s, the Conté government was losing favor with the international community. In 2001 Conté had the Constitution changed to allow him to run for a third term. Commitments to freedom of expression and free and open elections began to dissolve. The president moved toward full control of the political arena, even sending opponents to prison. The erosion of popular and multi-party support for ambitious national reforms on the scale attempted by PASE I, due to declining confidence in the intentions of the Conté government, fueled a growing local resistance to many of the changes proposed.

Open conflict and disagreement between key government institutions like the ministries of finance and primary education slowed down disbursement of funds, fueled frustration and encouraged lethargy on the part of potential beneficiaries at the provincial, district and school levels.

### **Decreasing Confidence by the Public**

Conté's decision to increase salaries for one sector of the civil service led to a crisis in expectations in the public sector, which resulted in unrest and a demand for higher salaries. This in turn triggered a decline in public confidence, political unrest and demand by parents for equitable education standards. These grumblings had begun before the PASE II design, so that program responded by focusing some activities at the school level. But eventually this response was insufficient.

The president's dismissal of Aicha Bah in 1996 for political reasons was seen as undermining both national and international confidence in the educational reform process. The changes caused by a succession of ministers, Aicha Bah replaced by Kozo in 1996, followed by Germain Doualamou a year later, which helped to slow down the momentum sensed in the earlier years.

### **Faltering Donor Collaboration**

Donor collaboration faltered. If PASE I had benefited from a well coordinated approach and a strong sense of donor partnership based on a common strategy and an agreed set of rules, PASE II was driven by different interventions, emanating from diverging donor policies lacking coherence. The demise of unified government policies for important multi-donor supported interventions like classroom construction, teacher training and curriculum development, created confusion and encouraged an uncoordinated donor response.

Not all international agencies agreed to continue budgetary support. Both French Cooperation and the World Bank had evaluated the outcomes of their contribution to the PASE process and concluded that PASE, though imperfect, had made a significant contribution to the improvement of basic education services and that its continued financial support was merited. USAID, in contrast, decided to withdraw budgetary support and work only through projects. In 1995, immediately after national elections were held, the U.S. Department of State judged the elections to be biased, and used this as a basis for denying financial support. In addition, the agency was losing interest globally in the “non-project” approach to assistance.

In summary, the shift in reforms from an emphasis on increasing enrollment and budgetary support in PASE I to improving quality through project support in PASE II was accompanied by a slowdown in the momentum of the whole reform effort, due to events outside and inside the ministry, and a disintegration of collaboration among partners. It is difficult to say whether the frustration of PASE II efforts was due primarily to the shift in strategy or to macroeconomic, political and other factors that would have had a strong impact, regardless of whether the strategy changed.

### **Ambitious Objectives**

PASE II’s objectives of improving instruction, reducing inequities, modernizing management, and decentralizing the management and administration of education service delivery are initiatives that require significant changes in practice of nearly everyone in the education system. They have been achieved in most countries only over long periods of time, and often not even then. .

### **FQEL and LINKS (1997-2006)**

In 1997, two years in to PASE II, USAID launched its Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels (FQEL) project, which ran through 2005. It was followed by a one-year project called LINKS. Between the termination of PASE II in 1999 and the start-up of a new multi-donor program in 2002, FQEL and the World Bank were the most significant sources of support to MEPU.

### ***FQEL Goals***

The project had two goals: to improve the quality of basic education (specifically classroom instruction and teacher training and support) and to improve the management of information and its use in decision-making. In working toward both these goals, FQEL continued the work of PASE II.

### ***FQEL Achievements***

FQEL implemented a number of activities to improve instruction. It created and implemented a nationwide distance education program, with direct interactive radio instruction channeled to students in grades 1 through 6. To support radio broadcasts, the project delivered directly to schools pupils' materials and teacher-support materials. It provided instructional materials and training for instructional supervisors at the prefecture, sub-prefecture and local levels, as well as for teachers, in child-centered learning. Some materials went beyond the distance education curriculum.

A competency-based curriculum had been developed with French technical assistance over a period of eight years. The LINKS Project has helped the ministry finalize the curriculum for Grade 1-2 French and mathematics and to produce accompanying textbooks. FQEL also improved teacher training. In collaboration with the National Institute of Pedagogical Research and Action (INRAP), FQEL established a nationwide in-service teacher training program and helped elementary school delegates (DSEEs) to initiate in-service training at the local level. Following a pilot project of a new reading instruction program with World Bank funding in 2000, the program was generalized in 2001 and revised as more was learned about how to help teachers improve instruction in reading.

To help improve decision-making and management in the ministry, the FQEL project strengthened the Statistics and Planning Section of the ministry's national elementary education database and began to decentralize the information management system so that it could be used at the regional and prefecture levels. It began with activities in four prefectures and expanded during a second phase to 15 more. Schools were equipped with planning and management tools based on the standards such as a School Assessment Sheet whose use at the school level is being facilitated in collaboration with several NGOs.

A manual and computerized planning and management tools and training were provided to regional and prefecture statistics personnel, so that data entry and cleaning now occurs at the prefecture and regional levels and the national database is formed by consolidating the regional ones. A number of prefectures produce their own yearbooks, including analyses of the situation of education in their areas. Documents defining the roles and attributions of the regional and prefecture education offices have undergone a major restructuring, which is being piloted in two regions and ten prefectures. Work is being done at the regional and prefecture levels to bring teacher education partners together to develop a professional development plan that acknowledges and responds to the priorities identified in the area.

### ***Enablers and Barriers to FQEL***

Whereas PASE I focused on improving access through advocacy and classroom construction, and PASE II worked mainly with systems for input delivery, FQEL began with a more direct route to delivering instruction. In the first phase of the project (1997-2001), staff members worked largely in parallel to the ministry, involving selected staff members, to prepare radio scripts and accompanying learning materials, for which they were held accountable by USAID. At the end of that phase, however, as the ministry was gearing up for a new multi-donor project, FQEL staff members had more time and opportunity to engage ministry staff members, particularly those in the units concerned with quality, policy, and information management, in setting priorities and designing and implementing activities. The partnership

between the project and the ministry evolved from one of requests for feedback and cooperation in particular activities to collaborative strategizing and implementation.

### **Overcrowded Schools**

The policy decision in 2002 to remove class-size restrictions (see the section below on EFA) resulted in many overcrowded schools and classrooms. Pupil-teacher ratios rose dramatically, and the amount of materials that FQEL had produced were very inadequate.

### **Decentralization**

PASE II had introduced the goal of decentralizing basic education services to prefecture and lower levels of the ministry's administrative system, but it had not made much progress. FQEL, especially in its second phase, concentrated on making the ministry's database accessible throughout the system and engaging officials at each level in planning and implementing quality-improvement strategies. Understandably, some prefectures and sub-prefectures were more successful than others in strategizing and implementing activities.

One issue was the capacity and willingness of the Division of Administrative and Financial Affairs (DAAF) to give up control of budgets to field offices and of field offices to take that responsibility. It was not until 2004 that funds moved from the central ministry to the prefectures. Until around 2004, budget support to the decentralized levels was irregular and often non-existent for anything except salaries. In that year it improved some, but by then another issue had become important: a shrinking budget for primary education made it difficult for both central and field offices to agree upon budgets; there were simply no discretionary funds to dispense.

### **Accountability**

The FQEL aimed toward giving schools more responsibility for improving the quality of instruction. It did this through delivering school assessment tools and including principals in workshops on quality education.

### **Ministry Staff**

As discussed, over time FQEL moved decisively closer to the ministry in developing and implementing its strategies. Beginning in PASE II a frequent turnover among ministers of education had begun to occur. Leadership was effectively delegated to the general secretary, who proved to be a competent and trustworthy partner for FQEL. Project staff members have mixed views on whether other ministry staff facilitated or blocked project efforts. Some appeared willing and able. Others seemed to be more loyal to politicians than to the ministry's mission.

In the past few years, ministry staff, like teachers and other civil servants, have suffered from rampant inflation that is not matched by salary increases. They are distracted by the problems of insufficient income and taken away to do other work. Rising social tensions also keep

them from focusing on technical matters as much as they did in the past. Yet to date, ministry staff and teachers generally continue to come to work and try to do their jobs.<sup>38</sup>

### **Shrinking Ministry Budget**

Like PASE II, FQEL was hampered by a continually shrinking budget in the ministry. This kept the ministry from institutionalizing activities that had recurrent costs. A particularly painful instance was the distance education program. Most of the cost of such a program is in its development, which USAID had covered. The main recurrent cost is for radio airtime. Though not a large expense, the ministry simply did not have the funds to continue to finance the program directly. Since the end of the 2004-2005 school year, it has used funds from its World Bank loan to ensure that the programs are regularly broadcast in the morning and afternoon.

### ***Additional USAID Initiatives (2000-2005)***

In 2002 and 2003, USAID included Guinea in its Africa Education Initiative intended to provide resources for teacher training and for a scholarship program for girls. FQEL and LINKS also financed and piloted in 2005 an additional scholarship program based on a cohort model rather than individual awards.

In 2001, USAID expanded work that had been piloted under the FQEL project, in which two international NGOs worked with local NGOs to help schools strengthen Parent Associations.<sup>39</sup> The new project is called Community Participation, Quality, and Equity in Guinea's Schools (PACEEQ). The goal was to build the capacities of Parent Associations and communities to assist in improving the quality of education their schools offered and to become more responsible for enrolling more of their children in school. The project trained NGOs to train parent boards in governance and management functions, and it helped principals and administrators manage resources. Working with local NGOs, which worked with schools, the project reached approximately 900 Parent Associations, both urban and rural, constituting about 15 percent of the total in the country. It also worked with formal alliances of these organizations and a national alliance, thus indirectly reaching more school associations.

An evaluation of the project recorded that schools in the area of coverage benefited positively from parental participation. While other donor-supported projects were working from the "top down" to improve education quality and access, this one worked from the "bottom up." Parent Associations became more confident in their ability to participate in school issues and more capable of resolving intra-community conflicts. As parent board members were chosen through elections, participants gained experience in a democratic process. The evaluation

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<sup>38</sup> In response to the recent strike, the government has agreed to a 30 percent increase in functionaries' salaries effective April 1, 2006. The government has also agreed to intervene in the "freefall" of the value of its currency, though it is not clear what specific steps will, or can, be taken in this regard to achieve reduce the rate of inflation.

<sup>39</sup> These pilots had initially intended to found community schools supported by NGOs, but government officials objected to any non-government agency engaging in matters of instruction. See Miller-Grandvaux, Yolande, et al. (2002), "Evolving Partnerships: The Role of NGOs in Basic Education in Africa." Washington, DC: USAID/AF/SD.

also reports that sub-prefecture (DSEE) officials interacted frequently with schools and school communities, so that the bi-directional strategy was effective.<sup>40</sup>

### **Other Donor Initiatives**

Other donors, particularly the World Bank and the French, continued to support basic education throughout this time period. In teacher training, two interventions must be mentioned. The World Bank has supported a reform of pre-service training. When it relied on pre-service training to supply teachers, barely 200 to 300 teachers entered the classroom each year, while 1500 to 2000 were actually needed. With assistance from the Bank, the Ministry implemented a new model of pre-service training, *Formation Initiale des Maitres de l'Elementaire*, a program with various configurations, among which the most widely used model combines one-year academic and pedagogical training in the teacher training colleges with a one-year practicum. The French devised a mobile cadre of teacher trainers and pedagogical experts who traveled to schools to train teachers in situ. Initially, 200 master teacher trainers, or pedagogical counselors (CPMFs), were trained to go out to schools to organize the training and act as teacher mentors. While at least some judgments of this activity were favorable, the ministry has not given the level of support to the project, however, to keep it alive.

### **EFA (2001-2007)**

In 2002, the ministry launched Education for All (EFA) a comprehensive program approved by and involving the cooperation and support of the ministry and all donors in the sector. The largest donor is the World Bank, which took the lead in designing the project. The three goals of EFA are to expand access, improve quality, and strengthen capacity for decentralized management. These are essentially the same goals of PASE I and II, and the quality and capacity goals were supported by FQEL.

In keeping with the Millennium Development Goals and government's commitment at the Dakar forum in 1990 to providing a basic education to all children, the EFA program has introduced a policy goal of full enrollment in basic education. Toward this end, it reached agreement with the ministry to remove the enrollment caps schools were imposing in order to limit class size to 40-50 pupils. As noted above, the resulting overcrowded classrooms have interfered with the ministry's ability to provide adequate numbers of trained teachers and instructional materials.

### **Current Status of the Education Sector**

In terms of the broad indicators used to measure progress in improving access, quality and equity of basic education opportunities, what have been the results of sixteen years of

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<sup>40</sup> Garnier, Maurice, et al. (2005), "Community Participation, Quality, and Equity in Guinea's Schools: Evaluation Report of the PACEEQ Project, 2001-2005." The conclusion that sub-prefecture officials worked willingly with Parent Associations represents a change from the finding by Miller-Grandvaux, et al. (*op. cit.*) in 2002 that "at all levels of the system, education officials were very uncomfortable with this trend [of parents to monitor school performance] and many expressed outright opposition. Many government officials claim that pedagogy in Guinea is a 'reserved domain' and thus citizens have neither the mandate nor the qualifications" to interfere.

education reforms? In sum, though government has not kept its promise to raise education's share of the public budget, enrollment rates have risen, largely due to increased community awareness and demand. While government funding of primary education falls short of what the international community would expect, enrollments in primary school have risen at a higher rate than anywhere in the region, at an annual growth rate of 9.8 percent between 1990 and 2003. This sustained rate is among the highest in the world. The decrease in per-pupil expenditures, however, has hampered improvements in the quality of education, which has been felt most by rural children and girls.

### **Financing Basic Education**

Since 1990 government has gradually increased the share of the public budget for basic (primary) education, but it has fallen far short of reaching the targets set in PASE I and is short of what it should be in terms of regional and international standards. Education's share of the GDP grew from 1.8 percent in 1994 to 2.25 percent in 2003; it fluctuated between 1993 and 1999, when it was at 1.76 percent but has grown steadily since then. Primary education received 2.04 percent of GDP, a steady increase from 1.69 percent in 1998.

In 2005 the total cost for primary education rose to \$145 million (not adjusting for inflation), while total government financing covered only \$88 million. International agencies pitched in \$20 million, but a gap of \$37 million was left to be covered by families.<sup>41</sup>

While enrollment increases are remarkable, Guinea has not done as well in keeping children in school and ensuring that they learn basic skills. In these respects, however, it is not much different from other countries in the West Africa region. Efforts to promote pupils through the system and complete primary education have improved; by 2003, 52 percent of those who enrolled in primary school completed grade 6. But repetition rates continue to be high, thus making the system more costly than it need be.

### **Indications of Quality**

If investments in instructional inputs have not kept up with enrollment rates, have schools failed to teach children? This is not so easy to answer. For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to measure what pupils in Guinea have achieved—what they have learned. One indication is that Guinean children are achieving basic skills at about the same rate as pupils in other countries in the region. The 1999 administration of the PASEC exam in Guinea, which is an exam given in Francophone countries, revealed that Guinea's scores are only slightly below those of the regional average (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Senegal).<sup>42</sup> Since regional test scores are generally low, Guinea's performance on the PASEC indicates that schools are teaching some basic skills though there is much room for improvement. But much has changed since 1999, and if the PASEC were given today, scores might be different.

An important proxy indicator of education quality is the pupil-teacher ratio. A report in 2003 showed that education quality was keeping pace with enrollment between 1998 and 2002,

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<sup>41</sup> UNESCO (2004). "Education For All – Fast Track Initiative Status Report." Prepared for the EFA FTI Annual Meeting, November 10-12, 2004.

<sup>42</sup> The test can only be a rough indicator, due to econometric irregularities.

hovering at about 48 to one.<sup>43</sup> After the introduction of the EFA policy not to limit enrollments based on class size, however, this ratio has changed. While we have no official reports on the current ratio, it is likely to have had a strong effect on instructional quality.

