HEART
HEALTH & EDUCATION ADVICE & RESOURCE TEAM

Helpdesk Report: The role of education in contributing to safety and well-being in conflict settings

Date: 21 June 2016

Query: Produce a report looking at:
1) The contribution of education to child protection during an active conflict;
2) The contribution of education to well-being and resilience building during a conflict;
3) Evidence that disaster risk reduction (DRR) education in schools leads to improved resilience, both at the individual and community level;
4) The extent to which education contributes to peace-building and stabilisation during and in the aftermath of conflict, and how.

Content

1. Overview

The purpose of this report was to provide a summary of existing research on the non-academic benefits of education in a conflict setting. The review seeks to identify particular educational interventions that are seen to impact on the area in question. In addition, the review summarises contextual factors that may influence outcomes in the associated area.

In general terms, the range of interventions under each section are categorised as either systemic inputs (e.g. educational resources, mechanisms, and infrastructure) or educational inputs (e.g. courses, content, teaching and learning approaches etc.). It is to be noted that the role of administration, infrastructure, and resources in countries affected by conflict may make important differences in the effectiveness of types of education interventions, particularly when focussing on school-level activities.

Summary conclusions

In general terms, evidence from a broad variety of sources and settings indicate that the following interventions are seen to contribute to the role of education and schooling as a provider of safety and well-being in conflict-affected settings.

Community participation

Evidence shows that communities play a key role in supporting the contributions that education in conflict-affected settings can make to the safety and well-being of both children and the community at large. Firstly, community mobilisation in advocating on behalf of the school contributes significantly to its role in protecting children from military attacks, conflict-related violence, and exploitation by militia groups. Secondly, community engagement in schooling through parental support for children's enrolment and attendance, and a general valuing of the importance of education, contribute to creating a stable and safe schooling environment that can support the children, both at school and at home. Thirdly, community engagement in education strengthens the school's role as a focal point for community investment and exchange, and, in post-conflict settings, as a mechanisms for inter-community interaction that can foster and strengthen community peace and stability.

Teacher roles

Evidence shows that the teaching workforce have a key role to play in establishing education and the school environment as a safe, protective and fear-free setting for children affected by conflict. This involves ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge to a) maintain a stable and coherent learning environment, particularly in a highly-disrupted setting, b) foster positive peer-to-peer and child-teacher relations, and c) support and encourage children in striving for educational attainment. Teachers also are seen to have a role to play in ensuring child well-being through engagement with external initiatives associated with child protection and health referral. However, achieving these multiple roles involves ensuring that the teachers themselves have appropriate and realistic levels of support in terms of training, resources and professional guidance.

The schooling environment

Some anecdotal and observational evidence suggests that the school environment itself has a central role to play in fostering the safety and well-being of children in conflict-affected settings. As already indicated, the community and the teaching workforce are key to facilitating this. However, the implementation of additional conflict-sensitive educational policies and practices have a significant role to play. These might include, but not be limited to, school-level policies and inputs for fostering respectful and supportive peer-to-peer and pupil-teacher relationships; initiatives centring on creative and free play to support child expression; context-specific curriculum and content associated with peace-building, psychosocial care, relationship training, and child rights; and the careful selection and design of educational materials across all subjects. In addition, it is reported that the fostering of high academic expectations at school level has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of pupils in conflict-affected settings.

Inclusive and equitable access

Inclusive and equitable access to schooling is regarded by some as a key factor in supporting social stability at both community and national levels. In this context, the role of participation in schooling is seen to operate at several levels. Firstly, regular attendance limits the likelihood of children, and youth in particular, becoming engaged in local-level activities including crime and violence. In addition, in specific contexts, school attendance limits the likelihood of individuals being recruited or co-opted into militia groups. Thirdly, educational policies and practices designed to target inclusive and equitable access for children and youth across all communities increases perceived life opportunities, and reduces levels of social isolation and disenfranchisement that, in the long-term, can lead to political resentment and inter-community conflict. However, it is also to be noted that the relationships between access to schooling, social stability, and levels of community-level conflict and violence, are

highly complex, and that available evidence does not demonstrate the relationships conclusively.

School as a point of access to communities

In largely practical terms, the school setting is regarded in conflict-affected contexts as a key point of access to the community, and as such can support community-level safety and well-being through numerous 'non-academic' interventions including health interventions (e.g. vaccination programmes; health awareness campaigns; health referral programmes), nutrition (e.g. school-feeding programmes; food distribution programmes), and child protection (e.g. child protection engagement and referral programmes). Anecdotal evidence suggests that such interventions can benefit not just the children but also the community at large, through awareness-raising and message-distribution.

2. Methodology and quality of evidence

Methodology

This review undertook a review of published research on education in conflict and post-conflict settings from a broad range of sources, including UN agencies, humanitarian organisations and websites, and academic journals on education and psychology. Documents included meta-studies, literature reviews, and research papers.

