

# conflict

research findings for development policymakers and practitioners

## Rebuilding education in Afghanistan

**More than half of Afghanistan's children do not attend school, despite a 500 percent increase in enrolment over the past six years. What obstacles are there to school enrolment and how can these be overcome?**

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 and the drafting of the country's new constitution, which includes the right to free education from grades 1 to 9, there has been a rapid expansion in enrolment. Yet the reality is that most school-aged children are not yet enrolled. The demand for education needs to be expanded, especially for girls, as a disproportionate number remain out of school.

A study by Oxfam International looks at the challenges facing Afghanistan's education sector from grades 1 to 12 (primary, secondary and high school), and implications for the education budget. It examines education provision and analyses limitations in order to discover the main policy priorities for the financing of education:

- While about 5 million children (42 percent) attend school, about 7 million do not. Many children in rural areas have no access to schools.
- One-third of primary school children in 2005 to 2006 were girls. Only 5 percent of girls attended secondary school.
- Only 17 percent of all teachers are professionally qualified and subject knowledge is very poor.
- Between 75 and 80 percent of all school buildings were destroyed in the conflict and reconstruction has been slow. Many schools do not have safe drinking water and toilet facilities are often inadequate.
- The release of ministry payments from the provincial and lower levels to schools for salaries and small purchases is complicated, leading to widespread corruption.
- Teachers often do not receive their salaries on time and do not get the full amount owed to them.

The report urges all those involved in Afghanistan's education provision to take action to reform the process to ensure that all children enrol in school:

- The Government should urgently train 52,722 primary school teachers to fill existing gaps. A further 63,616 primary teachers must be trained to cope with the anticipated increase in student enrolments

over the next five years. At least 50 percent of new teachers should be female.

- The Government should remove all formal and informal user fees for schooling. The cost of school uniforms, shoes, books, transport, stationery and midday meals must be subsidised.
- The Government should provide a midday snack of milk and two fortified biscuits each for all school children. This would cost US\$32 per child per year, or US\$192 million for the school year of 2007 to 2008.
- The Government should set aside 20 to 40 percent of its operating budget for education for ongoing non-salary expenses. Funds should be distributed evenly across the provinces, based on educational needs.
- Donors and the international community should invest US\$563 million in the core development budget for the rebuilding of 7,824 school buildings.

### Oxfam GB

Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY, UK  
T +44 1865 339100 F +44 1865 473727  
[enquiries@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxfam.org.uk)

### See also

*Free, Quality Education for Every Afghan Child*, Oxfam Briefing Paper 93, by Basira Mojaddidi, 2006  
[www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp93\\_afghanistan\\_0611](http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp93_afghanistan_0611)

## How donors fail to educate children in conflict-torn states

**Even in times of conflict, education is a basic human right. Yet out of the world's 77 million children out of school, half live in conflict-affected fragile states – a disproportionate number. Why are these children losing out on attending school and what is needed to rectify this situation?**

Despite international efforts, measures directed at achieving universal primary education are not reaching children living in conflict-affected fragile states. Education is not prioritised in humanitarian or development aid – only 1.1 percent of global humanitarian aid was committed to education in 2006, whereas the need was at least 4.2 percent.

While US\$9 billion in external financing is needed each year to ensure that all children are in school by 2015, donors are not yet committing this amount. Nor are other

mechanisms, such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, coming up with sufficient additional funding.

Conflict-affected fragile states receive only one-fifth of total education aid as middle-income and other lower-income countries tend to be prioritised. Education is not prioritised by donors – only four percent of Official Development Assistance to conflict-torn states is set aside for education.

A report by Save the Children examines the situation of out-of-school children in 28 conflict-affected fragile states:

- One in three children is not in school, making up half of the world's out-of-school children, yet these states receive only one fifth of global education aid.
- Due to the current donor approach of assisting only those states that have good policies and institutions in place, conflict-affected fragile states receive less aid than they need.
- Unless these states receive assistance from the international community, their children will not be able to enjoy the potential contribution that education can make to peace and stability, better governance and economic growth.
- Donors do not realise the vital role that

education can play in a humanitarian context in restoring stability and providing viable alternatives to war.

If this situation is to change for children living in war-torn states, donors need to provide coordinated, long-term aid. Appropriate mechanisms exist for providing such aid. The report recommends that donors:

- increase global funding of education to meet the US\$9 billion needed annually to fund universal primary education
- increase the proportion of aid to conflict-affected fragile states
- increase the amount of funding allocated to education in humanitarian crises to at least 4.2 percent, in line with the needs of the conflict-affected fragile states.