### Indications of Equity

PASE I and II aimed to improve equity, so that rural children, girls, and poor children would benefit from public education as well as the elite. As of 2003, although many more children were in school than in 1989, there were still considerable disparities among populations in participation in primary education. While the average rate of completion of primary school among those enrolled in grade 1 is 52 percent, this varies from 26 percent among rural girls to 78 percent among urban boys. Geographic disparities are greater than gender disparities, with a 24 point difference between girls and boys and a 37 percent difference between rural and urban areas. Three factors seem to account for these disparities: time spent on instruction, available resources for instruction, and, in particular, the availability of teachers.

There are also inequities based on family income. One estimate is that half of the education resources go to families in the top 10 percent income bracket; this figure is largely influenced by investments in secondary and tertiary education. At the primary level, the estimate is not so bad. A pupil in the highest quintile receives 1.17 times the amount of government financing that a child in the lowest pupil quintile receives.<sup>44</sup> This figure, however, must be viewed in the light of a rapidly growing number of private schools, which probably attract the better-off families.

These inequities must be viewed in the overall picture of a country in which over 80 percent of children are enrolled in primary school, and access to primary education is widespread across the country. This is in spite of diminishing resources.

### Present Barriers to Progress

As the political and economic situation in Guinea has declined dramatically since the EFA was launched, it is important to look at the barriers facing that program.

- The basic education budget is sufficient to cover even salaries. The ministry is now relying heavily on funds from the World Bank and other international partners.
- The real income of teachers and other ministry staff continues to fall due to inflation. The average primary school teacher or policeman is paid about 125 thousand Guinean francs per month. Yet a 50 kilo bag of rice, which cost 35 thousand francs in March 2004 had risen in price to between 75 and 100 thousand francs in Conakry and 100 thousand or more outside it. A liter of petrol had risen from 2,500 to 3,800 francs.<sup>45</sup>
- A recent general strike among civil servants, with support from the private sector, gives evidence of social discontent. Although most teachers continue to report to work, social tension is rising, which must be demoralizing.

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<sup>43</sup> UNESCO, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> *Le système éducatif Guinéen, op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> International Crisis Group, *op. cit.*



- Though Guinea is one of the more stable countries in the region, it is an active participant in the turmoil. The militarization of this turmoil has added to corruption within the army and reduced the security of Guineans, including teachers and students, especially in border and urban areas.
- Guinea hosts over 600,000 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees (2005). The current high net immigration rate is a significant factor in national stability. Refugees' presence in Conakry and border towns has put pressure on scarce resources and created serious security situation. As government capacity diminishes, officials pay less attention to the refugee crisis. Crowded into border towns and villages, refugees place a heavy burden on basic health and education services. The refugees from Côte d'Ivoire present a particular problem to the education sector. Families from Liberia and Sierra Leone, Anglophone countries, had no interest in sending their children to French-speaking schools. Those from Côte d'Ivoire, on the other hand, enrolled their children in schools, adding to the already significant problem of overcrowding.

## Lessons Learned

At present, Guinea is a failing democracy. Government has become ineffective and is losing legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Twenty years ago, the promising reforms of the education system gave hope that an educated and enlightened public would, in perhaps two or three generations, become the foundation for a thriving democracy. Since then, education has been progressing under relatively stable, though slowly deteriorating economic and political conditions. In recent years, however, stability has been threatened; some fear breakdown and anarchy. The school system continues to function, though reliant on funds from international agencies.

## What Has Kept the Basic Education Sector on Track?

In spite of extremely difficult conditions, schools are open, teachers and children are in class, and the ministry functions. Under the circumstances, we might expect schools to be abandoned. What keeps the education sector operating? Here are some various hypotheses:

- Schools and teachers, especially rural schools, hold themselves accountable to their communities (if not *de facto* then *de jure*), and don't see political crises as relevant to the work of teachers and pupils. Though teachers have been known to strike and express dissatisfaction to government over salaries, and they are involved in election politics, in this crisis they may place more value on their roles as teachers than as political activists.
- Teachers have been given enough attention, through trainings and advocacies, that they are making an effort to maintain stability in schools.
- Internationally funded programs and projects—in this case EFA and its partners—are holding the sector together through their support activities, even at the decentralized and school levels. Ministry staff count on this support to pull the sector through difficult times.
- In fact, the public primary education sector is *not* stable. Families who can afford it have been turning to the private sector for education services (The private education sector is expanding rapidly. The World Bank reported in 2001 that private school enrollments rose

from 9 percent in 1995 to 16 percent in 1999. A more recent, unofficial estimate is that private schools comprise 30 to 40 percent primary education sector.)

- The public primary sector is *not* stable and enrollments will fall dramatically soon, as political and economic conditions continue to deteriorate.

### **National Leadership**

The case of Guinea has shown that strong leadership by the minister in the early part of PASE was invaluable in creating trust among ministry staff and communities. Subsequently, strong leadership by the top administrative officer, the secretary general, also has had an important stabilizing effect.

### **Community Strengths and Limitations**

Many communities do not have the resources to operate their own schools or the technical skills or knowledge to hold government accountable for the quality of instruction. The FQEL and PACEEQ experience seems to show that the limit of many school communities' capacity is to monitor teacher attendance and school record keeping. Both of these are indeed critical factors in education quality, so this role of the community is worthwhile, but communities should not be expected to discern whether teachers are teaching effectively. Thus, efforts to empower school communities, while an indispensable aspect of improving schools, require complementary support from the ministry or other agency that can infuse and monitor good quality instructional practices. As it was done in parts of Guinea, a community-based strategy must be complemented by support to decentralized ministry offices. Over time, Guinean officials seem to have begun to appreciate the role of school communities in improving education.

### **Service Delivery versus Capacity Building**

The underlying dilemma for international agencies working in fragile countries in crisis is to find the best balance between providing services directly to children who would not otherwise be getting them and rebuilding government's capacity to provide services. Throughout much of the terms of the PASE, FQEL, and EFA support programs, during which Guinea was *not* considered a fragile state, balance between service delivery and capacity-building shifted.

- PASE I relied primarily on a new set of policies, and donors, especially the World Bank, expected government to do most of the work to implement them, with financial support but not much technical assistance.
- PASE II attempted to strengthen systems (teacher training and textbooks) but was not very effective. Donor technical support was uncoordinated and did not seem to work systematically to build capacity.
- FQEL began with a strategy that brought selected region and prefecture staff to work on project activities but eventually established more collaborative partnerships with ministry officials throughout the system. Unfortunately, as these partnerships were bonding, the ministry's resources were ebbing.
- EFA appears to focus on building capacity.

The trend toward capacity-building, though positive during stable times, may need to be reconsidered during this crisis. The next section looks at this issue.

### **Strategic Choices in the Education Sector to Curb Fragility**

What strategic choices do international agencies have in supporting the education sector as Guinea falls into fragility? Although it is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate strategic choices and make recommendations, the present case offers a lesson about what options may be available.

International agencies seem to have only two kinds of leverage over Guinea at this point to keep the education sector stable. One is to induce its leaders with funds to adopt policies that they believe will benefit the sector. The other is to assume authority for educating Guinea's children and circumvent government to take over management of the sector. Other strategic options, which are reasonable in stable situations, would not help Guinea now. Total reliance on building capacity is a long-range strategy that will not, in itself, prevent a crisis. Dialogue or advice is unlikely to have any effect.

The World Bank and other agencies have chosen the inducement strategy. One issue here is whether government will keep its promise this time. The Guinean government demonstrated in PASE that it does not keep an agreement brought about by inducements. It did not continue to prioritize primary education after a few years of PASE I, when government revenues shrank. Yet now, in desperate need of funds, it has agreed again with the World Bank to adopt policies (this time, among others, to remove enrollment caps that limit class size) in exchange for financial support.

Another issue is whether the World Bank and others have selected the right policies to impose. Though the full-enrollment policy is in line with government's pledge to provide education for all and to the Millennium Development Goals, it may not be feasible or appropriate for a country near bankruptcy, and is thus not likely to endure. It is a policy more suited to stable countries than to one deteriorating into fragility. Other policies that might be more appropriate would be to raise teachers' salaries, thus motivating them to stay on the job; to support the creation of more private schools in communities that can afford them, with government in a regulatory role; or to continue to strengthen decentralized and community decision-making and financing, as an interim strategy until support from the ministry can be built back up. As the crisis intensifies, support to the ministry might best be directed to the decentralized levels that can most effectively support schools.

Except in cases in which a government is defeated militarily, there is no precedent for a strategy of wholesale assumption of authority by foreign agencies to provide education services (though one can argue that if basic education is a human right, such a measure may be merited.) The closest alternative is for international agencies to fund international NGOs to take over provision of basic education services. The problems with this option are, first, that NGOs traditionally work on a small scale, as supporting communities is labor-intensive and requires time, and second, that it is not sustainable. Providing mass education ultimately requires systemic support, whether it be government or non-government, for functions such as teacher training and materials production. In addition, stable countries need some authority over basic education services, as primary schools feed higher levels of the system, which

provides human resources and serves the national interest in many ways. NGOs could be relied on in an interim strategy, as ministry support is being strengthened.

At present, with international support, government seems to be “staying the course” on a wide range of goals by increasing access, improving quality, and strengthening managerial capacity. As government’s own resources have shrunk, the ministry has agreed to follow the international communities’ priorities, rather than focus on what it might eventually be able to afford on its own.

## IV. The Philippines (Mindanao)

This case study is a review of education in the southern region of the Philippines and of government and donor-supported education programs that have taken place between 1995 and 2006 with the aim of mitigating the negative influence of militant Islamic groups in the crisis-prone region of Mindanao

Under the USAID/DCHA/CMM current “fragile states” typology, the case of Mindanao in the Philippines is categorized as a state in “arrested development.” The Philippines is becoming more unstable because of its growing population and tension between the Catholic and Muslim regions. There is a large gap in the quality of government services, including education, between that provided to much of the country and that provided to Muslim communities of Mindanao. Increasingly, this region appears to be a growing recruiting ground for Islamic terrorist groups. The Philippines government is continuing its efforts to integrate the Muslim culture and polity of Mindanao—efforts that it had begun well before September 11, 2001—since independence in 1898. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was created in part to help placate rebels, but it hasn’t solved the problem. In the education sector, the ARMM has taken a huge step by devising policies to improve access and quality of education, but it lacks the resources and capacity to implement those policies. In the past few years, multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid agencies, including USAID, have stepped in to help.

### The Philippines Context

The Philippines is an archipelago of over seven thousand islands located southeast of China. The current (2004-05) population estimate is about 87.8 million people. About 80 percent of the population is Roman Catholic; other Christian denominations make up about 10 percent. Muslims are 5 percent of the population, while the remaining 2.5 percent practice a variety of traditional religions.

The Philippines’ complex political economy, stemming in part from a multiparty system of government, which no one party currently dominates, has resulted in government’s inability to take the kind of hard decisions needed to carry out the structural reforms required for an equitable solution to many national problems. Political decisions are frequently driven by narrow self-interest and sectarian considerations that have tended to distort the policy-making process. This is particularly true for Muslim Mindanao, which is only partially self-governing. Important decisions on budget allocations, policy formulation for education and other basic social services are often taken in Manila and reflect the will of a legislative process that often doesn’t take into consideration Muslim or other minority views and needs, since many of the decisions made in both chambers are reflective of the dominant Christian view.

In 1998 the Philippines survived the Asian financial crisis, helped by annual remittances from Filipino overseas foreign workers, amounting to between \$7 and \$8 billion. From a decline then of 0.6 percent, GDP grew to 2.4 percent in 1999. By 2000 it had reached 4.5 percent. Political and security concerns and an international economic downturn brought the GDP down again to 3.2 percent, in 2001. Improved agricultural markets and a resilient

service sector raised the GDP to 6 percent in 2005. However, high international energy costs driven up by rising oil prices make it unlikely that the Philippines will be able to meet its poverty reduction goals. The pressure placed on the Arroyo government to meet its debt obligations has forced the government to shift resources away from national reconstruction programs affecting health, education and employment. At present the unemployment rate is 11.7 percent, and about 40 percent of the population lives below poverty level.

### **Historical Context**

The Philippine islands were settled by several waves of people from distinctive adjoining regions migrating to islands in the archipelago. Malaysian and Indonesian traders in the fourteenth century brought with them Islam. Islamic influence was strongest in the south but also extended as far north as Luzon. During the Spanish colonial period, which spanned four hundred years from 1521 to 1898, over 90 percent of the population was converted to Catholicism.

In 1898, with encouragement and help from the United States, a Spanish fleet was defeated, and the Philippines declared independence. After World War II, the U.S. administration introduced modern public education, public examinations, a democratic system of government and a viable legal system. Church schools and universities were allowed to continue but had to adhere to national standards and be open to inspection by the state.

Under Ferdinand Marcos, who governed with an iron fist from 1972 till 1981, civil liberties were suppressed, martial law was introduced, and government was side-stepped in favor of popular referenda. By the time he was forced out of office in 1986 the Filipino institutions were undermined and human rights ignored. Resources that had been previously allocated to maintain public services like education and health were squandered on excessive military expenditure or to bolster his flagging control over the country by buying off any potential opposition. Under his successor, Corazon Aquino, civil liberties were restored and democratic government re-established. However, her lackluster government encouraged several attempted military coups, which slowed down the process of national economic recovery.

More significant for the future of Mindanao was General Fidel Ramos's election as President in 1992. His experience, military pre-requisites and realism brought the Philippines the reconciliation needed to rebuild national confidence in government institutions and the rule of law. He legalized the Communist party and began a constructive dialogue with Muslim separatists and ex-military rebel groups. The successful outcome of these talks established the basis for a general amnesty, which was signed in 1995. In 1996 a separate peace agreement was signed with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and semi-autonomous government status granted to the ARMM. After a brief period in office, Ramos' successor, Joseph Estrada, was impeached and ousted to be quickly replaced as President by his Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was re-elected in 2004, to begin her current six-year term in office.

### **Education**

Education in the Philippines has not remained untouched by the political and economic challenges currently affecting national development. The Philippines once boasted one of the

best public education systems in Asia. Today education services throughout the republic have deteriorated both in quality and access. Per-student government spending has dropped, drop-out rates have increased, and education services still remain unresponsive to needs of rural populations. Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has declined to 3.1 and accounts for about 18 percent of total government expenditure. This breaks down to 58 percent for primary education, 24 percent for secondary, 14 percent for tertiary and about 4 percent for a variety of non-formal and adult education interventions. A decline in public investment in education has had a strong negative impact on school supplies, teacher training and supervision.

## Mindanao Context

The southern region of the Philippines has remained a stronghold of Muslim culture and been relatively neglected by the national government. Today Mindanao's population is estimated at about 20 million inhabitants, or 23 percent of the total national population. The poorest segment of Mindanao is the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The population of the ARMM in 2000 was 2.87 million, or about 3.8 percent of the national population. In the ARMM, Muslims are the dominant group (76 percent) while Christians make up 11 percent and indigenous groups about 13 percent of the population. Here geographic, economic, and cultural inequities converge to make poor Muslims living in the rural areas recipients of far less than their fair share of social services.<sup>46</sup>

Almost four hundred years of Muslim resistance to Spanish and American colonization have spread the seeds of animosity and mistrust between the Muslim minority and Christian majority. The central government has failed to integrate Muslim Filipinos into the national mainstream or to prevent the outbreak of Islamic secessionist movements that have since raged for more than three decades.<sup>47</sup>

The island of Mindanao has some of the highest levels of income inequality in Asia, with the poorest 20 percent of the population accounting for less than 5 percent of the total national income. The poverty rate is about 65 percent as compared to the national average of about 40 percent. It is pervasive in the rural areas, and communities have been historically marginalized and excluded from meaningful political and economic participation. Muslim towns and villages lack access to most basic services and are often deeply suspicious of government policies, which are still perceived to favor the Christian-dominated majority.