Where possible, the review sought to draw on evidence from the Syrian context, both domestic and regional, and/or published since 2011, the start of the current Syrian conflict. However, the limited availability of evidence specific to the current Syrian context made it necessary to drawn on evidence from studies in multiple other conflict- and post-conflict settings. In all cases, the review sought to highlight evidence from only those interventions that indicate examples of transferable good practice.

Quality of evidence

In general terms, there is a lack of rigorous and robust evidence available on the impact of education on individuals and communities during and post conflict. Of this, the majority of evidence assesses the impact of investment in education for individuals and communities from an economic perspective of investment against return. This is supported by a number of recent literature reviews covering this field. For example, Burde et al. (2015) identified a total of only 13 experimental or quasi-experimental studies conducted in countries affected by crisis. Of these, only 10 assess the effects of interventions on children's quality of learning or wellbeing, and only 6 take into account the specific context of disaster or conflict as part of the research design. Nicolai & Hine (2015) observed that published analysis generally covers multiple countries rather than in depth analysis of the situation in one country or region.

Evidence by sector

From a sectoral perspective, studies on education in crisis- or conflicted-affected settings largely focus on primary and early years education. There are very few studies conducted in crisis settings that cover secondary education, or focus explicitly on youth. In the Syrian context, this can be seen in part as a result of the 'stark contrast' between levels of educational provision for primary schooling and that for secondary and youth (Chatty et al. 2014). Research on access to secondary school and vocational training for youth is extremely limited, and there is a need to address this (Burde et al. 2015; Nicolai & Hine 2015).

Evidence by intervention

There is an identified need to extend the focus of research in education in emergencies beyond analysis of provision, access and levels of enrolment, and look more at broader issues of quality, equity, psychosocial effects, and, in the case of education for youth, school-

to-work transitions (Nicolai & Hine 2015). As the findings of this review indicate, education in conflict settings frequently includes multiple inputs designed to support children across several indicators. However, numerous emerging theory-of-change models for education in crisis- and conflict-affected environments currently remain untested, and very few available studies attempt to determine causality between interventions and outcomes. It is difficult to identify which intervention components work at achieving what outcomes, and which are effective for particular populations (Olenik & Takya-Laryea 2013).

Factors influencing the availability of evidence

The low levels of available evidence is influenced largely by the lack of real-time and up-to-date data and analysis from current and on-going conflict-affected settings that can be used to inform decisions on education response. In general terms, this is due to circumstances resulting from the disruption caused by the conflict itself. More specifically, identified issues contributing to the lack of current data and analysis include:

- Ineffective and at times parallel information systems from multiple providers, leaving gaps in data collection and analysis
- Poor frequency of real-time data collection, leaving in-country actors unclear on scale of crises
- Insufficient analysis of existing data
- Assessment tools focused largely on issues of access and primary schooling, rather than full range of needs
- Limited analysis, and ineffective use of data, makes it difficult to communicate priorities and needs

(ODI 2016)

In this context, multiple reviewers highlight the need to develop and share knowledge with a focus on increasing both awareness of need and evidence for high-quality educational interventions in crisis contexts in order to improve delivery systems. It is argued that improvements in real-time quality data and analysis will contribute to this, and will also help support education crisis advocacy, response planning, implementation and accountability (ODI 2016; Alexander et al. 2010).

This analysis also points to the need for more and better research to identify which intervention components offer the most impact in conflict settings. More widely, research in this area would benefit from in-depth systems research focused on specific countries and regions experiencing emergencies, especially as many conflict and post-conflict situations are informed by highly specific contextual factors (Alexander et al. 2010).

However, despite the lack of experimental or quasi-experimental studies, reviewers note a large number of strong observational studies in countries affected by crisis, as well as a substantial body of grey literature generated by UN agencies and international NGOs. Reviewers frequently use these to suggest hypotheses and promising options for future research (Burde et al. 2015; Nicolai & Hine 2015).

3. The contribution of education to child protection during an active conflict

It is acknowledged that the right to education is most at risk during emergencies, yet education is critical during emergencies and times of crisis. There is growing evidence that participation in education in conflict-affected situations can save lives (ODI 2016). Being in school can keep children safe and protected from direct combat, especially where schools are identified as agreed safe zones. Participation and school attendance also can protect children from conflict-affected risks such as gender-based violence, recruitment into armed forces and groups, trafficking, child labour and early marriage (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; UNICEF 2016; Winthrop & Matsui 2014). Girls out of school are more vulnerable to early

marriage and sexual exploitation, and several reports have found this to be the case in Syria (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin 2015). For these reasons, education is regarded by communities as a priority for emergency intervention during active conflict.