### Janice Dolan

Save the Children UK, 1 St John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR, UK  
T +44 20 70126400  
[j.dolan@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:j.dolan@savethechildren.org.uk)

### See also

*Last in Line, Last in School: How Donors are Failing Children in Conflict-Affected Fragile States*, Save the Children Alliance, by Janice Dolan and Victoria Perry, 2007 (PDF)  
[www.savethechildren.org/publications/rewrite-the-future/RTF\\_Last\\_in\\_Line\\_Last\\_in\\_School\\_report\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org/publications/rewrite-the-future/RTF_Last_in_Line_Last_in_School_report_FINAL.pdf)

## Education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

**The Palestinian Authority was set up in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over a decade ago to take control of administration and services in many aspects of Palestinian life, including education. How has education been managed under the Palestinian Authority and what lessons can be learned for other states enduring conflict?**

After 50 years of dispossession and over 35 years of occupation, the Palestinian Authority was set up in 1994. That same year, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was established to take responsibility for the neglected education system, including harmonising the systems in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The Ministry developed a five-year educational plan in 2000 and an Education for All plan in 2002. In its first five years, it struggled to establish basic

**An end to the occupation would be the single biggest factor affecting Palestinian children's right to education**

mechanisms for planning, budgeting and coordinating the system, dealing simultaneously with a rapidly growing student population and a crisis in access to education. In 2000, the second *intifada* (uprising) began, throwing the education system once more into turmoil.

A book by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and Save the Children UK assesses how the education system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has developed and been managed from 1994 to 2005:

- A significant success of the new administration has been the unification of the Gaza Strip and West Bank education systems.
- The new curriculum reflects Palestinian culture, history and identity, unlike their previous education systems.
- Although there has been a high population growth and consequently a high growth in the student population, the number of classrooms and schools has grown at a slower rate.
- Too little attention has been paid to improving quality in education – prior to the five-year plan, the Ministry focused on quantity – yet there is no consensus on what 'quality' involves.

- The politically volatile context remains an obstacle to the efficient coordination of donor funding. The main 18 donors to education continue to take a project-based approach.

There is little doubt that an end to the occupation would be the single biggest factor affecting Palestinian children's right to education. While progress is being made, true success ultimately hinges on the peace process.

- A national curriculum is a display of identity and helps build confidence in an education system. The new Palestinian curriculum is seen as a major success and a step forward.
- Access to education needs to look at qualitative and quantitative problems simultaneously. Apart from construction, the Ministry also needs to focus on the high birth rates, cost barriers to education and encourage the acceptance of mixed schooling for boys and girls.

**Susan Nicolai**

Save the Children UK, 1 St. John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR, UK  
T +44 20 70126400  
susan@nicolai.com

**See also**

*Fragmented Foundations: Education and Chronic Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, by Susan Nicolai, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and Save the Children UK, 2007 (PDF)  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001502/150260e.pdf>

## Learning from south Sudan's ongoing tragedy

**Two decades of civil war, two million deaths and massive displacement have left southern Sudan with one of the world's most undereducated populations. A book from UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning urges aid agencies to invest in education at the earliest opportunity and not to wait until formal peace agreements are concluded.**

The Sudanese Government's attempts to impose Arabic as the sole language of instruction in an Islamic curriculum in 1983 helped to re-ignite the civil war after an eleven-year lull. For southern Sudanese, schools became a place to express resistance and many were bombed by the Khartoum regime. In the squalid camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) around Khartoum, at least 800,000 southern Sudanese children have had their schools and homes bulldozed by government authorities, sometimes more than once.

In some areas of south Sudan, less than one percent of school-age children have received an education. Until the 2002 ceasefire between Khartoum and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), thousands of children served as soldiers in forces on both sides of the conflict. Pro-government militias also abducted children into slavery.

Southern Sudanese people value education and many communities have

made heroic efforts to provide basic schooling. Yet coordination between international agencies, churches and the SPLM's Secretariat of Education was poor. The research shows that:

- The country-specific orientation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees prevented it from equally meeting the needs of all displaced Sudanese people. While refugees in camps in Kenya and Uganda received schooling, significantly less attention was paid to those in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic.
- Donors often concentrated their efforts at the same schools: food aid generally went to those already receiving support from other agencies.
- The international community did little to challenge the persistent campaign of religiously-motivated state intimidation against IDPs in Khartoum and to promote their right to protection, shelter and education.

As peace returns to Sudan, and international staff move on, there is a danger that institutional memories and knowledge on education in emergencies will be lost.

- Refugees remain a source of information that is significantly under-used.
- The prospects of education and resettlement in a third country can attract war-affected

populations to refugee camps and settlements. The commitment of agencies to coordinate their work on both sides of a border may reduce refugee flows.

- Priority should be given evenly to children, regardless of their location.
- Military personnel should never be involved in education management.

**Marc Sommers**

Fletcher School, Tufts University, 160 Packard Ave, Medford, MA 02155, USA  
T +1 617 6274619 F +1 617 6273712  
Marc.Sommers@tufts.edu

**See also**

*Islands of Education: Schooling, Civil War and the Southern Sudanese (1983-2004)*, International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, by Marc Sommers, 2005 (PDF)  
[www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/sudan.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/sudan.pdf)

Send us your comments and feedback via SMS  
+44 7504 882535

id21  
Institute of Development Studies  
University of Sussex  
Brighton, BN1 9RE UK  
T +44 1273 678787  
F +44 1273 877335  
E id21@ids.ac.uk



*id21 education highlights* bring the latest research to education policymakers and practitioners with limited internet access. Please photocopy and distribute them to your colleagues. If you would like to subscribe free of charge, please send your contact details to the address above. id21 is hosted by the Institute of Development Studies and supported by the UK Department for International Development.  
ISSN 1746-8698

**Keywords:** Conflict, post-conflict, enrolment, out of school, girls, donors, civil war, peace, internally displaced, refugees, aid

**id21**  
[www.id21.org](http://www.id21.org)