Average income levels are 57 percent of the national average. Life expectancy in ARMM is ten years less and the infant mortality rate is about 35 percent higher than the national rate. Marginalized communities are forced to turn elsewhere for essential services and may join the nearest, parallel, insurgency-created alternative to get the help they need. The poor, as is the case elsewhere in the Philippines, are left to look after themselves and have little or no alternative but to find what they need from those willing to provide.

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<sup>46</sup> Asian Development Bank, "Technical Assistance to the Republic of the Philippines for the Development of Basic Education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," 2004. p.2.

<sup>47</sup> Milligan, Jeffrey A. (December 15, 2004), "Islamization or Secularization?: Educational Reform and the Search for Peace in the Southern Philippines." *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 7 (1).

Within the ARMM, Muslim communities suffer from a similar center-periphery malaise. Less accessible Muslim communities still lack essential basic services despite well meaning efforts by donors and the Cotabato-based ARMM administration to promote development there. Communities on the Mindanao mainland are by and large better served than the island communities of the Sulu archipelago, but access to the level of resources and training needed to build the services is still lacking. These inequalities are further exacerbated when Christian communities in Mindanao, which are supported and financed by central government in Manila, benefit disproportionately over Muslim communities and ethnic minorities. Most Christian communities are better integrated into the Filipino economy, have better access to the resources needed to develop strong basic educational services and adequate energy, health and water and sanitation services.

Government-supported social-economic solutions are not proving effective. USAID promoted private-public partnerships intended to jump-start investment in Mindanao are still too weak to sustain growth. The private sector is reluctant to invest in Mindanao and the ARMM because of unresolved political issues related to the ongoing insurgency and a relatively weak investment climate despite plentiful agricultural, mineral and sea resources.<sup>48</sup>

### **Resurgence of Radical Islamic Groups**

Renewed interest in the development of Mindanao has three bases. First, concern for the unification of the Philippines has grown as radical Muslim groups exert their influence on four million Filipino Muslims and demanded an independent autonomous Muslim state centered on Mindanao. Since the 1990s the separatist struggle in the ARMM and bordering areas has killed an estimated 120 thousand people, displaced one million, and traumatized millions more. A series of skirmishes with Muslim insurgents in the 1990s proved costly to the army, which was already having problems containing a Communist insurrection in Luzon and a military rebellion among soldiers accused of human rights violations against insurgents. An “All Out War” declared and waged against Muslim rebels under the administration of President Estrada in 2001 undermined the peace negotiations initiated under President Ramos and took the whole process several steps back.

Second, conflict continues to limit economic development in the region, and investment in the whole of Mindanao. Under Ramos, there was a growing awareness of the need for a more equitable distribution of resources if the Philippines was to mitigate poverty and grow to meet the economic and social challenges of the global economy.

Third, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks international pressure was applied worldwide to prevent the growth of radical Islamic movements by pre-empting the spread of al Qaeda’s influence to potentially supportive and vulnerable Asian communities, like those in the southern Philippines.

The Manila government has been unable to serve as an effective national buffer and protect the social services to people in one of its regions. The long-term political implications of internationally influenced Muslim campaigns to win hearts and minds in Mindanao are recently becoming clearer. The spread of jihadist thinking by converts in Luzon and

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<sup>48</sup> USAID Philippine Activities in Mindanao, 2005, “Growth with Equity Project ( GEM)”



elsewhere is a documented phenomenon that adds concern for those in Manila who are working to mitigate the spread and influence of radical Islam on Filipino society.

The last two years have seen a shift in the locus of power within jihadist movements in the southern Philippines. Successful peace talks begun under Ramos with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a once dominant player in Mindanao, have upset collaboration between moderate homegrown groups and the more radical imported foreign elements from Malaysia and Indonesia, who have exploited Mindanao's fragility to escape from the increasingly effective counter-insurgency activities in their own countries. Counter-insurgency operations have largely driven the radical Jimaah Islamiyah (JI) group, largely composed of Indonesian Islamists allied to the radical local Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), out of Basilan and the Sulu archipelago to MILF strongholds on mainland Mindanao. Their active presence in Mindanao poses a serious threat to an ongoing peace process, while their presence exerts a destabilizing influence on local Muslim communities, especially on unemployed and undereducated youth. Furthermore, their presence is acting as a magnet for radical groups from Indonesia, like Darul Islam (DI) and KOMPAK, which are using Mindanao as a refuge for their cadres and a training center for recruits.

More recently, a group called the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), with strong support from Saudi Arabia, has begun to promote conversion to Islam and the Islamization of Mindanao. The Balik-Islam, or back-to-Islam movement, as this group is sometimes referred to, is well financed and supported by Saudi "daa'wa" organizations, which have credibility among the thousands of Filipino overseas foreign workers (OFW) returning from Gulf countries, where over 1.5 million Filipino workers are now registered. Balik-Islam considers itself a legitimate religious education movement tasked with winning back Filipinos who, before the arrival of the Spanish, had been Muslims.

*From a jihadi perspective, the Philippines is Asia's ultimate crusader nation, an intimate American ally that subjugates its Muslim minority with active aid of the U.S. military. Mindanao is Islam's historical high-water mark, the farthest frontier of the Muslim world. RSM and Manila's Muslim converts are a reminder of what might have been and, in the jihadi imagination, what can still be.<sup>49</sup>*

The Balik-Islam approach is particularly attractive to youth in Mindanao and Manila who have little or no access to quality education or training and whose only prospect is a life of poverty and unemployment. Saudi-financed literature and scholarships provide an attractive alternative that few can resist. Apparently, funds raised in the Gulf states are channeled through RSM to the hard pressed ASG/JI groups, which have taken refuge in Mindanao. This alliance of convenience gains public support every time they exploit the negative publicity from excessive government counter-insurgency operations, which are seen to discriminate against Muslim communities. The army has been accused of using excessive force, disrupting community development and coercively re-settling Muslim communities in areas unsuitable for sustaining a livelihood. So far, however, there seems to be no evidence to suggest that new converts to the Balik-Islam movement have joined the ranks of militant Muslim insurgents.

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<sup>49</sup>International Crisis Group (2005), "Philippine Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts."

## **ARMM Governance**

To placate the rebels, the government of the Philippines has allowed a measure of local political and educational autonomy in Muslim Mindanao. The overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship and reinstatement of elite democracy in 1986 created a political rupture within which new possibilities for Muslim Filipinos began to take shape. The new administration of Corazon Aquino, which saw lingering Communist and Islamist insurgencies as artifacts of the Marcos dictatorship, was sympathetic to Muslims' claims of oppression and relatively willing to acknowledge the historical legacy of Christian Filipinos' biases in furthering that oppression.

This new climate led to the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in 1990. Significant steps were taken to consolidate the ARMM's autonomous status in 1996 under President Ramos, when the region was granted the right to establish its own legislature. The ARMM encompasses the poorest part of Mindanao. Its present composition, which includes five provinces and one city, namely, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan (except for Isabela City), Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Marawi City, was decided by plebiscite after the enactment of RA 9054, the New Expanded Regional Autonomy Law, in 2002.

While the legal framework which established the ARMM government clearly grants that entity the right to raise its own revenues, the right to provide basic services and the right to legislate change, the record so far is disappointing. Lack of education and training among Muslim leaders committed to creating peaceful self-government within the ARMM, meant that little progress was made in the first years after the ARMM set up its own government structures.

Without the capacity, resources or stability needed to build a strong autonomous Muslim society, the ARMM has a weak and divided administration, poor governance and under-funded programs that lack support from central government. The poor performance of the ARMM legislature has been made worse by Manila's tendency toward cronyism. The first two governors of the autonomous region under Aquino and Ramos were both close associates and party supporters. After a poor showing, Ramos encouraged Nur Misuari, a popular MNLF leader, to stand for election in 1998, which he won. Unfortunately, Manila's tendency to manipulate and control ARMM's leadership was re-asserted when President Arroyo took office and pushed out Misuari to replace him with Dr. Parouk Hussin, an ineffective leader. In 2004 another Arroyo favorite, Datu Rizaldy Ampatuan, took over and is currently still governor. The jury is still out as to his eventual impact and performance<sup>50</sup>.

Unfortunately, the 2002 plebiscite that was intended to enable ARMM's expansion into a New Regional Autonomous Government, which would have included many more contiguous Muslim communities, only succeeded in attracting two; Basilan and Marawi City. The current ARMM governance structure reflects an imperfect attempt to give Muslim communities the independence for which they clamor, without granting the autonomy needed to develop their own form of government reflective of Muslim values. Consequently, the decentralized institutions which make up the ARMM legislature, merely replicate all the

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<sup>50</sup> Rufa Cagoco-Guiam, "Toward a Framework for Good Governance in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao: Prospects and Challenges," General Santo City, 2005.

bureaucratic and governance shortfalls of the central government in Manila, and with far less financial resources.

### **Government Failures**

The Arroyo government is losing credibility. Corruption, ineptitude and poor fiscal management are serious constraints. Recent economic decline has affected new poverty alleviation programs, including health and basic education. In Mindanao, as in Manila, political consensus is built around vested interests that are driven not by open democratic processes but narrow self-interest and sectarian or clan considerations. The ARMM's semi-autonomous status in every real sense allows Muslim communities only a half-full glass, especially when the Manila controlled process frequently overrules many of the policy and financial decisions made by the democratically elected regional assembly.

Low capacity and poor planning within the ARMM legislature means that education and other legislation passed in Manila is frequently out of step with the policy needs of the DepEd in Mindanao. A lack of relevant research and dearth of accurate educational statistics continues to hamper long-term education decision- and policy-making in the ARMM. ARMM-legislated policies must be consistent with those of the Manila central government. Critical areas pertaining to curriculum content, the integration and accreditation of *madaris* (plural of *madrasah*, an Islamic school) and the harmonization of education standards to meet national goals require special attention.

The MILF's weakened leadership status vis-à-vis more radical Islamic groups now entering the Southern Philippines is an unexpected new development that may be slowing down progress on the socio-economic development front. President Arroyo's failure to consolidate the peace with the MILF and other moderate groups has provided opportunity for a jihadist penetration of Mindanao that may have undermined the political gains made after the Moro Peace Accords and have contributed to the growing instability of Mindanao.

### **Education in the ARMM**

Education for children living within the ARMM jurisdiction is provided through public schools and through *madaris*. In recent years, the government has made efforts to bring these parallel systems closer together.

#### **Public Education**

The worsening national education situation has had a significant impact on Mindanao. There, student teacher ratios can sometimes be as high as 80 to 100 students per teacher, as compared to an average pupil-teacher ratio of 35 to 1 in the rest of the country. Thirty percent of the Muslim population is illiterate as compared to only 7 percent nationally.

Social indicators in Mindanao show the lowest net enrolment rates for basic education in the country. The primary net enrolment rate in 2001 was 85 percent as compared to an average of 96 percent for the rest of the country. Secondary enrolments rates were the lowest in the country, at 39 percent, as compared to a national average of 75 percent. The primary cohort transition rate is 40 percent, as compared to 80 percent for the rest of the country. Less than 20 percent of those who enter secondary education there complete the cycle.

### ***The ARMM System***

Responsibility for education was assigned to a Regional Department of Education (DepEd/ARMM). The ARMM education system is large and serves many families. In 2005, there were about 550 thousand students enrolled in public elementary schools and over 12,500 in private elementary schools. Public secondary enrolments exceeded 122 thousand, while secondary private enrolments were a tenth of that, at less than 20 thousand. The DepEd/ARMM employed nearly 20 thousand staff members, of which about 17 thousand are teachers. There are 162 school districts, more than 1,800 public elementary schools and only 46 private ones. At the secondary level there are 178 public schools and 37 private ones.

Within the ARMM different communities respond to different authorities represented by at least three levels.

- In Mindanao accountability in Christian communities is by and large through an elected local government structure responsible to the government in Manila. Funding, legislation and the delivery of public services are all held to account by elected local and central government officials. Educational services are accountable to the central government's department of education in Manila, which, in turn, is responsible for salaries, policy making and the delivery of educational services to beneficiaries.
- Muslim communities in the ARMM are held to account through their own elected semi-autonomous government, which, in theory, is beholden to the ARMM Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) in Cotabato. ARMM's authority to deliver education services is mediated through an administrative structure composed of the Department of Education, the local government units, the local school boards and the PTCAs.
- Camps run and organized by insurgent groups continue to hold influence in "ungoverned spaces" throughout Mindanao and outlying islands like the Sulu archipelago and Basilan. In some insurgent-governed areas attempts are being made to set up schools, health centers and other essential services with some degree of success. Accountability in insurgency areas is to one or more groups led by one or more leaders, or a religious council.

### ***Problems Within the DepEd/ARMM***

Within the DepEd/ARMM the implementation of quality education services suffers from the following serious deficiencies. A lack of clear standards and accountability mechanisms impedes any progress toward uniform quality education services at all levels. A shortage of funds for capital development has prevented the building of enough primary and secondary schools to meet the demand created by rapid population growth. Teachers are still not being paid sufficiently for the work they do, and on a regular basis. Weak performance on the part of poorly trained teachers and principals will not be mitigated unless the ARMM sets up an adequate in-service training provision. The production and distribution of textbooks and learning materials, especially to remote communities, is still a major problem. Learning resources arrive late, damaged or pilfered because those responsible for delivery are not held accountable. The ARMM examination system is fraught with inefficiencies when examinations don't conform to the content and standard set by the national examination system. For example, frequently students have to sit the same examination on different days

and teachers marking and setting examinations are not trained to carry out this function objectively and to an agreed standard.

Lack of financial and administrative management capacity at all levels in the education system is holding back changes introduced by internationally funded programs. The management system lacks financial integrity and an effective centralized support system of budgeting, planning, finance and administration. Staff selection, recruitment, promotion and personnel benefits management systems lack transparency, which is affecting confidence in the quality and effectiveness of the education system. Effective monitoring and evaluation and information and communications systems are lacking<sup>51</sup>.

### ***Gaps Between the Central Government and the ARMM in the Education Sector***

Corruption, weak governance, poor capacity and inefficient allocation of resources all conspire to prevent the central government's implementation of the poverty-amelioration plans of the Arroyo government. Educational policies imposed by the central government don't seem to be meeting the needs of the ARMM system.

The ARMM's semi-autonomous status is stymied by lack of control over financial resources and policies governing the way schools are being run to serve Muslim community needs. In effect, continued conflict and lack of security will undermine the ARMM's autonomy as long as Manila perceives its instability as a major threat to governing the country. Autonomy gains credibility only when the autonomous entity is both financially self-supporting and has the necessary capacity to sustain itself. In the ARMM several structural and systemic factors may be impeding the ARMM's ability to become autonomous. On the national structural level, the ARMM was designed to keep fiscal and policy controls firmly within the central government, in Manila. Accountability is still through central government in Manila despite the establishment of a separate legislature and government in the ARMM. Most ARMM laws and policies on education are still tied to the Manila decision-making process. For example, legislation to alter the status of the *madaris* won't proceed till Manila decides to integrate Muslim education into the national mainstream, and this despite appropriate ARMM legislation for this to happen. Responsibility, both legal and fiscal, still resides with Manila and is likely to continue so until Mindanao ceases to be a national security problem.

### ***Madaris***

By the mid-1990s the legal and policy frameworks were in place for Muslim Filipinos to determine the content and direction of their education for the first time since losing their independence to the U.S. at the beginning of the century.<sup>52</sup> The legislation that led to the ARMM charged the regional government with the creation and maintenance of a public educational system that would teach "the rights and duties of citizenship and the cultures of the Muslims, Christians and tribal peoples in the region to develop, promote and enhance unity in diversity." It requires Arabic language instruction for Muslim children, and it

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<sup>51</sup> USAID, Philippines, "Review of Education Legislation and Policy Implementation in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," Prepared by Creative Associates International, Inc., Manila, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> This and the following three paragraphs are adapted from Milligan, op. cit.

requires schools to “develop consciousness and appreciation of one’s ethnic identity,” and to give the autonomous government the power to regulate the *madaris*.