Depending on context, and based on the testimonies of recruitment and re-recruitment told by children, parents and teachers, school is considered to be a safer place where armed groups are less likely to target or seek out children in schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is based on an awareness of the negative impact that attacking a school has on the reputation of militias; remnants of respect for education among some group commanders; and the impact of community-led negotiations. Similar testimonies were provided by survivors of sexual violence. However, it is worth noting that, in the context of offering protection, girls value 'shelter' as having greater or equal value to 'education', whereas boys prioritise 'education' only (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). It is noted that there needs to be further in-depth research into the intersecting and often complex factors that contribute to protecting schools from armed attack and sexual violence in some locations more than others (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

More widely, knowledge learned in school is also seen by beneficiary communities to offer protection, with value placed upon life-saving health and hygiene messages, critical thinking skills, and skills in gathering and processing information (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

Key interventions that can support education's contribution to child protection can be grouped as systemic inputs and education inputs:

Systemic inputs to education to support child protection:

Community participation

Emerging evidence also suggests that a greater sense of community ownership in education and engagement with schooling serves as a protective mechanism against local attacks on schools, and makes parents and students feel safer about school attendance (Groneman 2010). In a global evaluation of their Child Friendly Schools (CFS) programme, UNICEF found that high levels of community and family participation were positively associated with students feeling safe and included in school, especially among girls (UNICEF 2009). Observational studies have found that NGO-run schools that rely on community participation in conflict settings are less frequently attacked than government-run schools (Glad 2009; Rowell 2014; Burde 2014 in Burde et al. 2015). Community members often have the ability to respond quickly, the knowledge of the local context, and the commitment to protect education for their children. Stakeholders perceive community-based measures to be one of the most powerful mechanisms to protect education from attack (Koons 2015).

In certain countries or regions affected by acute conflict, there is promising evidence to support the role that community-led negotiations with political or insurgent groups have protected schools, students, and teachers from attack (Burde et al. 2015; Thompson et al. 2014). Community interventions include negotiating with militia to preserve school safety and status by sensitising militia on importance of education, and also disseminating community views at a regional level. The success of these negotiation methods vary, depending on the particular militia group concerned (Thompson et al 2014; Gladwell & Tanner 2014). It is reported that these strategies are more effective when the relevant militia leader has received some schooling, or sends their own children to school (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

In support of the above, a study commissioned by the Global Coalition to Protect Education From Attack (GCPEA) found that there is some evidence that involving local communities enhances the effectiveness of initiatives to protect education, and compensates for the lack of state capacity in this area. Community engagement in schooling promotes the appearance of political neutrality, which enhances security, and also encourages a sense of ownership, which increases the likelihood of communities ensuring the protection of schools at a later

date (Thompson et al. 2014). In the Syrian context, this finding is supported by evidence from an evaluation of the People in Need (PIN) initiative, which works with local councils in both the Aleppo and Idlib areas to select 'Temporary Learning Spaces', spaces safe enough to restart education activities. Working with the local civil administrations rather than with political or religious actors has helped gain local acceptance for PIN activities (Burbach 2014).

Thompson et al.'s GCPEA study (2014) on the role of communities in protecting education draws on case studies to outline 12 steps in the process of mobilising communities for school protection. These steps include: i) coordinating and collaborating with communities; ii) mapping and power analysis; iii) creating social cohesion; iv) identifying issues of concern to community-level stakeholders; v) creating wider ownership; vi) developing a protection plan; vii) monitoring, evaluating, and ensuring accountability; viii) carrying out a risk analysis; ix) allowing groups to organise themselves; x) capacity strengthening, awareness raising, and/or social behavioural change; xi) resourcing and implementing the plan; and xii) feeding back lessons learned to community groups. It is also important to: staff the programme with staff who are neutral representatives of the population they will be working with; work with and through local NGO partners; engage children in the process; and adapt the programme to the context so that it does no harm.

However, in order to achieve such steps in an effective manner, effective and sustainable local involvement in protecting education from attack requires a high level of community capacity building on the part of external stakeholders, as well as commitment from community members (Groneman 2010). Some evidence shows that this can be undertaken through interventions for public awareness raising, for example through national campaigns on topics such as: the importance of education; going back to school after conflict-caused closures; and schools as protected conflict free zones (Koons 2015). Other inputs centre around building communities' capacity on key protection topics, including: advocacy and promotion of the right to education; children's and human rights; school evacuation and school safety; school-based contingency plans in case of attacks and military use; psychosocial support methods; alternative learning modalities for when schools are closed; early warning systems; and first aid (Koons 2015).

Administration & Communications

Limited anecdotal evidence suggests that, when available, mobile phone messaging platforms can facilitate the physical protection of schools and students in conflict contexts, especially where attacks on schools are a particular problem (Thompson et al. 2014). In Gaza, Souktel implemented a large scale, web-based SMS alert and survey system as part of the UNESCO crisis-Disaster Risk Reduction (c-DRR) programme. Message sharing across parents, school staff and other community members enabled announcement of alerts and emergency notifications of ongoing military activities, alongside more general school announcements. The system was also used to deliver SMS-based surveys to collect data related to programme activities and was eventually connected to emergency response partners (hospitals, paramedics) to ensure timely response in case of schools being attacked (Souktel 2012, in Burde et al. 2015). However, descriptions of lessons learned largely cover issues of technical implementation rather than actual impact on child protection (Burde et al. 2015), and are clearly dependant on the availability of a working communications infrastructure as well as community access to the relevant technology.

Child protection programming

Particularly in IDP and refugee camps, schools and child-friendly spaces are a key mechanism in finding, identifying and accessing children at risk of abuse or abandonment. Teachers' roles in identifying problems and referring children increase the visibility of the child protection services at community level in the camp. With training in child protection, the role of teachers is seen as particularly important in providing holistic protection and overseeing a safe environment for children to come to (Alexander et al. 2010). Surveys of child responses

highlight the role of teachers in treating the children well and protecting them within the school environment (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

Educational inputs to support child protection:

Children's rights education
Where school is used as an opportunity to teach children about their rights, interventions can help identify for children the risks they face in terms of child labour, abuse, and exploitation. Initiatives include a school-based Child Club as a forum for discussing child protection issues and alerting children to the services available. In surveys of such interventions, children have highlighted that such school-acquired knowledge was not only giving them options for the future, but helping them to protect themselves in the present day. Parents also indicated that children's risk awareness and general ability to be alert and make sensible decisions increased when they attended school (Gladwell & Tanner 2014), a point also made in Alexander et al. (2010).

Relationship education
Through relationship education, teachers teach children about healthy relationships, each other's rights, and the impact of sexually transmitted infections. Such interventions are particularly important in contexts with high incidence of rape or sexual violence, as school is not always a safe environment (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; Alexander et al. 2010).

Protection through targeted interventions for health and hygiene
The connection between education and physical health is well established, and educating girls in particular has a positive influence on health outcomes (Winthrop & Matsui 2014). Appropriately designed school-level inputs for health and hygiene education, particularly those surrounding WASH, are seen as effective in increasing well-being and health resilience among children and their communities (Alexander et al 2010). Children report learning about toilets, hand-washing, clean water and disposing of harmful materials in school, and then conveying good practices to their families. Interventions through classroom lessons and school clubs can provide children with important information on communicable diseases such as cholera and HIV, and a range of studies has shown increases in healthier sexual behaviours as a result of education increased understanding of HIV and AIDS and of STIs (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; Alexander et al 2010). For logistical and administrative purposes, schools have demonstrated their role as an ideal location for carrying out health surveys and vaccinations, thereby offering additional layers of protection (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

In specific contexts, there is evidence that teachers have become important sources of information on a range of health issues affecting the community, and are able to ensure that life-saving health practices are taught directly to children in a way tailored to their understanding and specific needs. In addition, with appropriate training, some evidence shows that teachers have also been key in identifying illness and referring sick children to health clinics (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

4. The contribution of education to well-being and resilience building during a conflict

The need for emotional support provision for those children affected by the Syrian conflict has been well-researched. The Bahçeşehir study (2012-2013) aimed to document the levels of trauma experienced by Syrian refugee children living in a Turkish refugee camp, to assess their mental health needs. Nearly half (45 percent) of the surveyed Syrian refugee children experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms—more than ten times the rate observed in other children around the world who also took the same survey. The PTSD rate among Syrian refugee children is comparable to that observed among other children who experienced war, such as Palestinian and Bosnian refugees (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin 2015).

In general terms, it is acknowledged that, in conflict-affected settings, education in the form of regular schooling and school attendance can provide the stability, structure and routine that children need to cope with loss, fear, stress and violence (UNICEF 2016; Alexander et al 2010). Emerging evidence shows that, for the majority of children and youth affected by conflict or disaster, school routines improve mental health and resilience (Burde et al. 2015) and aids recovery from the extreme distress many have experienced (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). With the provision of appropriate systemic and educational interventions, the educational system can work as a special institution to fortify children's resilience and coping mechanisms when they live in violent environments (Slone & Shoshani 2008; Noltemeyer & Bush 2013, in Burde et al. 2015; Gladwell & Tanner 2014). Evidence shows that education in conflict-affected settings improves life chances and is highly prioritised by both children and adults in crisis-affected communities, for reasons of both stability and opportunity (Nicolai & Hine 2015; ODI 2016; Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

In general terms, evidence suggests that well-being in school-based contexts is supported through peer-to-peer and community-based learning, teacher learning, student-led clubs and other cultural and extracurricular activities that foster social interaction, teamwork, and respect for others. School activities can include play, recreation and story-telling to promote healing and build psychological resilience by providing skills and competencies to deal with challenging situations (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). In the context of Syrian refugee youth across the 5 neighbouring host nations, this is a point reiterated by Chatty et al. (2014).