The majority of children in the ARMM are enrolled in public schools, but a significant proportion attends *madaris*. Many attend both, going to public school on weekdays and *madaris* on weekends.<sup>53</sup> *Madaris* are privately owned, often externally financed schools providing primary and sometimes secondary level education of varying quality. Children attend them exclusively or at least on weekends in order to sustain their Islamic identity. These schools, however, offer little in the way of social and economic mobility within the larger Philippine society. The vast majority of *madaris* focus almost exclusively on religious instruction; thus students who attended them do not receive instruction in those subjects that would enable them to attend high schools and universities or compete for positions in the larger society. Even those *madaris* that do offer such instruction are often not recognized by the government or are of such poor quality that their graduates are equally handicapped. The quality of training that a *madrasah* teacher receives is not uniform and varies with the origin and source of support received. Some teachers are trained outside of the Philippines in religious schools and universities, in the Middle East, Malaysia and Indonesia. Thus graduates of the *madaris*, some of whom do go on to receive an advanced Islamic education in the Middle East, are employable only as poorly paid teachers in Islamic schools. This contributes to a sense of exclusion, frustration and discrimination that has radicalized many.

### **Integrating *Madaris* into Mainstream Formal Education**

When the ARMM education system was legislated, Muslim educators developed a policy to integrate *madrasah* education into the mainstream, encouraging and supporting *madaris* to expand their curricula to include subject matter taught in the public schools. This would enable those integrated *madaris* to seek government recognition and thus be eligible for limited public support under the Fund for Assistance to Private Education. It would also, theoretically, afford those students who choose a *madrasah* education a measure of social mobility through the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to transfer to public schools, attend government universities, or to seek employment in the national economy.<sup>54</sup>

The most frequently cited examples of integrated *madaris* are Ibn Siena Integrated school which was established in 1994 in Marawi City and the Shariff Kabungsuwan College, in Cotabato. The curriculum in each integrates the study of the Koran, the Hadith, the Sunnah and Islamic history and Arabic with modern science, social science, math and English. A second parallel Islamic non-formal adult education movement, called Jema’at al Tabligh, was introduced from India to Mindanao in the 1970s and is still thriving. Tabligh teaches a form of personal moral responsibility to the community via the Koran, the Hadith and the Sunnah in an attempt to fill the gap between the more formal Muslim education practiced through the Integrated Schools and *madaris*.

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<sup>53</sup> In 2003, a World Bank study on Mindanao estimated that there were 440 *madaris* catering for a student population of about 90 thousand students. Only 44 of these were recognized by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the ARMM.

<sup>54</sup> Milligan, op. cit.

Project *Madrasah* Education (PME) was launched by Dr. Mahad Mutilan in 2002(?), while he was vice-governor and secretary of the ARMM Department of Education. This initiated a well-intentioned attempt to Islamize public education while also stressing the need to decentralize the management of education to the community and school levels. A second, but more difficult to achieve PME goal tried to establish pilot integrated *madaris* in each province of the ARMM to act as models to speed up *madaris* modernization and accreditation.

Through PME, Islamic values will be infused into the public school curriculum both in the formal values education program and in the curricula of other subjects. Textbooks will be written and disseminated that depict Muslims and Islam favorably and accurately reflect their values. To this end locally respected *ulama* have been engaged to help review, revise, and write new curricula and textbooks. Arabic language instruction is to be expanded as well in order to enhance Muslim children's opportunities to interact with the rest of the Muslim world as well as enable them to read the Koran, the traditional purpose of Arabic instruction in the *madaris*. The goal of these efforts is to make public schools more attractive to Muslim families and thus reduce the incentive to send children to *madaris* outside of government control and susceptible, in some instances, to radical Islamist influences.

Several obstacles conspire, however, to hinder successful implementation of the PME initiative. The geographic concentration of Muslims in western Mindanao and the growth in the numbers of Muslim school teachers since the 1970s has meant that many Muslim children attend majority Muslim schools taught by Muslims and located in Muslim communities. The centralization of policy making in Manila ensured that curricula "did not reflect, and at times conflicted with, local values." Centralized testing policies enforce teacher compliance with this curriculum; those who choose to deviate from it jeopardize their students' already slim chances for social advancement. Thus the new autonomy to design curricula that reflect local values represents a significant shift in policy which has still to be reflected in practice.

## **Initiatives of International Agencies**

To respond to concerns about growing instability in the region and the ARMM's attempt to improve education services, international assistance to education in Mindanao has stepped up in the past few years.

### **Planning and Funding Assistance from the Development Banks**

In the mid-1990s, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had offered to help the ARMM prepare a plan for improving education throughout the autonomous area. The ADB's project is assisting in the development of a ten-year master plan for basic education. The plan is to be based on government legislation and its commitment to Education for All, made in 2000 at the Dakar Global Education Forum.

The ARMM received a boost in funding for education in 1996, after the signing of the Moro Peace Accord. Led by the World Bank, international agencies set up a Trust Fund for the reconstruction of MILF-controlled areas in Mindanao. The fund assessed the need for basic education and vocational training, which is supported by an MILF request for more attention to measures to alleviate youth unemployment.

In December 2002 the World Bank initiated the ARMM Social Fund Project, a \$30 million loan that channels small grant to community development and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including, among many other options, small schools and community learning centers.

### **Technical Assistance from Bi-lateral Agencies**

The largest and most comprehensive bilateral aid program currently in the Philippines is Australian. Six of its 19 projects are in education. The goals and strategies of AusAid's program are similar to those of USAID's (described just below), and while the DepEd/ARMM has not taken a leadership role in coordinating international support, the two agencies make an effort not to overlap or interfere with each other. AusAid provides support to school management; teacher training in math, science, and English; support to *madaris*; programs for out-of-school children and illiterate adult members of their families; and support to the Philippine Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in vocational training.

### **USAID**

A significant part of USAID's program portfolio in the Philippines comprises projects in the conflict areas that focus on peace, stabilization and economic growth. The education sector program is being implemented in selected areas of Mindanao and the ARMM. As discussed earlier, out-of-school youth in these areas represent a sizable pool from which the insurgents, terrorist groups, and criminal organizations based in Mindanao can draw. The goal of USAID's education program is to increase access to quality education and livelihood skills as a means of stemming the tide of youth turning to radical Islamic movements. In order to get more children and youth to participate in an accredited program of basic education, the program has a three-pronged strategy:

- To improve access to public education at the community level;
- To maximize use of alternative learning options for those with poor access to formal schooling;
- To strengthen *madaris* as an integral component of the basic education system in ARMM.

In addition, USAID is working with the ARMM to formulate policies that achieve its broad goals and acquire the capacity to implement them.

USAID implements its program through the EQuALLS project and a grant assistance program. EQuALLS has a budget of \$30 million over a 5-year period, and this figure is likely to increase.

### **Government Schools**

One prong of USAID's support strategy is to improve access to and quality of public primary and secondary schools. To encourage enrollment and retention in primary school, the project encourages children, parents and members of the community to value education. Community ownership and participation, a previously missing element in Mindanao's schools, is now being promoted through a process involving national and international NGOs, whose trained personnel are better placed to win the trust of the communities participating in this program.



Over 200 PTCAs have been trained to financially manage their schools affecting over 150 thousand students. Committees are democratically elected from within each community and have been trained to organize fund raising and budget management in support of teachers and administrators in local schools.

To help pupils complete the primary level, the USAID project is reviving a DepEd program called IMPACT<sup>55</sup> as a flexible learning option for elementary students in overcrowded and mixed-level classrooms with high student/teacher ratios. The program will allow pupils to enter school when they can and exit when they must, with the doors remaining open for re-entry until they have earned an elementary education certificate.

To improve access to secondary school, the project is working with four pilot schools implementing the EASE<sup>56</sup> program for students who find themselves unable to attend school regularly and are at-risk of dropping-out. EASE is an innovative program of flexible attendance supplemented by self-learning. The project is also supporting the government's move to an open high school system.

The quality of education at both primary and secondary levels is being addressed through support to pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. Here, a recent assessment carried out by the EQuALLS project identified the need to improve pre- and in-service skills training in reading, science, and math. Improved training methods should include experiential learning, practical teaching sessions, lesson demonstrations, role-playing and other active-learning techniques<sup>57</sup>.

USAID is working with the private sector to introduce computer education to schools. The TEAMM<sup>58</sup> project is introducing educational television (ETV) in about 150 schools and is testing a ten-part TV series on livelihood and business skills for out-of-school youth.

The project is also assisting in policy reform by identifying and supporting policy development that addresses disparities in the ARMM and in other conflict-affected areas and developing an ARMM policy reform agenda. The output is a policy reform agenda and an assessment of key institutions, particularly DepEd/ARMM, and their capacity to implement these policies.

### ***The Alternative Learning System***

Many youth in the Mindanao area are not able to attend public schools. An Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Philippines was developed by the Department of Education with ADB loan support in the 1990s, but funding for ALS diminished drastically once the loan project came to a close in 2002. It has been revitalized under the EQuALLS project, updated and contextualized for Mindanao, and is now the largest non-formal education program in the Philippines. The ALS has two streams, one for elementary, with the objective of reintegrating out-of-school children into the school system, and another for secondary,

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<sup>55</sup> Instructional Management by Parents, Communities and Teachers (IMPACT)

<sup>56</sup> Effective Alternative Secondary Education (EASE)

<sup>57</sup> USAID, Philippines, Capacity-Building Needs Assessment of the Department of Education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Prepared by Creative Associates, Inc., Manila, 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Television Education for the Advancement of Muslim Mindanao (TEAMM)

which can result in out-of-school youth attaining a high school equivalency certification. Initial data indicate that in the first year of the ALS implementation in Muslim Mindanao, about 6,000 learners participated and almost 90 percent completed the full eight-month class cycle, a much higher than anticipated completion rate. In the second year nine to ten thousand more out-of-school children and youth are expected to participate.

The project uses hundreds of teaching and learning modules intended for classroom instruction and individualized study. These modules are distributed to ALS Community Learning Centers constructed or refurbished by the project. Project staff and NGOs prepare instructional managers to conduct good-quality sessions, including a series of individualized and small group instructions for those who could not attend the group sessions regularly.

The project helps local NGOs keep the public informed of current and future ALS activities through broadcasts and announcements on a local radio stations and regular consultation meetings with community leaders and stakeholders. It works closely with the DepEd/ARMM in administering the placement and equivalency tests. It is also helping the DepEd National and DepEd/ARMM formulate policies to improve the quality and efficiency of ALS.

### ***Madaris***

Another thrust of USAID's program is work with *madaris* to improve the quality of the education they offer and to help their graduates transition in the public school system. The emergence of a groundbreaking standard curriculum for private *madaris*, a key element of the government's Roadmap for Upgrading Muslim Basic Education, demands that *madrasah* teachers receive substantial training and orientation in matters such as classroom management, lesson planning, beginning reading, grading system, teaching methodology, and production of low-cost instructional materials. Many teachers in *madaris* may also require refresher or remedial training in English and math. The EQuALLS project is helping 20 pilot *madaris* modernize their curriculum and train teachers in effective teaching methods. Standard math, science and English curricula are being integrated into the traditional *madrasah* curriculum, one grade level each year; *madrasah* teachers are being trained to teach these subjects, or teachers from nearby public schools are asked to teach certain subject in local *madaris*. The project is helping meet a dire need for learning materials by supplying them through government and private sources. Assistance also includes classroom furniture, toilet facilities, books and classroom supplies.

In addition to providing these services directly, the project is attempting to help integrate *madaris* into the public education system. PTCAs have been organized in each pilot *madrasah*, and each is also pursuing legal status and recognition from DepEd ARMM. This may be considered the first of many steps toward eventual DepEd accreditation.

To offer *madrasah* graduates the opportunity to participate in the DepEd's Alternative Learning System (ALS), an equivalency and bridging program for *madrasah* completers is being prepared. The project aims to reach 700 *madrasah* students (completers) in the first year of the experiment. It will offer a two-track educational opportunity for *madrasah* graduates (age 12-20) who could not continue their education after completing *madrasah* and could not find good jobs. One track will be through the existing ALS program culminating, for those that pass, in a high school equivalency diploma. The other track, more experimental in nature and targeting the younger 12-15 year-olds, will offer an intensive preparation class

for the equivalency placement exam for entry into the formal school system. The ambitious target is to reach 700 *madrasah* graduates within two years.

### **Shortcomings in International Support Strategies**

Current education programs in Mindanao assume that more and better quality education will help to stabilize the economy by educating and training a future workforce to meet the challenges of a changing society. Education is also assumed to provide a degree of immunity for the young against the corrosive influences of jihadist propaganda and dogma.

Some argue that attention to basic services and social needs came too late and was supported by too few resources and will therefore be unsustainable. Furthermore, critics of the current approach hold that what is really required is massive investment in large-scale programs that will make a big impact quickly. However, after closer examination, recent evidence reveals that the many well intentioned large and small donor-driven education projects and programs aren't providing the level of impact expected to address some of the more urgent economic, social, political and security causes of fragility. ARMM education still isn't addressing major political causes of fragility like social inequity, center-periphery elitism, religious exclusion; or economic sources like rent-seeking, unequal access to jobs and poor distribution of resources; or security issues like ungoverned spaces, a well organized insurgency and public disengagement. All of these elements are proving to be real constraints for the stabilization of Mindanao.

The national budget is not strong enough to support a major development thrust in Mindanao or the ARMM, and donors are increasingly reluctant to invest what is needed for Mindanao's development while they perceive central government to be corrupt, ineffective and divided. Lack of cooperation between U.S. military-led civil affairs programs and multi-donor development programs may be contributing to the perception that there is poor coordination and little agreement among major players in arriving at a satisfactory development strategy for Mindanao's communities.

The future of privately supported public services in Mindanao rests, however, with investor's perceptions of what lies ahead. If the current status quo of sporadic conflict continues to threaten the peace, it is unlikely that donors and investors will stay the course long enough to insure the growth of industry and business needed to jump start Mindanao's economy sufficiently to support the ambitious development targets expected by international banks.

### **Lessons Learned**

Although current investments by government and international agencies in education in Muslim areas may still be insufficient, their significant increase in recent years seems to support the notion that inequitable education services throughout the Philippines have contributed to the growing fragility of government in the southern region. The question now is whether improving education will help stabilize the region.

It is too soon to say whether or not the measures taken by the Philippines central and ARMM governments are making up for the lack of attention paid to Muslim communities in the southern part of the country and dampen the attraction of terrorist programs to Muslim youth in Mindanao. It is possible, however, to highlight promising aspects of the education

strategies used by government and international agencies to decrease the fragility of the Mindanao region.

- Government policy has turned away from efforts to secularize Muslim schools to helping these schools enhance and improve their curricula and instruction. As Milligan reported in 2004, this turn responds to the preference of Muslim communities.

*When Muslim Filipinos were given the freedom to shape the ends and means of their own education they chose to foreground Islam. Thus, Filipino Muslim educational experience suggests that secularization of education may only be feasible where it is already culturally acceptable. Imposing secularization where it is not acceptable—in some Muslim communities, for instance—may in fact be counter-productive, exacerbating rather than mitigating religious tensions. The Islamization of public education in Muslim Mindanao represents, in effect, a bet that lowering the wall of separation between mosque and state in the Philippines will create a space in which more moderate Muslim voices can articulate viable educational alternatives to the assimilative, alienating educational practices of the past that have contributed to the conflict in Muslim Mindanao.<sup>59</sup>*

The ARMM government has developed policies intended to improve the quality of education in *madaris* and to integrate their religious curriculum with the secular knowledge and skills of the government curriculum. This seems to be a positive step forward, eschewing any tendencies toward building a higher wall between *madaris* and government schools.