In general terms, evidence suggests that resilience in school-based contexts is supported by a similar spread of mechanisms. A World Bank qualitative study examining education resilience approaches for Palestine refugees found the following key factors contributed positively to educational resilience: a collective understanding of the value of education; setting education related goals and objectives to provide quality pedagogy, to give students a sense of control and competence, and to create purpose and hope in motivation to study; and mechanisms for relevant school-level support from a mutually reinforcing network of empathetic staff, peers, and family members (ERA 2013).

In light of this, many educational interventions in countries and regions affected by conflict and crisis attempt to support children, youth, and their families by helping to mitigate risk and promote psychosocial wellbeing and resilience. There is strong evidence to support creative arts and play therapies, early childhood development, and the provision of extra services to the most vulnerable (especially girls and younger children) as ways to improve wellbeing (Burde et al. 2015). However, Burde et al. (2015) also note that research on such interventions in these settings are limited primarily to observational studies. They instead refer to more robust evidence from research conducted in the US, which indicates that well-structured and organised schools that provide safe and protective learning environments for conflict-affected students have contributed to improved academic outcomes, physical and mental health, and social behaviour.

Based on the above, key interventions that can support education's contribution to well-being and resilience during conflict include the following:

Systemic inputs to education in order to contribute to well-being and build resilience:

Community participation

In general terms, education is seen to contribute to the psychosocial resilience of communities by providing support for children and their families and facilitating perceptions of new opportunities (Chatty et al 2014). More widely, anecdotal evidence suggests that education and schooling as a focal mechanism facilitates community socialisation and creates a strong community structure (Alexander et al 2010). This is something that is seen as particularly important in camp settings in conflict-affected situation (Gladwell & Tanner

2014) and is currently being advocated for in the context of Syrian communities in Lebanon (Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014).

More specifically, some evidence suggests a positive relationship between community-supported school-based interventions and students' psychosocial functioning and learning outcomes. The Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRCs) 'Our Communities, Our Schools' intervention in Palestine sought to engage parents and communities around school operations and education activities, and promote inclusive, student-centred teaching. NRC's 'Better Learning' intervention, also in Palestine, aimed to provide community-based teachers and child-workers with strategies for addressing the effects of child trauma by analysing teacher questionnaires and stakeholder narratives. Qualitative data from both interventions points to a positive relationship between improvements in student engagement, students' psychosocial functioning as well as improvements in students' academic achievement (Shah 2014).

Support to parents and caregivers

Recent studies in emergency settings suggest the importance of including parents and caregivers in interventions to address wellbeing. Researchers found that caregiver mental health was highly and significantly related to youth mental health, and parents and teachers' mental health in conflict-affected situations affect their ability to care for children (Burde et al. 2015). Evidence shows that cycles of violence and abuse are easily perpetuated in the classroom environment and such situations lead to long-term detrimental effects for a child's development and future outcomes (World Bank & IRC 2013). These studies suggest that psychosocial interventions and other support in emergency settings should include or directly target caregivers in their efforts to improve children's mental health (Burde et al. 2015).

Educational inputs to contribute to well-being and build resilience during a conflict

Participation in active learning

At the individual level, evidence shows that participation in education has important secondary physical and psychosocial health effects that contribute to a population's overall well-being and capacity to cope with difficult circumstances (Winthrop & Matsui 2014). Participation in active learning is seen to have an intrinsic worth for children and their parents, and is seen as contributing to a sense of well-being and happiness among conflict-affected children. In this context, learning is associated by beneficiaries as a locus for overcoming adversity, providing meaning and purpose, and enhancing the skills that children perceive they need to in order to navigate the challenges they face (Alexander et al. 2010). Parents have reported that children going to school are happier and more motivated, and that this also has a positive impact on their families and wider communities (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

Evidence shows that children who attended school felt that they were able to make a better contribution to their communities, enhancing their self-esteem, sense of purpose and value, which in turn contributes to an individual's resilience to crisis (Winthrop & Matsui 2014).

Creative arts and play therapies

Creative arts are increasingly employed in psychosocial interventions aimed at children affected by conflict and crisis (Jordans et al. 2009, in Burde et al. 2015). They include music therapy, creative play therapy, dance, drama, painting and drawing to enable the processing of traumatic experiences.

Evidence shows that, in both conflict and crisis-affected contexts, creative arts and play therapies have had positive effects for participants. A systematic review of 21 studies on interventions targeting 1800 refugee children found that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and creative arts-based programmes resulted in significant improvements in mental health (Tyrer & Fazel 2014). An observational evaluation of 'Right to Play' programmes in refugee

camps in Tanzania and Pakistan found that participation supported wellbeing, particularly through the enhancement of peer relationships, student and teacher relationships, and the inclusion of young girls (Lange & Haugsja, 2006, in Burde et al. 2015).