- Decentralizing education services does not, by itself, solve the problems of centralized service provision. USAID’s strategy, which is still of a short-term, three-year horizon, is to work directly with schools—in cooperation with NGOs—to improve their quality and with communities to improve access to schools. At the same time, it is working in close cooperation with the DepEd/ARMM, helping to build its capacity to institutionalize new practices. Different from USAID’s initial response to some other fragile states, the EQUALLS project works actively with local level officials across the territory that it serves.
- A concentrated focus on primary education may not be appropriate in failing states. USAID’s EQUALLS project steps out of the mold of USAID-supported education projects over the past 15 years by focusing a large component on youth who are beyond the age of primary school. It is not limiting activities to primary schools. The project has responded to the recognition that reforming primary education alone will not address the urgent need for more and better education in the Muslim region being served, and that the system must be more flexible to meet the needs of youth and children. It has capitalized on opportunities at the primary and secondary levels to help youth and children move through the formal schools at their own pace.
- A major problem in the region is the lack of access for many children and youth to the only system—government’s—that qualifies them for further education and most good

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<sup>59</sup> Milligan, *op. cit.*

jobs. The EQuALLS project has found ways to help more learners complete school or acquire an equivalent basic education. An unusual and apparently effective component of the project is support to an Alternative Learning System that was established by government. The Philippines already had such an alternative system, although it was under-funded and never implemented in ARMM). Using the existing system, rather than developing a new one, has led to unexpectedly high numbers of out-of-school youth able to benefit quickly, leading to reintegration into the formal school system, or reintegration into the world of work via a high school equivalency certification.

## V. Uganda

This report describes the history of the delivery of education services in Uganda since the Museveni government came to power and how changing relationships among government and international agencies affected government's capability and willingness to provide and sustain education service delivery.

This case study is categorized, in the USAID/DCHA/CMM typology of fragile environments, as a post-conflict state in early recovery, with rising levels of effectiveness and legitimacy. The environment changed dramatically between 1987 and 2003, the years covered by the study, slowly but surely improving. By 2003, it could hardly be said that the political-economic environment was fragile. The Uganda case is one of policy decisions and interventions that were effective in improving the delivery of education services. It demonstrates that when a government strengthens its delivery of education services it helps reduce conditions of fragility, thus, in turn, becoming even more capable of providing education.

The state's recovery in general and the education sector in particular has had four phases.

- Between 1987, when Yoweri Museveni became president, and around 1992, when government launched an education reform;
- Between 1992 and 1997, the years during which recovery in the education sector was steady and remarkable;
- 1997, when Universal Primary Education was introduced;
- 1997 to the present, while government and international agencies have worked together to respond to the UPE policy.

Throughout this time period, Museveni's government has been threatened by ethnic-based groups competing for power. The only significant enduring group is the Lord's Resistance Army, in northern Uganda, and the enduring struggle for that part of the country keeps Uganda, in spite of generally remarkable progress, in the fragile state category.

The case study moves through each of the four time periods listed above. It describes the key events and actions undertaken by government to provide education services to primary school children. It discusses shifts in the relationships among politicians, policy-makers, international agencies, education administrators, teachers, pupils and their families. And it summarizes the policy and technical achievements resulting from these interactions. Following this history, the study summarizes the political-economic issues and lessons learned.

### **1987-92: Immediate Post-crisis**

In this five-year period, government did little to provide education services. Communities relied on their own resources, and many children had no access to education at all.

In 1987, Museveni's army defeated the competing factions struggling to take control of Uganda after years of the disastrous rule of Idi Amin and Milton Obote, civil war, and war

with troops in bordering Tanzania. When he came to power, there was only a broken, leaderless government in place, and services, including education, that had been effectively managed by the new Ugandan government for a brief time after Independence in 1962, had come to a near halt. In the company of his loyal soldiers, Museveni formed a new government; one of his trusted officers was appointed Minister of Education and Sports.

Mistrust was deep among ethnic groups and even individuals. Many of those who worked in the MOES still feared for their lives as well as their jobs, and director-level positions turned over frequently. A structure was in place, but few were willing to risk making the decisions needed daily to revive that structure and organize the delivery of education.

Many schools continued to operate with support of local communities. Since records were not kept, the ministry knew little about how many teachers and students were in the system. Independent church schools and teacher training colleges operated without regulation or guidance. Primary education was far from universal; only those families who could pay school fees educated their children; the post-colonial system still catered to the elite.

By 1990, the World Bank was lending money to pay for publishing contracts so that textbooks were available and for construction contracts so that classrooms were built. But the general sense was that only a fraction of funds received by government resulted in new primary schools and books in the hands of pupils.

### **1992-96: Early Recovery**

Beginning around 1992, the Ugandan government began to take charge of economic and fiscal policies, which allowed it to gradually implement sectoral reforms. In the education sector, ministry officials followed the lead of international agencies in improving the quality of basic education in primary schools.

### **Growing Government Capacity**

Essential to Uganda's ability to improve education services during the 1990s was government's growing capacity to manage fiscal and economic policies, which lay the foundation for reform in every sector. The government began to set public spending priorities in the context of projected revenues. It tracked monthly expenditures and dramatically lowered inflation. It also backed sound economic policies, notably the liberalization of the coffee market and allowing Asians to return and do business in Uganda. The Ministry of Finance worked with line ministries, including education, to establish sectoral priorities and programs that it could afford to finance.

### **New Education Policies**

Between 1992 and 1996, government officially adopted a series of education policies and programs, but it effectively turned these over to external aid agencies to take the lead in amending and implementing.

In 1992, the government approved a White Paper, carefully drafted by key Ugandan educators and without foreign involvement, that prescribed a broad reform of the education system. The White Paper was the result of efforts that began in July 1987 with the formation of an Education Policy Review Committee, which was re-constituted in November 1989 to include more representation of the president's political party, the National Reform

Movement. The planned reform was comprehensive, covering all sectors of the system and all layers of the MOES.

The White Paper process coincided with the international Education for All (EFA) movement, which urged governments to provide education to all children and basic literacy to adults and youth. In Uganda, as in many countries, the emphasis was on primary education. The government focused on adult and youth basic education was minute in comparison. EFA also pressured international agencies to increase support to primary education; thus, Uganda's reform received support from outside.

### **Modes of Donor Support**

Uganda negotiated three major programs with donors. The first, in 1991, was a structural adjustment credit agreement (SAC) with the World Bank and the IMF, which aimed at adjusting financial policies throughout the government, including the education sector. The second, in 1992, was with USAID for project (technical) assistance and non-project (financial) assistance, an arrangement through which USAID put dollars into the treasury with specific conditions attached regarding reforms in the ministry of education. The third, in 1993, was a World Bank loan to the ministry of education with conditions attached regarding reforms. These agreements gave the MOES \$135 million in budgetary support loans and grants and \$25 million in technical assistance programmed over ten years.

World Bank and USAID contributions constituted less than one-half of one percent of the government education budget (\$135 million in contributions to a budget of \$35,026,000<sup>60</sup>), yet the budgetary support offered by the two donors was sufficient to give them a voice in reform goals and programs. This resulted in policies and programs largely limited to primary education:

- A new system for in-service teacher training
- A substantial raise in teachers' salaries
- Sufficient numbers of good quality textbooks
- Improved gender equity
- A new curriculum and reformed examination system
- Improved planning and management
- Restructured ministry
- Increased access to schooling.

For the most part, the goals of the international agencies reflected the ministry's own goals. As the World Bank and USAID loosely coordinated their programs, their support was complementary. USAID took responsibility for support to teacher training, improving teachers' terms and conditions, and management at the school level. The World Bank took responsibility for support in school construction, curriculum reforms, examination

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<sup>60</sup> Education for All 2000 database (UNESCO/ IIEP).



(assessment) reforms, and planning practices. It also pledged support to the new in-service Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS), which was the heart of USAID's program.

All three funding programs were conditional on policy changes, some beyond the sector, most within it. The World Bank made its initial loan on the conditions, first, that funds be reallocated from the military to the education sector, and, within the education sector, from higher to primary education. The second condition was that the government's wage bill be more tightly capped and managed.

The World Bank's education sector loan credit of \$52 million required the government to undertake the activities funded by the loan (school and college construction, curriculum and examination reform, improved planning and database management, textbook publishing and printing, and development of the TDMS).

USAID conditioned its assistance on the government's agreement to improve teachers' terms and conditions of service and improve the ratio of girls to boys who enroll in and complete primary school. It also asked government to institute structures, systems and policies in collaboration USAID's technical assistance in order to develop the TDMS in 10 districts, provide primary schools a sustainable supply of instructional materials, and improve district- and school-level management.

### **Implementing Policy Changes and New Programs**

By 1993, a full agenda was in place and government had agreements for external assistance in their implementation. Who set the plan in motion and kept it moving? While nominally in the leadership role, the minister had a dictatorial style that intimidated ministry staff and made it hard for them to plan and implement programs. The minister was known to readily dismiss staff who assumed authority. In the Ugandan bureaucracy (inherited from the British), the permanent secretary is supposed to execute the political will communicated by government through the minister. But none could satisfy this government; six permanent secretaries served in five years. The vacuum of leadership thus created inhibited ministry staff members' taking responsibility for even minor decisions about implementation of the reform but opened the door wide for interventions of external aid agencies, which provided resources to the minister and did not deal with him on an inferior basis.

USAID and the World Bank provided starkly different modes of assistance. USAID combined project (technical) assistance with non-project (budgetary) assistance; it facilitated dialogue within the ministry and beyond in various forums, depending on the issues and the stakeholders. The World Bank expected the ministry to implement programs, hiring its own technical assistance as needed. But in the early 1990s the ministry, for reasons described above, was not capable of implementing programs on its own. The Bank continued to disburse funds, even when the ministry did not meet the conditions it had agreed to. It did not hire additional staff in the Planning department, delayed reforms in examinations and in construction of teacher training colleges and primary schools. USAID-supported programs, in contrast, moved ahead, as they were supported by financial incentives, technical assistance, and strict monitoring of compliance. Government raised teachers' salaries, changed textbook policy, and reformed its systems and structures to support the TDMS.

### ***Teacher Training and Support***

The program that received the most attention from government and its external partners was the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS), which entailed a major reforming of teacher training and support. Formerly primary teacher training colleges were pre-service training schools subject to standards and procedures instituted by the Institute of Teacher Education at Kyambogo (ITEK). They did not interact systematically with either schools or district education offices. With the inauguration of the TDMS, “core” colleges took over the in-service training function, while ITEK remained responsible for pre-service training but got little support from the new program. The TDMS developed a network of schools, colleges, and district offices. The chain of command ran from the TDMS headquarters in Kampala, which was heavily supported by USAID’s project, to the college administrators, who were trained intensively and guided closely by project staff, to “tutors,” selected college staff members assigned to the program who circulated among schools supporting teachers-in-training, first, and other teachers as well.

Although TDMS staff did not officially report to district education officers—the line officers of the ministry—some district officials viewed the tutors as their own agents. Officially, when tutors intervened in district rather than college matters, such as advising that a head teacher was neglecting his or her duties, they reported to the college administration, who advised the district office. TDMS staff increasingly made an effort to involve district staff in the system. This helped legitimize the sharing of responsibility, if not authority, between the district offices and the colleges.

The TDMS was initially situated within a World Bank Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in the planning department of the ministry, which had some autonomy from the rest of the ministry, mainly in financing. Autonomy had the advantage of keeping TDMS resources out of the hands of bureaucratic red tape and—possibly—corruption. It presented the risk, however, that when external support and protection ended, colleges would not develop supportive relationships with ministry offices in Kampala, and their authority and capacity would deteriorate. In short, the ministry needed to be restructured around the TDMS so that the functions of that new system would become institutionalized.

Anticipating this risk, in 1996 the USAID project asked Ugandan education officials to plan for the integration of the TDMS functions into the central ministry offices. Although the ministry approved the plan, its implementation was stalled in 1997 by the onset of Universal Primary Education (UPE) policies and the ministry’s desire to first revise its own reorganization plan, in the wake of UPE. Eventually the TDMS became institutionalized, housed in the Department of Teacher Training.

### ***Raises in Teachers’ Salaries***

Raising teachers’ salaries was a goal the ministry strongly supported, and USAID’s financial incentive, as well as a growing economy, gave the ministries of Education, Finance, and Public Service the means they needed to do the job. Teachers’ salaries were raised significantly, and while USAID provided the impetus and the leadership, the government went beyond even USAID’s expectation. USAID gave budgetary support for the first three years (1993-1996) on the condition that government would budget an increase in teachers’ salaries the first year and actually raise salaries the second year. To accomplish this, the Ministry of Finance had to allocate funds to the Ministry of Education and Sports for salaries,

the Ministry of Public Service had to agree to raise the rates at which teachers were paid, and the Ministry of Education had to disburse the money and get paychecks into the hands of teachers.

Even with the combined will of the three ministries, some daunting hurdles had to be overcome. First, a new staff establishment formula had to be agreed upon. This was accomplished through two workshops, at which all stakeholders put their concerns and constraints on the table and negotiated an agreeable plan. Next, all district offices had to be trained to identify which teachers were not on the payroll and which individuals on the payroll were not actually teaching. Working with these officials, project staff organized a “head count” in May 1994, which allowed the Ministry of Public Service to clean up the payroll, and the Ministry of Education and Sports found it had 4,000 fewer teachers to pay. This helped the government free up funds to raise salaries. While USAID had asked that salaries be raised from a rock bottom level to a “living wage” level within ten years, the government achieved the target within four years.

### ***Changes in Textbook Procurement***

The ministry’s Instructional Materials Unit (IMU) successfully reformed its system of procuring textbooks and distributing them to schools. Three groups of stakeholders were positioned to block attempts to changes in textbook procurement. One was of those within the ministry that wanted the government to develop and publish books itself. The White Paper called for the ministry to create its own publishing house, in which textbooks would be written, edited, and printed. The World Bank, which had been financing textbook purchases, supported development of an in-house publishing center. Another group in opposition was the British publishers who did not want to lose their long-term monopoly contract with the ministry for textbooks and a few ministry officials had something to lose in the termination of this huge cash flow arrangement. USAID helped the ministry convene these stakeholders to agree upon how to reform an operation that had obvious flaws—schools were not getting books. Through negotiations in a public dialogue, the parties agreed to liberalize the textbook market and procure books from private publishers, foreign and local. Working from a list of texts approved by the ministry and a precise budget for books, each school would be asked to select its own books. The ministry would then consolidate orders, make the purchases, and, deliver books to schools.

### ***Change in the Curriculum and Testing***

Grants and loans aided the government in strengthening its National Curriculum Development Center and the Uganda National Examinations Board, which is responsible for testing students for promotion. The World Bank asked the NCDC to write a new primary curriculum and the UNEB to reform the examination system, introduce continuous assessment in the classroom, and implement a national education assessment program to find out what students were learning and how student achievement varied among schools. These projects suffered long delays but were eventually completed. Work at UNEB was disrupted in 1998 by the dismissal of some staff persons, who were accused of corruption.

### ***Regular Communication among Offices***

At a high (department) level of management within the MOES, USAID and the World Bank urged the creation of a new group to help manage the reform. The National Primary Education Reform Program Management Committee (NPERPMC) was comprised of the directors of each department implicated by reform activities. These included not only departments within the MOES (primary education, teacher training, inspectorate, planning), but also in the Ministries of Finance and Public Service. The Permanent Secretary chaired NPERPMC, which worked through committees that oversaw specific tasks, such as the preparation of teacher training modules. The new management unit did not alter ministry channels of authority. Neither did it circumvent them. Rather, the committee brought together government staff for the purpose of communicating with each other on Reform activities. The permanent secretary chaired the committee, but constant turnover in this office often stifled leadership. NPERPMC became inactive in 1997 when UPE was launched. The implementers of that policy ignored the committee, and what had been a budding organism of reform leadership appeared to wither away until it was reborn in 1998 as a larger and more powerful forum, the Education Sector Review.

### **Impact on Schools**

During this era, significant changes took place at the policy level, but most of them did not yet have a widespread effect on most schools. The new textbook procurement procedures took awhile to implement; the TDMS was launched in a limited number of districts. Salary raises appeared to motivate at least some teachers to work more diligently, and in the pilot districts of the TDMS, teachers received more active supervision and support. With the exception of the classroom construction program, which dragged far behind schedule and was riddled with problems, most changes affected the quality of education—better teachers, better textbooks, and a better functioning system. But in 1997, the focus changed dramatically to access—getting more children into school.

### **1997: Universal Primary Education and a Shift in Power**

In 1997, Uganda saw a dramatic shift in power, as government stepped in to put its own agenda before that of the external aid agencies.

It was the President of Uganda, not the Ministry of Education and Sports or international agencies, who stepped in to help more children enter school. Museveni used his political authority to mandate change in how the government and parents were to share the financing of primary education. No one, including the ministry, the new Parliament, or international donors, attempted to oppose the mandate. USAID tried in vain to engage politicians in a dialogue that would at least modify the president's proposal. Members of Parliament who had professional training and experience in education (there were over forty of them) were concerned that flooding the schools with students would undo the gains made in training teachers and textbook provision, but initially they waited.

### **The New Policy**

The White Paper had called for UPE (meaning free and compulsory primary education), starting with the first four grades in 1991, the next two in 1995, and the highest grades (7 and 8) in 1999. The paper also envisioned that schools, teachers, and textbooks would be in place

to accommodate increased enrollments. But the policy had not been implemented. When he announced in 1996 that, if elected, that he would institute free UPE, the President overrode the White Paper. He further modified the policy by stating that four children per family would be permitted to enter school without paying fees, that families were to enroll their girls as well as boys, and that all families were to register these children during the first week of school.

### **The Politics**

What gave rise to the new policy? In June 1996, Ugandans elected a president for the first time since 1980. Although Museveni, who had become president through a military coup in 1986, was clearly the favorite, he was not the only candidate. All the candidates sensed that access to a good education was an issue and promised dramatic improvements in education. Museveni's platform of free universal primary education was among the more modest campaign promises, and other factors as well, including Museveni's demonstrated competence as president and his hero status among many, undoubtedly affected voting behavior. One conclusion, however, is that while other candidates offered more, their appeal was to narrower constituencies; free education had widespread appeal.<sup>61</sup>

After his election, it became clear that the president intended to keep his promise, and Universal Primary Education began when the school year opened in January 1997. Nationwide, enrollment rates doubled, growing from an estimated 2.6 million to 5.2 million.<sup>62</sup> Most increases were at the first and second grade levels.

### **A New Government Leadership Group**

The president delegated authority on implementing his UPE policy to a UPE Implementation Committee, headed by an assistant commissioner for education (ACE) and comprised of representatives of each department. The ACE reported directly to a newly appointed Minister of State for Education (one of two new appointments who served under the minister); the minister of state reported directly to the president. Thus, the ministry bureaucracy was effectively marginalized, and decisions were made entirely within the UPE Implementation Committee.

The committee made its decisions in private, consulting neither other ministry officials nor donor officials. District and school officials, including teachers, were not consulted in decisions that they were charged with implementing. The only set of activities that posed as dialogue were the sessions held around the country by the ACE, but participants in these sessions characterized them as one-way pronouncements, not exchanges of thoughts and opinions. That others were not to meddle in policy-making became clear when the permanent secretary intervened to propose publicly that free education would be implemented gradually, in accordance with the White Paper, and was immediately removed from his position. Ministry officials learned quickly to take orders only from written circulars issued from the implementation committee.

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<sup>61</sup> World Bank (2004). *World Development Report*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>62</sup> Between 1990 and 1997, primary enrollment had increased by about 17 percent, from 2.47 million.

The new policy meant that there was an immediate need for more teachers. At first the Implementation Committee said (but did not put in writing) that schools were authorized to recruit more teachers. Many schools did so, only to find in the coming months that new recruits were not put on the payroll. Several parties became involved in this issue. The Ministry of Public Service did not have the authority to add teachers to the payroll because of the cap put on civil service employees by its SAC agreement with The World Bank and IMF. The education ministry took this constraint into account and calculated that teacher-pupil ratios would have to be adjusted from 1:40 to 1:50 (later adjusted to 1:55), and that in the first two grades, P1 and P2, the ratio would be doubled to 1:110. But when called before Parliament's Social Services Committee, the minister was admonished that such ratios were not workable and that his proposal for double sessions would compromise the quality of education. The minister was asked to find the funds within the ministry's budget to hire more teachers and bring the ratio to 1:55 for all classes by the beginning of the 1998 school year. In the meantime, the minister advised teachers to try to at least teach the alphabet and to keep young students occupied as best as possible while the school focused on helping those in the upper grade prepare for the Primary Leaving Exam.

### **Reduced Influence of Assistance Agencies**

When UPE was introduced in 1997, even the ability of USAID, World Bank, and the ministry staff with whom they were working closely to implement reform measures was squeezed. The UPE Implementation Committee kept itself at a distance from the TDMS, never calling upon its resources and even denigrating its achievements. For example, although USAID project staff and their counterparts had directed an efficient and fruitful "head count" of teachers in 1994, the Implementation Committee refused the offer of help when it repeated this exercise in 1997. The ministry staff appointed to TDMS became more fearful of making decisions visible to the minister, such as putting in place the resources needed to move the TDMS into the remaining areas of the country. Ministry staff in primary education and teacher training, who used to work cooperatively with TDMS staff, were distracted by UPE implementation. Some of those who had been most cooperative with TDMS were abruptly terminated by the minister.

### **Compromise**

As 1997 progressed, the polarization between the president's tightly controlled execution of his new policy and the inhibition and resistance of government cadres and external agencies engaged in education reform began to loosen. Parliament and donors began to recover their voices. For the first few months, most people waited to see how high enrollments would actually rise, hoping that the effect might not be severe on schools and teachers. But it was, and those who favored improving the quality of the school system before opening its doors to every child at no cost had to regroup. Parliament had, in its first years, developed a successful mode of operating through committees and some credibility for holding ministers and other high ranking officials accountable for their actions and their budgets. The Social Services Committee, which monitored education, became particularly strong.

The president, having achieved the political goal of banning fees and doubling enrollment in primary school, seemed to back off some on the ban against PTA and parent involvement in supporting schools. In late October, the Minister of State told the press that parents were

allowed to “develop schools’ welfare and even fund-raise” for construction, and that they would be “required to contribute bricks, sand, hard-core, and unskilled labor.” By mid-year the UPE implementation committee had nearly ceased to meet. Its initial six-month work plan was never funded by the ministry, so the committee did not have the resources to continue making hip-pocket policy implementation decisions, let alone enforce them.

The minister began feeling pressure from the new Parliament to meet certain standards for teacher–pupil ratios. Teachers complained about overloaded classrooms, and district officials began to express impatience with stalls in the capital. The president stepped back. Again, donors came cautiously to the fore; this time the British offered to help the ministry develop a strategy and program for getting more resources to schools. The UPE Implementation Committee became less visible, and the NPERPMC decided to re-institute regular meetings. At the end of 1997, it was not clear who was providing the leadership. It seemed possible, however, that donors, who had led the reforms for quality improvement, and the president, who had led the reform for increased access, might agree upon goals and programs that satisfied both.

### **Change in Funding Policy: Capitation Grants**

An important political component of the UPE policy was the president’s desire to remove from parents the financial burden of their children’s education. This burden came not only in the form of tuition fees but also added fees collected by the school and the costs of school uniforms and textbooks. Thus, the UPE policy forbade schools to charge PTA fees. Yet these fees had been a significant source of schools’ cash flow, used to top off teachers’ government salaries, to pay those not on the government payroll, and to purchase supplies, including, sometimes, instructional materials, for the school.

Soon after the declaration of the UPE policy, the Ministry of Education announced it would give schools “capitation grants” of 5,000 Ugandan shillings (about five U.S. dollars) per student per year for instructional materials. A circular from the Implementation Committee specified the kinds of items that could be purchased with the grant funds. To avoid the disappearance of funds at schools, each school was to open a local bank account, into which the district office directly deposited the grant each month. Schools were then ordered to form school finance committees, on which the head teacher (who is commonly suspected of pocketing school funds) was not allowed to serve.

The ministry argued that now that teachers were paid a living wage, textbooks were provided from Kampala, and capitation grants would cover the expense of other instructional materials, schools did not need additional contributions from parents.

The capitation grants policy became one of the most confusing and controversial. One circular stated that parents could be charged neither cash nor in-kind payments for their children’s schooling. Yet another, while reiterating the message that schools were not to make “unnecessary demands” on parents, directed them to “mobilize communities” to build temporary shelters where there were no classrooms. Teachers were commanded to provide “sitting structures” and safe drinking water.

The restrictions on PTAs ability to raise funds and in-kind support was further interpreted by zealous politicians, eager to demonstrate their ability to implement presidential policies, to forbid teachers from meeting with parents so that they could not request help. This was

antithetical to efforts prior to UPE of the TDMS and district officials to mobilize parent support for schools. With threats to head teachers' job security, the politicians prevailed throughout most of the year. Without PTA funding, many teachers felt their earnings went below an acceptable level. Head teachers, who took some of the blame from teachers for lack of support, journeyed frequently to district offices asking for information from the ministry and seeking consolation. No one dared speak out to vehemently, as "disloyalty to UPE" was not taken lightly.

### **Auditing Capitation Grants**

The first of these grants reached the schools in February 1997. By the end of the term, many schools reported the grants had either dwindled or simply had not been available at the school. Some teachers believed that the full grants never reached the district offices, while others could not explain why they diminished.

In late 1997, the ministry, with support from a condition imposed by USAID, announced that to help schools monitor the flow of grant funds, it would henceforth publish at the district office the amount of money sent to each school each month. This policy led to a study commissioned by the ministry that revealed the abysmal rate of funds actually arriving at schools.<sup>63</sup> The policy, backed by evidence of its necessity, proved remarkably effective at restoring the full transfer of grants, through ministry and bank offices, to schools.

### **Decentralization**

In 1997, the same year that UPE was instituted, Parliament passed the Local Government Act, which devolved authority to district and sub-district officials and decentralized some government services, including primary education. An empirical study of this change concluded that the movement of authority and resources to district governments did not precipitate any dramatic improvement in the delivery of primary education. Due either to habit, limitations on genuine decentralization, or both, local governments, while apparently fairly aware of local preferences, could not break out of the procedural, resource, and governance constraints that prevent them from responding. Perhaps the most notable weakness of decentralized governance was the flow of information from government to constituents, particularly outside major urban centers. Citizens relied on community leaders rather than on the media for information on local politics and corruption. Levels of corruption were sometimes higher at local government levels than at the central level and sometimes lower, depending on the discretion of local officials.<sup>64</sup>

### **Dynamics at the Middle Level**

Three groups of actors at the middle level of the education system were involved in implementing reforms: primary teachers colleges, district education offices, and district political and administrative offices. In the ten districts where TDMS had been introduced by

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<sup>63</sup> Republic of Uganda (2000). "Study to Track Use of and Accountability of UPE Capitation Grants." Ministry of Education and Sports. Report by International Development Consultants, Ltd., Kampala, October.

<sup>64</sup> Azfar, Omar, Satu Kähkönen, Patrick Meagher (2001), "Conditions for Effective Decentralized Governance: A Synthesis of Research Findings." Working Paper No. 256, IRIS Center, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.



1997, these three groups found themselves caught between the quality reforms led by the donors and the access reform led by the president.

The actors who had become most empowered through the Reform were the administrative staff of the colleges. The college staff in Bushenyi, which was the first to introduce the TDMS, had, by 1997, taken nearly complete leadership in implementing changes. They had established procedures at the college and at the schools it served; they had taken the authority to detect, diagnose, and resolve problems. College administrators had taken full advantage of the resources provided by TDMS—staff, training, supervision, housing, offices, vehicles. They were implementing the in-service teacher training program, professional support activities, and school management training, and they had begun to implement the community mobilization program.

UPE brought to local politicians, whose authority had recently increased by virtue of administrative decentralization, a great opportunity to engage in the politics of primary education. The actors empowered by UPE were district-level and sub-district-level politicians—members of the President’s party—who saw it to their benefit to enforce the president’s orders that schools were no longer to call on the help of parents. In the worst cases, which were not a few, party members threatened with dismissal head teachers or teachers who attempted to meet with parents or to suggest modifications to UPE policies. (Local politicians had less authority over primary teachers colleges, however, because, unlike teachers and head teachers, college staff are appointed at the national, not district level.)

District education officers, who are administrators and inspectors, were hit from several directions. As part of the new TDMS, college administrators asked them to support the array of training and services they were introducing in schools. Following UPE, the president, his political loyalists, and appointed Implementation Committee asked that they communicate mandates from Kampala to schools and mollify teachers whose work load had doubled. With administrative decentralization, district education officers (DEOs) who had been appointed by Kampala were now appointed locally, often based on new patronage groups, and many of them were either new and inexperienced or fearful of losing their posts.

DEOs in districts where the TDMS had been introduced were generally supportive of its reforms, especially since the system had brought them new resources. UPE mandates, in contrast, made their jobs more difficult. They did not defy the command to enroll students at no cost, but they did not rush to insist that other orders be followed. For example, by late 1997, no district had introduced multi-grade classrooms or double-shifts as means of accommodating more students. In Bushenyi, the district education office had even modified the mandate that PTAs not contribute to schools. It announced that, while the district would not require support from parents, it would accept voluntary support. To gain political support for this bold move, the district office successfully sought agreement of the local governing council.

Implementation of both reform and UPE measures varied from district to district, depending on the competence and experience of the college administrative staff (since the TDMS had been introduced in phases, some colleges were ahead of others in this respect), the interventions of local politicians, and the will and skill of district education officers in responding to these two groups and their sometimes conflicting interests.

## **Impact at the School Level and Political Consequences**

The measures taken by government in 1993 and thereafter gave teachers better pay, in-service support, and vastly improved access to textbooks. They brought head teachers some training in management skills and helped them to some extent involve parents in their children's education. They brought tutors the training they needed to offer in-service training and support to teachers. The launching of UPE, however, crowded classrooms and lowered the morale of teachers, especially at the lower primary level.

In his state-of-the-union address in October, the president reported that enrollment in primary schools had doubled. But beneath the surface, indications of dissatisfaction grew. UPE, while it pleased families who had previously not been able to pay for their children's schooling, it also raised the expectation among parents that schooling would benefit their children. In the early years, however, schools were disappointing, and many children dropped out. Families who were willing and able to pay for school were also dissatisfied, as the quality of public school education deteriorated. Teachers, parents, and Parliament wanted "enrollment" translated into "education." One ministry official predicted that if the UPE policy failed to provide good education to children, Museveni might not succeed in being re-elected. Yet to find the huge amount of money it would take to equip schools now overloaded with children, the government would need to cut back on expenses elsewhere, and the only budget item large enough to sustain such a cut was the military. But Museveni could not afford to cut troops as long as rebel groups threatened his army. If he was to afford UPE and the other social initiatives required to get him reelected, he had to find a way to end the rebellions. Thus, the government's armed struggle with rebels was a political situation that would continue to have an effect on primary education.

## **1998-2003: Stability and Collaboration**

In this period, government kept the lead and continued to improve its own capacity to deliver services, including the ability to make effective use of donor and lender assistance. Although the advent of UPE in 1997 caused uproar within the education ministry and its external aid agencies, two factors led to positive trends: continued economic growth and willingness on the part of politicians, external aid agencies, and ministry officials to compromise on quality versus access issues.