Fostering of educational expectations

Promotion of high educational expectations and positive self-esteem among conflict-affected children are seen to have an impact on their resilience (Alexander et al. 2010). Evidence shows that academic resilience in conflict-affected settings is strengthened by external factors including: high expectations at home; caring school relationships; and caring peer relationships, as well as by internal factors including: high positive self-perception, high education aspirations, empathy for others, and hope for the future (Gizir & Aydin 2009, World Bank 2014b, in Burde et al. 2015). The role of educational participation in fostering resilience is further supported by comments and observations made by conflict-affected children, reported in Gladwell & Tanner (2014).

Early childhood development programming

There is strong evidence to support the impact of interventions focused on early child development on child wellbeing. A non-formal education intervention in Bosnia consisted of weekly meetings to promote good mother-child interaction, peer support, and increased knowledge of child development and trauma, as well as to provide basic health care (Dybdahl 2001 in Burde et al. 2015). Psychological tests and qualitative observations revealed significant post-intervention differences between treatment and control groups on child psychosocial functioning, as well as on measures of maternal wellbeing and mental health.

An evaluation of a UNICEF programme in the DRC reported that children who have attended ECD centres were better able to express themselves without fear. Family communications and parents' attitudes were also reported to model healthy behaviours better (Burde et al. 2015).

Teacher roles and practices

Evidence shows that students' relationships with teachers are important predictors for academic performance and positive health and social behaviours. Several meta-studies identified perceptions of teacher fairness and teacher respect for students as important contributors to resilience and psychosocial wellbeing (Tol et al 2013; World Bank 2014b; Noltemeyer & Bush 2013, in Burde et al. 2015).

However, enabling this requires teachers to be trained in psychological support and gaining understanding of the impact of violent and distressing events on children (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). In the Syrian context, the influx of Syrian children has stretched educational resources in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, and a priority concern is that, in addition to the shortage of material resources in this context, most teachers have not been trained in addressing the needs of traumatized children, some of whom may exhibit difficult behaviours (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin 2015; Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014).

Such training focuses on helping teachers recognise the importance of their relationship with students beyond the academic roles. Findings have shown that, during school-based assessments conducted during the two years after training, teachers demonstrate a strong awareness of children's psychosocial needs and sometimes prioritise these over and above their material needs. Teachers who have attended programmes are more conscious of the difficulties inherent in trying to provide adequate psychological care for their pupils, but also feel better equipped to do so. Such interventions have also been successful in enhancing the development of positive teacher-student relationships, and thus in improving student's satisfaction with their education (Locatelli et al. 2002 in Bell 2011).

However, from a pedagogic perspective, research suggests that addressing the psychosocial needs of children through a stand-alone 'psychosocial' module for teachers may not be a

wholly effective approach, and may lead some teachers to believe that the training enables them to solve children's problems. Instead, the integration of the psychosocial concepts into standard pedagogy, lesson planning and classroom management training may be more appropriate (Winthrop & Kirk 2005, in Bell 2011).

Finally, while some evidence suggested that teacher sensitisation programmes can contribute to helping children come to terms with psychological and social problems, success is also dependent on the education system's ability to support its teachers both through good quality training and through on-going professional feedback and support (Bell 2011).

Targeted interventions for psychosocial care

Education in fragile contexts can play a particularly important role in supporting children's psychosocial well-being. The ability of children and youth to regulate their emotions, develop cognitively, form relationships with others and have hope for the future are all part of psychosocial well-being and help them cope constructively with uncertainty and crisis. Especially in fragile contexts, this is important for young people's healthy development (Winthrop & Matsui 2014).

Within this, the role of psychosocial care as part of formal school-based support is under some debate. The label 'psychosocial programming' has been used to refer to ongoing structured activities that may combine creative and psychotherapy activities, safe spaces for play and recreation, sensitising teachers to the needs of conflict affected young people, bringing trained counsellors in to schools to conduct a series of focused sessions, or identifying and referring to problems outside the school. Schools are regarded as good places for psychosocial programmes because they can potentially access many children of different ages, draw on existing resources, and, ideally, offer a neutral stigma-free environment. However, across psychosocial support (PSS) programming, there is little consistency in goals and approaches (Bell 2011).

The EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2011 (UNESCO 2011) focuses on education in conflict settings and recognises the importance of psychosocial interventions in addressing the negative effects of conflict, including depression, trauma, shame and withdrawal, that can have significant consequences for individual learning. However, from an educational perspective, there is little evidence regarding the impact of such activities on improvements in children's learning. Very few studies show a direct improvement in education outcomes after a psychosocial intervention, whether school or community-based. A small number of studies on school-based psychosocial interventions demonstrate improvements that could impact on educational outcomes indirectly through, for example, reduced anxiety, a sense of structure and meaning in the individual's life, improved self-esteem and improved relationship with teachers (Bell 2011).

However, emerging evidence suggests that children and youth affected by conflict respond less well, and sometime adversely, to therapies that focus on trauma rather than on daily stressors (Burde et al. 2015). In this context, numerous reviews highlight the dangers of using Western-based models as the basis for psychosocial care in a school setting, and emphasise the fact that contextually-relevant programme design should serve as a guiding principle for EiE interventions that address wellbeing (Burde et al. 2015). The issue of community and context-sensitive implementation more generally is also highlighted by Novelli et al. (2014).

Similarly, existing psychosocial care approaches may not reach the most vulnerable in any given context. Girl children are especially exposed. Several studies with a variety of populations show mixed, weak, or even negative effects of psychosocial interventions for girls (Burde et al. 2015). This suggests the importance of specific and targeted support programmes, particularly for traditionally marginalised groups.

Overall, studies show that psychosocial support can be provided through a range of general and holistic interventions, rather than through specific PSS counselling. Key activities include: ensuring schools are open and accessible; implementing safe play programmes to help children normalise their behaviour through play with their peers; and teacher sensitisation training (Jordans et al. 2009; Barenbau et al. 2004; in Bell 2011).

More specifically, running activities in schools that combine creative and skills components with distinct psychological recovery components can reach many children and has had positive outcomes such as improving children's concentration in schools, increasing their feelings of security and reducing symptoms of trauma. Peer-to-peer dialogue has been employed in schools with some success. Peer dialogues appear to be useful psychosocial tools since they build important life skills. Finally, having specialised counsellors work with individuals and groups of severely affected children and youth has proven to be effective, but only when these efforts have been implemented in cultures that traditionally use mental health interventions and in schools which are part of functional education systems (Jordans et al. 2009; Barenbau et al. 2004; in Bell 2011).

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives

Evidence-based SEL programmes consist of two components: creating safe learning environments and providing social competency instruction (Dean 2014). SEL programmes create a safe learning environment as a necessary foundation to ensure protection, provide routines and a sense of normalcy for conflict-affected children. Successful SEL programmes also complement safe environments with social skill-building, where explicit SEL instruction has a designated time slot, and is infused in course curriculum, and where students are given the opportunity to demonstrate SEL skills.

The majority of SEL research comes from programmes in the US. However, a few SEL programmes piloted in conflict-affected countries have been examined for impact evaluation and have shown promising results. Dean (2014) cites the Opportunities for Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education (OPEQ) in DRC as one example where recent qualitative feedback from children assigned to the pilot cohort perceived their teachers to be more supportive than those who did not receive the intervention package. Another promising programme is the International Rescue Committee's (IRC's) Healing Classrooms Initiative. With a focus on student and teacher well-being in order to improve educational outcomes, the programme aims to improve teacher training and community participation through evaluation and staff training. The evaluation of Healing Classrooms has yielded positive and encouraging results based largely on qualitative and anecdotal reports of teachers and students, where teachers made considerable improvements in their efforts to create more safe and child-centred learning environments that included regular routines and individualised attention. Teachers also employed more effective and creative teaching strategies such as integrating games, pictures and stories in the curriculum content (Dean 2014).

Targeted interventions for health and hygiene

Appropriately designed school-level inputs for health and hygiene education, particularly those surrounding WASH, are seen as effective in increasing physical well-being and health resilience among children and their communities. Children report learning about toilets, hand-washing, clean water and disposing of harmful materials in school, and then conveying good practices to their families. In specific contexts, there is evidence that teachers have become important sources of information on a range of issues affecting the community, and are able to ensure that life-saving health practices are taught directly to children in a way tailored to their understanding and specific needs (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). Findings from other studies indicate that participants also experienced increases in healthy behaviours such as personal hygiene practices and protective sexual behaviours as a result of various interventions that included a health education or life skills component (Anastacio 2006; Right to Play 2011; Yeager 2006; Addy & Stevens 2006; Fauth & Daniels 2001, cited in Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013). Currently, non-formal education provision in informal settlement schools

for Syrians in Lebanon serves as a platform for greater education, protection, WASH and food distribution provision for refugees (Deane 2016).

Targeted interventions for nutrition

In crisis situations, including food insecurity, education and schooling can provide a vital platform for an integrated emergency response. Evidence has shown that children can be taught to store, prepare and consume food in a safe manner, and, through school-feeding programmes, can at times be supported with nutritional food. Such approaches are seen to be particularly valuable for younger children and those enrolled through early-childhood development programmes (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; Alexander et al. 2010).

5. Evidence that disaster risk reduction (DRR) education in schools leads to improved resilience, both at the individual and community level

Little research exists on the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction (DRR) education programmes. Within this, there is little or no research that investigates the effectiveness of DRR programmes in improving resilience to or reducing the impact of conflict-related disasters e.g. attacks on communities; aerial bombings; suicide bombings etc. (Barakat et al. 2012). The majority of research instead focuses on resilience to natural disasters (Burde et al. 2015).