## **Macroeconomic Stability**

After the civil strife ended in 1987 Uganda's economy grew steadily, with GDP averaging a growth rate of 5.8 percent per year between 1987 and 1994, reaching 10 percent in 1996. This growth gave the government additional revenues and, in accordance with the World Bank's structural adjustment credit, the government reallocated part of its revenues from the military to education (the education budget rose from 12.8 to 22.8 percent of government expenditures between 1984/5 and 1995/6<sup>65</sup>) and from higher education to primary education. This added money in the education budget allowed the government to bring teachers' salaries to a living wage within four years rather than the ten years planned in its agreements with USAID. Economic growth also brought the promise that the primary education sector budget

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<sup>65</sup> *Unesco Statistical Yearbook*, 1998.

could continue to expand, and it attracted more and more grants and loans from donors, who saw primary education as a sound investment. At the same time, as rebels continued to challenge Museveni's government, economic growth allowed him to buy guns as well as education.

### **Ministry Collaboration with Aid Agencies**

After the president's UPE policy had banned them from interference, international aid agencies were welcomed back into the sector by mid-year. In late spring 1997 the ministry agreed with the British Department for International Development (DfID) to formulate a strategic plan for the long-range implementation of UPE. Following a trend instigated by the World Bank, that plan eventually became known as the first education sector investment program (ESIP). The next two years were spent negotiating the plan among ministry and donor officials.

Museveni appointed a new minister of education, permitting more assertive participation in reform efforts by ministry staff. A new phase of policy debate and program implementation began, which entailed a closer look at the constraints of funding and ministerial capacity to implement. These events coincided with growing cooperation among the international agencies, perhaps driven by their collective banishment and recognition of the virtue of working in harmony within the sector.

In the late 1990s the World Bank, DfID, USAID, the Netherlands, Irish Aid, GTZ and JICA began meeting regularly and coordinating their assistance. For some, this meant providing budgetary support to the government on the condition of specified improved performance of the education sector. Although USAID, GTZ and JICA did not contribute to budgetary support (USAID had, in the meantime, reversed its NPA policy), they were full-fledged members of the donor collaborative group.<sup>66</sup> This group worked intensely with the ministry, particularly the Planning Department, to formulate a set of common objectives; these centered on increasing inputs (classrooms, teachers, and textbooks) but included other objectives as well. The first ESIP was based on these objectives.

### **Inter-ministerial Cooperation in Planning**

Perhaps equally important, the ministry and the aid agencies began to meet every six months to review progress and update objectives. These semi-annual Education Sector Reviews also brought in Ministry of Finance representatives, who helped the education ministry to formulate and use a Medium-Term Budget Framework, and the Ministry of Public Service, whose cooperation was needed to increase the number of teachers.

In 2003, when the first five-year ESIP expired, the ministry's Planning Department developed a second, ten-year ESIP. The second plan was costed and linked to department Work Plans as well as the Medium-term Budget Framework (MTBF) so that it could be used as a basis for medium-term and annual planning and budgeting.

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<sup>66</sup> The collaboration among donors was often characterized as a Sector-wide Approach, or SWAP. In fact, it was not until 2004 that the ministry and donors looked seriously at the entire sector, beyond primary education. But the more common meaning of SWAP is the agreement among donors to provide budgetary support.

The second ESIP shifted the emphasis from one of implementing Universal Primary Education, which had riveted the attention and resources of the sector since 1997, to a more balanced concern for post-primary and other sub-sectors as well as primary. The second ESIP also evidenced the government's interest in both increasing access to schooling and improving the quality of schooling, and it attempted to pursue both goals within the realities of the government's economic and population growth forecasts.

## **Crisis in the North**

The insurgency in northern Uganda, led by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) accelerated during the past years, becoming a major social as well as economic problem for the government. This is a case of a country that has overcome widespread fragility but faces continuing and even increasing fragility in one region. For the people in that region, normal life has been disrupted, and social structures and systems have been weakened or broken down. There is a difference of opinion on how effectively the central government is responding to the crisis in the north. Some say that the military response is less willful than it could or should be, blaming this on ethnic-political differences between the south and the north. Others argue that local government officials in the north are working together to call Kampala's attention to the need for humanitarian relief and reconstruction in the north. In the meantime, humanitarian assistance is becoming more and more the domain of international and local non-governmental organizations.

The ministry has continued to run government schools throughout the country, even in the conflict areas. Yet recognizing the high cost and difficulty of reaching remote and disadvantaged areas, it encouraged NGO support in these areas.

The quality of education in northern Uganda never reached the level of that in other parts of the country, due to insurgencies that go back to Museveni's early days, and in recent years, education quality has deteriorated. The war has also caused lasting social problems, as both children and adults have experienced inhuman conditions for long periods of time. Many families live in the more than 60 camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In these camps, government schools have been collapsed and reformed as learning centers, each center comprising about half a dozen schools.<sup>67</sup>

With significant support and leadership from USAID's Basic Education and Policy (BEPS) Uganda project, the Ministry of Education and Sports developed a program to respond to the needs of the conflict areas. The Revitalization of Education Participation and Learning in Conflict Areas (REPLICA) program now reaches ten districts, including two that are newly created. REPLICA is providing services to schools in peace education, school management and leadership, psycho-social support and guidance and counseling, educating and mentoring girls, community integration and participation, and performing arts and learning as tools for effective communication, education mobilization, sensitization, and behavior change.

In terms of providing education services in fragile states, the MOES's REPLICA program is significant for two reasons. First, it uses the ministry's own system and structures to deliver

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<sup>67</sup> This section on the conflict in northern Uganda draws on the 2005 Fourth Quarterly Report of BEPS project activities, prepared by the Chief of Party, Renuka Pillay.

services. Second, it adapts a number of ministry programs to the special circumstances of the conflict areas.

The prominent system used to provide education in conflict areas is the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS). The ministry has worked through the TDMS, using what have become almost standard processes, to build consensus around a program, institute new curriculum units, train teachers in their use, orient administrative officers and politicians in supporting the programs, and building community support and participation. As in other parts of the country, the Primary Teachers Colleges and coordinating center schools have been used as institutional nodes of service delivery, and the local administrative structures have supported these units. With the TDMS in place, teaching materials have been introduced and teachers are being trained in their use in an efficient and systematic matter, even in the face of severe disruptions from insurgents.

Local ministry officials are also adapting programs that were developed for national use, including guidance and counseling activities and the PIASCY curriculum to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Other institutions, notably Kyambogo University, the government's lead teacher training institute, have been integrated into the ministry's coordinated response.

A group that has been critical in calling attention to the plight of schools and children is the Northern Region Education Forum, which was organized to advocate for education interventions and international assistance. The NREF has moved beyond advocacy to lobbying members of Parliament for support to the region. It has become an active player in Uganda's civil society.

In brief, Uganda's ministry of education, which not too many years ago suffered from the constraints imposed on a fragile state, has proven capable, with international assistance, of tailoring and managing education services to that part of the country that has remained fragile as the rest grew more stable and secure. Although much support has been needed from NGOs in the IDP camps, and a strong dose of international technical and financial support has been taken, the MOES has been in a leadership role in this ongoing endeavor.

## **Lessons Learned**

The Uganda case offers lessons in accountability among ministry staff and international agencies and the effects of democratic processes on education. It shed light on the trade-offs between building ministerial capacity and delivering services during a period of fragility. The case shows the importance of building systems to moderate changes in leadership and protect decision makers. It also highlights the issues involved in distributing services and the importance of continuous dialogue among all stakeholders on policy issues.

### **Accountability**

During the era of Museveni's rule and remarkable reforms in the education, the ministry staff has become more accountable to the minister and the permanent secretary and to international agencies. The impact of democracy on the delivery of education services can be seen clearly in some instances, though a clear and complete picture has yet to emerge.

### ***Education Sector Reviews: An Effective Accountability Mechanism***

As the Education Sector Review became institutionalized, it began to change accountability relationships within the ministry departments, between the ministry and other parts of government, and among the ministry and donors. At each ESR, the offices responsible for specific undertakings had to report on their progress. While this pressure to achieve results did not always translate into rational management plans, it did force department directors to make public what they had and had not accomplished in the preceding six months. The ESIPs, particularly the second ESIP, required the ministry to allocate budgeted funds to departments in accordance with goals and priorities. One effect of this exercise was to challenge the continuation of programs that had built upon the special interests of particular donors. The special education department, for example, had a budget that was not commensurate with its responsibilities for ministry goals; the budget was a remnant of large funding from a donor in line with its own agenda. As a result of the ESIP, departments became accountable to the ministry and its priorities more than to the funding agencies.

### ***The Audit of Capitation Grants***

The inspired audit of the flow of capitation grants from the Ministry of Finance to schools has become a legend of improving accountability (not only of government, since in this case banks too were important players). The response to the audit was equally inspired: systematic public announcements of the arrival of funds at each step of the process. This episode suggests that transparent and publicized transactions are powerful deterrents to corruption and inefficiency but that they require persistent action on the part of government to publicize and on the part of the public to read, understand, and act.

### ***Democracy***

In 1996 Uganda re-instituted democratic elections. The most dramatic effect of the elections on education was the president-as-candidate's promise of Universal Primary Education, a promise that he fulfilled once elected. Most observers agree that his policy was motivated by its appeal to voters. Some, particularly foreign technical advisors, argue that it had a deleterious effect on primary education, but the popular opinion of the policy seems to be favorable. In 1997 elected members of Parliament, particularly those who had been teachers, kept an eye on education policies and intervened in the wake of UPE policy to urge the ministry to improve the pupil-teacher ratio. Since then, Parliament does not seem to have been as active in education issues.

This case study does not tell us anything about the effect of democracy on the provision of education services. In the late 1990s Uganda decentralized primary education services, making locally (district) elected officials accountable for these services. We have no information about where and how communities acted to hold them accountable. There is evidence, however, that in some districts education deteriorated when newly elected officials replaced veteran officers who had been doing a good job with unqualified cronies. Until more Ugandans understand how to use democratic institutions to improve service provision, the ministry of education will have to guide locally elected officials and their administrations in how to deliver education services.

In the meantime, the people's voice on primary education is heard in other ways. As schools became more crowded and under-resourced, the children of many poor families appear to

judge that opportunity costs—even if actual costs are zero—are too high to pay for the little their children gain from school; many children drop out after a few months or years in school. Those who are disappointed in the quality of government-provided schooling and who can afford to do so send their children to private schools. The number of private schools in Kampala and elsewhere increased dramatically after 1997.

### **Service Delivery Versus Capacity Building**

International agencies in Uganda have consistently made building the ministry's capacity a more immediate priority than providing primary education services. They have channeled resources through government and provided technical assistance to government. As the country has moved from a state of fragility to one of stability and growth, donor support has paid off. The ministry is now effectively managing its business, though it still seeks international technical assistance for specific tasks.

Since the early 1990s, modes of international assistance have evolved. In the early 1990s, USAID initiated a project that employed four senior foreign technical advisors and six senior professional Ugandan staff over a period of eight years on contract to a U.S. organization; project staff had their own offices, housed in the ministry. At present, the USAID employs one senior foreign advisor and some junior Ugandan staff who work directly in a ministry department. In the early years, the USAID contractor, with concurrence of the ministry, set the terms of reference for staff and consultants and held them accountable for meeting those terms. At present, ministry staff write terms of reference for consultants, who are accountable to the ministry.

The Uganda case illustrates the conflict between politicians' interests in delivering services and international agencies' technical interest in building capacity. This conflict came to a head in 1997, with the first election in many years. That event, ironically, vindicated the choice of aid agencies to build capacity, because it helped prepare the government for a commitment to extending services.

Before 1997 the ministry's acquiescence to donor and lender interests in building capacity permitted government, USAID, and the World Bank to pilot test strategies in one or two districts before taking them to scale. It gave them the freedom to introduce initiatives as they seemed necessary and to regroup when experiments did not reach expected results. As ministry staff gained experience from their work with assistance projects, they also gained confidence in their capacity to make managerial decisions, and their confidence was supported by the growing stability of government. Whereas in the unstable days of fragility, a wise civil servant refrained from making a decision that might make enemies, in a more stable environment, he or she was more likely to make a decision, often in collaboration with colleagues, who would share responsibility.

### **Relying on Systems Rather Than Individuals**

Uganda has had only three ministers of education since 1991. During the early period of fragility, the minister had complete authority and dismissed those who disagreed with his policies and practices. There were no systems in place to regulate decision-making. The second minister, who began his term after new systems had been introduced and ministry staff had been working under the tutelage of international technical assistance, delegated authority to his permanent secretary, who supported collaborative policy making processes

and capably managed the administration of programs. The third minister, a woman who was recently appointed after a long career in the education system, including years of work at the minister level, has kept the same permanent secretary. Consistency in high-level leadership at the P.S. level has provided an environment in which ministry staff can work securely and international agencies can collaborate effectively in support of the ministry's programs. New systems include a policy-making and review process, a budget planning and monitoring system, an information management system (EMIS), improved systems for teacher recruitment and deployment, and a teacher training, support and management system. In spite of some turnover of high level staff, these systems seem to endure.

### **Redistribution of Resources**

An issue that has continued to arise in Education Sector Reviews concerned the proper balance between improving the systemic flow of inputs to all primary schools and the provision of services to disadvantaged groups, including remote rural communities, AIDS orphans, children with disabilities, and children in northern Uganda where rebels continued to threaten communities. The cost of services to remote and disadvantaged groups is significantly higher per capita than that of services to more populous communities and to healthy children living with intact families. The debate has been not only within the ministry; it has been echoed among the international agencies, some of which had mandates to watch out for specific groups of people. The growing crisis in the North has brought new life to the issue.

The second strategic plan of the ministry, which was introduced in 2004, rebalanced the distribution of resources among primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, including vocational/technical education as well as academic tracks. After a decade of attention riveted on the primary sub-sector, financial and human resources are now being shared more equally across the entire system.<sup>68</sup>

### **Education in the Broader Public Context**

Stakeholders in the delivery of education services are not confined within the Ministry of Education and Sports. The ministry's improvement of services has been bolstered by sound leadership in economic and fiscal policy and a capable Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Public Service. The cooperation of both these agencies has been critical to reforms in the MOES. The MPS has cooperated in the recruitment, deployment, and payment of teachers, and the MOF has enabled their salaries to be raised to a level that attracts capable candidates. The MOF has also worked closely with the MOES in development, monitoring and revising a series of Medium-Term Budget Frameworks, which have helped define policy issues and translate policies into actionable programs.

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<sup>68</sup>Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Planning, Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2004-15.



The Education Sector Review process and the ESIP process have provided ongoing forums for stakeholders to conduct public dialogue on education issues. In the days of USAID support, ad hoc dialogues were organized on critical issues; today, the ESR and ESP encourage systematic dialogue on important issues as well as public monitoring of the performance of the education sector.

## VI. Conclusions

Fragility is a continuous—not a discrete—variable in the condition of governments of developing countries. Much of what we know about the condition of extremely fragile states applies to other states as well, but to a lesser degree. Thus, some of the lessons learned from these four case studies may not seem new. What is unique about extremely fragile states, however, is the urgent need for decisive action, the narrow margin for mistakes, and the absence of trusting relationships that are required to move forward under these conditions.

The basic education system is the largest, most widespread, and most visible institution in a country, permeating even remote regions. It represents government in every community, from urban centers to remote villages. In countries where government is robust, people expect it to deliver education services. In countries where government is sliding into or out of fragility, the presence of schools and teachers is visible evidence of how well government is working. In fact, while government may put up a façade of education—launch a campaign or construction project—it cannot provide sustained, good-quality education unless government *does* work. Its size, as well as its cultural, social and economic dimensions, makes it one of the most difficult institutions to govern and manage.

### Curbing Fragility

How does the delivery of education services help curb state fragility? The cases of Guinea and the Philippines—cases in which government has been falling into fragility—show that the link between communities and government in support of schools has endured during political and economic crises. In Guinea, the public education system, especially in rural areas, seems to be functioning reasonable well, despite the crises and their impact on teachers, ministry staff, and families. With support from international agencies, school communities and local ministry offices seem to take over the support of schools as central government declines. In Mindanao, the belated attention given to education by international organizations is getting a strong response from youth who otherwise have had poor chances at schooling and by state and religious schools, which have been neglected by government. The cases of Uganda and Afghanistan show that the demand for basic education is very strong, even when the political and economic situation is catastrophic. Uganda’s response to this demand in the decade of rebuilding was a strong aspect of its recovery. Although it may be too soon to predict a sustained outcome in Afghanistan, the initial years of support to education from international agencies and the recovery of the education ministries appear to encourage families about the legitimacy of the new government.

The decentralization of basic education services in Uganda, Guinea, and the Philippines has been a significant factor in strengthening both local governments and the decentralized offices of central government. While decentralization of services is a challenging undertaking, it is critical to reducing the top-heavy character of governments in fragile states. Education is the prime sector in which government services can be devolved.

Strategies in Guinea and Uganda to strengthen the interaction between schools and the communities they serve have resulted in fledgling parent teacher groups and school management committees. While the effectiveness of these groups in improving schools

varies widely among communities, they provide opportunities for communities to interact with government agencies—schools. As Guinea has slipped toward fragility, school-community organizations may be helping government to continue to provide services even if central offices have to slow down their support from lack of funding.

Activities in the education sector have also contributed to improving the transparency of government services in Uganda and Afghanistan. In Uganda, the ministry pioneered a means of monitoring the flow of grant funds to schools that foiled rent practices throughout the process. With help from USAID, it also managed to uncover “ghost” teachers and get them off the payroll. In Afghanistan, international agencies have helped the ministry transfer accountability of development funds in the education sector to the provincial level.

## **Lessons Learned**

What, then, is to be done to provide education services when government no longer functions? The empirical evidence provided in these four cases offers some lessons but also leaves some crucial questions unanswered. Though these lessons are presented here as a series of individual points, they are, in fact, interrelated. They are also intended as items for discussion rather than conclusive directions.

### **Lesson #1. National Leadership**

The quality of leadership in a fragile state is more important than elsewhere, because the institutions and systems intended to restrain bad leaders are broken. Whether the political and administrative individuals appointed to lead the ministry of education are strong or weak is much a matter of luck. A strong leader will help build trust, while a weak leader will continue to squelch it. Unfortunately for the education sector, the minister is often appointed mainly on the basis of political considerations rather than either leadership qualities or technical capacities. Sometimes, such as in Afghanistan and Guinea, an exceptional leader is made minister of education, but his or her tenure is not long enough to build institutions. In both these cases, their successors were relatively weak, and the fall back into instability and an absence of institutions to mediate leadership led to setbacks. In Guinea, however, as well as in Uganda, strong secretaries helped compensate for not-so-strong ministers. Strong leaders need time and help in building strong institutions.

Without a strong leader in the ministry, subordinates either usurp power or remain passive. In Afghanistan, when the minister was weak, deputy ministers added to chaos by working at odds with each other. In Uganda, under weak leadership the minister’s cadres chose the path of passivity; they feared the consequences of taking initiative. In Guinea, the change from a strong to not-so-strong minister may have contributed to the slowdown of reform efforts.

### **Lesson #2. International Leadership**

International agencies must continually assess the quality of the ministry’s leadership during a period of fragility. If it is strong, they are in the fortunate position of taking guidance from and supporting the minister or secretary. If it is weak, they have three alternatives.

One alternative is to circumvent the central ministry and work directly with decentralized offices to support schools. Even more extreme, international agencies can turn away from the government system altogether and support NGOs in delivering education services. Either of these can be only a temporary solution, however. Sustained support of basic education

requires policies and regulation at the national level, once the government is less fragile. Knowing that eventually capacity will have to be rebuilt in the ministry, it does not make sense to abandon it altogether, even in a time of fragility.

A second alternative, at the other extreme, is for international agencies to focus on the central institutional systems of the ministry. This would entail playing a stronger role in policy decisions and taking over the central functions of planning and management. But this alternative has not worked well in the basic education sector, which has deep cultural roots and depends on myriad frontline decision-makers, who behave in consonance with their culture, to operate. Even a short-term intervention, usually taken by a donor under pressure to show results, is likely to overwhelm local initiatives and undermine self-sufficiency.

The third and best alternative is, ironically, to do some of both. In this approach, the international community provides services on an emergency basis *at the same time* as it rebuilds the ministry's most critical systems. The difference between this approach and the others is that it continues to work with the ministry, building trust among communities and their schools, between schools and local ministry offices, and between local and central ministry offices. This is essentially what was learned in Uganda and Guinea and what is taking place in Afghanistan and Mindanao.

### **Lesson #3. Moving from International to National Leadership**

How do international agencies support national leadership in a fragile state? The constructivist approach to learning and teaching can serve as a guide for how to help local ministries and others in the sector take back responsibility for providing education services. Constructivist theory says that the knowledge the learner acquires is not the same knowledge as that of the teacher. There are limits to the knowledge that a teacher can convey, and there are limits to the institutions that foreign agents can build. Ministries of education that are rebuilding their institutions are learners who need to construct their own knowledge as they go along.

Work in a fragile state requires intense cooperation among national and local ministry staff and a number of international agents, most of whom operate in different cultural contexts and with different sets of constraints. Each agent is learning, and the closer they work together, the more they learn from each other. Experience in Afghanistan, in particular, revealed that the process of providing services and building institutions to provide services is cyclical, with progress made in each cycle toward a better structure or system. When ministry staff members were involved from the beginning in the cycle, they learned from experience along with their technical assistants. Creating new in-service training systems, for example, while simultaneously carrying out an emergency in-service training for teachers already in the field took the team through the transitional cycle several times.<sup>69</sup>

Constructivists use a scaffold metaphor to describe their approach. Scaffolding often supports a building under construction or repair at the same time it serves as a platform for reconstruction tasks. The scaffolding is temporary and gradually removed as its purpose is

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<sup>69</sup> VonHahmann, Gail (October 2005). A Collaborative Model for Donor Funding in Post-Conflict Environments: TEP Afghanistan 2003-2005. Kabul: Creative Associates International, Inc. (unpublished paper).

served. Likewise, education projects in fragile states both support the ministry (by directly providing services) at the same time they repair the institution. The metaphor highlights the value of building on those parts of the institution (formal and informal systems) that still function and the importance of taking the time to understand what those systems are and how they can be repaired. In some instances, the fragile status of the ministry (and all of government) may mean that a system that worked well when government was strong must be modified or replaced. The fragility condition will also call for new temporary systems, some of which may prove to work well and can be adopted for the long term.

The lesson, in brief, is that international agencies need to engage with ministry officials on both the emergency service-delivery track and the longer-term institution-building track. All those engaged will learn together.

#### **Lesson #4. The Trust Factor**

The most important variable in the fragility condition is the lack of trust in institutions, particularly among those who work in the institutions. Individuals experience a fragile state as anarchy, and their reasonable aim is self-protection. Each individual must take care of her own survival and that of her family. State institutions have failed them and sometimes threatened them. They do not expect government to protect them. The level of trust between colleagues falls below the point at which the institution can function. Their jobs are insecure, and they do not expect collaboration or teamwork that puts the institution ahead of the individual.

The impact of a recent bloody history or the growing evidence of decay cannot be brushed away in a quick stroke. In states recovering from a crisis, trust in institutions must be rebuilt. In Uganda, it was five years before the president signaled in his election campaign that government could be trusted to educate all children, and a couple more years passed before the entire ministry began working in a collaborative manner to plan and implement programs.

States that are becoming more fragile show signs of failing trust within the ministry. The Philippines government attempted to rebuild trust in intention to educate children by transferring some authority to a regional government, the ARMM. But trust within and between levels of government is slow to develop. It requires time, and it requires strong and persistent leadership, if not by those who are in power, then by the international community.

#### **Lesson #5. The Will Factor**

Government's "will" to provide education services must be considered a contextual variable—one that is outside the education sector. A comparison of the two long-term historical case studies, Guinea and Uganda, reveals interesting differences between two states that started major education reforms in the same period of time. Both presidents took office within two years of each other: 1984 and 1986. Twenty years later, Uganda's ministry of education has manifested impressive development of capacity. Guinea, though it seemed initially to be taking the lead in Africa in progress toward EFA goals, is today not much more capable than it was before reforms were initiated.

Under Museveni's leadership, Uganda has seen economic growth and policies that helped that growth support education services. Conté's policies have not allowed Guineans to benefit from the country's natural resources. Museveni chose to tax private gains and plow public resources into social services, leading to significant rises in teachers' salaries and

supplies to school children. Conté chose not to tax private gains and, after an initial promise to reallocate funds to basic education, the percentage of the government budget going to education fell. This is a clear expression of political “will”—or lack thereof—to support education.

### **Lesson #6. Priorities**

“Fragile states cannot afford *not* to do what they cannot afford to do.”<sup>70</sup> This paradox is too often the basis for over-ambitious programs and shifting goals in fragile states, where needs are overwhelming and resources in short supply. Yet it is in just these cases that clear priorities must be established, agreed upon by all parties, and stuck to. While the urgent need for action probably will not allow for in-depth studies as a basis for setting context-specific priorities, lead actors should undertake a rapid assessment to identify them.

In states recovering from fragility, each priority objective must be twofold: (1) An urgent set of activities to restore education services and (2) an initial step in a long-term set of activities to rebuild systems and structures. Urgent activities may be *radical alternatives* to the conventional way of doing business through established ministry structures and systems. Instead of rebuilding pre-service teacher training colleges, for example, organizing workshops for in-service teachers in the fundamentals of effective teaching and/or radio broadcasts for teachers in basic education subjects—language, math, life skills, and other—will substitute initially for better resources and systematic procedures.

In states falling into fragility, each objective must have the dual dimension of (1) continuing the provision of services and (2) keeping ministry support intact enough to support service provision.

Though education specialists may never agree on a list of priorities that fit every situation, the four case studies suggest a short list that can be used as a starting point and negotiated. These are presented below for the cases of states coming out of fragility. In states heading toward fragility, the priorities would remain the same, though the actions would take a different cast.

- Teacher training: (1) an immediate rollout of basic teacher training workshops and (2) first steps to rebuild a teacher training system;
- Provision of learning materials: (1) immediate delivery of whatever useful materials are available for teachers and students and (2) first steps to build a relevant curriculum and quality textbook procurement and distribution system;
- Community support: (1) immediate measures to reconnect families and communities with their schools and (2) first steps to institutionalize school-community relationships;
- Learning spaces: (1) immediate help to communities in finding safe and healthy places to teach, even if temporary, and (2) first steps to map schools and set construction standards and procedures.

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<sup>70</sup> Bruce F. Johnston, Professor Emeritus, Food Research Institute, Stanford University

The best strategies will combine activities to meet these four priority objectives simultaneously. Once these activities are secure and if additional resources are available, a second set of priorities would include the following:

- Management training: (1) hands-on guidance in how to manage people and resources and (2) continuing management training on-the-job as well as in short, just-in-time courses for ministry staff and NGOs;
- Planning and budgeting: (1) immediate technical support to the ministry in assessing the availability of funds and other resources and planning their most advantageous use and (2) building a planning and budgeting process and system that is integrated with extra-ministerial agencies;
- Monitoring and evaluation: (1) immediate technical support to help teachers and schools continuously assess students' performance and (2) first steps toward a comprehensive system of exams for students and a system that monitors the performance of schools.

Finally, as government moves out of fragility status, there are longer-term challenges that must eventually be met if the ministry of education is to function effectively in a sustained way. These include:

- Personnel procedures, salary adjustments, and payroll processes;
- Recruitment, deployment, management system;
- A pre-service training system;
- Relationships with decentralized, local governance institutions and teachers unions;
- A school construction program;
- An education management information system to support the planning system.

Others will think of system components that are left out or not given sufficient treatment here. The lesson is simply that whoever is taking the lead must set priorities and stick with them until their achievement is in sight.

## **Unresolved Issues**

The evidence in these four case studies leaves at least two important issues unresolved. Additional case studies and the passage of time may help to answer these questions.

### **Issue #1. Distribution of Services**

The issue of how scarce education resources are distributed has several aspects, none of which are clearly resolved by these cases.

First, the question of when and how to “universalize” basic education so that all children can attend school was an issue in Uganda, Guinea, and Afghanistan. In Uganda, Museveni’s declaration of Universal Primary Education sent shock waves through the system as enrollments doubled. Though the sector has not yet fully coped with the policy, the state has been stable and resourceful enough that it has not caused a crisis of government legitimacy. In the past few years in Guinea, government is under pressure from the international community to universalize access, even as it has been falling into fragility and becoming

short of resources needed to maintain current services. In Afghanistan, government found itself at odds with at least one prominent international agency on whether to continue a campaign to increase enrollments or to focus on improving teaching and instructional materials. There is still no agreement on whether it is prudent to get more children into school when the system cannot yet support them.

Second, these case studies have focused on the delivery of basic services to primary school children. But education systems serve youth and adults as well. Delivery of services must also be prioritized among *levels* of the education system. The past 15 or so years have not taught us much about how to achieve an effective balance in the delivery of resources among levels of education. Education systems that have come of age over this period have been pressured by the international Education for All campaign to focus on basic education to primary school children. Secondary schools have been neglected. Elite universities have usually been well funded, because they are protected by the powerful, but other tertiary institutions fare less well.<sup>71</sup> It is becoming evident to some that this focus has been shortsighted in several ways: the alarm over out-of-school youth, who cannot attend secondary school; the shortage of teachers, due to inadequate secondary education; and the bottleneck at the entry of middle school. But these cases do not address that issue.

Third, we have learned a little about distribution of services to disadvantaged populations. In the Philippines, the case concerned the central government's failure to distribute services equitably to a minority population and the eventual consequences. The story is similar in Uganda, without the dimension of international security. In Guinea, as well as in Uganda, government is involved in regional conflicts along its borders, where schools are receiving much less than their equitable share of resources. Much of the work is left to NGOs. We can only conclude that when governments ignore remote populations (physically and culturally) in relatively stable times, they are likely to pay a price later on.

## **Issue #2. Democracy**

To what extent does democratic government affect political decisions about education? The democratic governments in the fragile states covered by these case studies are relatively new and still very weak. Only the Philippines has a well established democracy. In Afghanistan, democratic governance is brand new, and while Guinea and Uganda have had practicing democracies for about a decade, both have been increasingly compromised by actual policies and practices. These cases would not be fair tests of the relationship between democracy and education.

A proper study of the impact that democratic governance in fragile states has on the delivery of education services will require a far more elaborate investigation than what this project allowed. It should be led both from the perspective of democratic practices and education services at the local level as well as at the national level. It should examine assumptions about the characteristics of democratic governance that improve delivery of social services. This study did not provide the time or resources to pursue research at the local level.

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<sup>71</sup> A case in point is Afghanistan, where U.S. government and local private funding is going to a new American university, leaving national institutions to look elsewhere for significant support.



One tentative lesson might appear at the national level. In Uganda, the occasion of a presidential election led the incumbent to promise free primary education for all families. This platform seemed to have wide appeal and to contribute, among other factors, to his election. Once elected, he kept his promise, mandating and enforcing a set of policies that doubled enrollment numbers in primary school. Democracy in Uganda also ushered in a new parliament. Many members of first session of parliament were former teachers, and it was their actions, more than the president's, that probably caused long-term benefits for education. Parliament began to hold the minister of education accountable for his policies and performance. Members were concerned about the negative effects of massive enrollment numbers on the quality of education, and they were an important force behind the technical assistance of international agencies in implementing the president's policy in a prudent manner. In more recent years, however, Parliament's effectiveness in Uganda appears to be waning, and it is less active in education matters.