In general terms, it is accepted that a variety of disaster risks are likely to interact in a given context, with conflict and natural hazard stressors both increasing their threat. In this context, DRR teaching and awareness can equip children and families to cope with current crises and support innovative solutions for future events (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

There is evidence that education can reduce vulnerability to environmental shocks, through teaching communities to assess potential risks and prepare for disaster. It is argued that education systems that prioritise disaster risk reduction (DRR) can use a range of strategies from incorporating emergency preparedness and response planning in education sector plans, implementing early warning systems to alert populations to an impending disaster, and teaching students how to prepare for and respond to disasters. In this context, the skills students learn not only help them protect themselves but also their families and communities (Winthrop & Matsui 2014; Izadkhah 2012). It is reported that older children can respond well to DRR teaching and take home messages, enabling them to prepare for crisis (Gladwell & Tanner 2014). The provision of basic emergency preparedness and response (EPR)/DRR manuals and visual learning aids have been proved to be a key element of increasing knowledge retention and assisting with the dissemination of DRR training messages (Barakat et al. 2012).

Countries with higher proportions of women with secondary education registered fewer fatalities due to natural disasters. Resilience to weather-related disasters such as floods and droughts has also been linked to education of women and girls (Burnett, Guison-Dowdy & Thomas 2013, in Gladwell & Tanner 2014). Studies by the World Bank and the Center for Global Development cited in Winthrop & Matsui (2014), indicate that educating girls and women is an effective way to reduce a community's vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate change. These studies showed that a huge number of weather-related deaths in developing countries could have been prevented if there had been a greater focus on progressive female education policies that included supporting resiliency.

However, approaches to DRR education vary greatly, as do learning and assessment standards. It is frequently difficult to isolate the impact of DDR training programme on participants' knowledge. In addition, delivery mechanisms can progressively diminish participants' knowledge acquisition at successive levels of rollout (Barakat et al. 2012). In many cases, programmes discuss the basic science behind disasters but failed to address

preventative measures or means of coping when a disaster strikes (Tekeli-Yesil et al. 2010; Selby & Kagawa 2012, in Burde et al. 2015). Where training participants can demonstrate improvement in their EPR/DRR practices, there are inconsistencies in practices across different countries and at different participant levels (Barakat et al. 2012).

In this context, it is worth noting that findings show that individuals with prior experience with disasters, higher levels of education, and greater social connectivity were more likely than those who have benefitted only from DRR education to be better prepared for responding to disasters (Burde et al. 2015). When compared with direct training provision interventions, greater collaboration with relevant civil society partners, particularly at the local level, is regarded as key to increasing grassroots DRR knowledge base (Barakat et al. 2012).

6. The extent to which education contributes to peace-building and stabilisation during and in the aftermath of conflict, and how

It is generally acknowledged that education can be a driver of stability, reconciliation and peacebuilding (UNICEF 2016), and there is growing evidence that educational equity may be a factor in reducing violence (ODI 2016; Alexander et al. 2010). Research demonstrates that there is a positive, significant relationship between several primary education indicators (enrolment, attainment and skill levels), and conflict susceptibility measures, including democratisation, representative forms of government, political and voter rights, and civil liberties (Burnett. N, Guison-Dowdy. A, Thomas. M. 2013, in Gladwell & Tanner 2014). In conflict-affected states, education is a means of socialisation and identity development; education is critical for inclusive post-conflict state-building, and the absence of education is often instrumental in narrow ideologically driven and exclusive nation-building efforts (Deane 2016).

Furthermore, evidence also shows that schools which engage with a diverse cross-section of fragmented communities can help create a sense of belonging by fostering respect and equality, thereby contributing to a more cohesive community. Gladwell & Tanner (2014) cite research in the DRC, where anecdotal evidence from teachers confirms that children tend to gravitate to their own community groups but, as a result of schooling and trained teacher interventions, are able to integrate the children and help them build friendships among different ethnicities and tribes. Community leaders and parents also spoke of growing positive inter-tribal relationships emerging as a result of the schools (Tabane & Human-Vogel 2010; Burnett, Guison-Dowdy, & Thomas 2013; Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013, in Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

In the context facing Syrian refugee students and their families, interventions to achieve such outcomes would be of substantial benefit. Syrian communities have reported marginalisation, bullying, and acts of violence in schools. In Jordan and Lebanon, native parents have expressed frustration with the influx of Syrian children, fearing their presence could compromise the overall quality of education. Hostility toward Syrian children has been especially pronounced in Lebanon, in a climate of growing resentment toward refugees. Syrian children describe frequent experiences of verbal or physical abuse from teachers and students in schools (Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014; Deane 2016). Signs have been posted asking Syrians to leave Lebanon, and there have been forced evictions from informal settlements and violent acts against refugees. Increasing violence has contributed to an undermining of perceptions of school safety (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin 2015). Similarly, in Jordan, teachers supervise shift transitioning to mediate tensions between the Jordanian host community and refugee pupils, because tensions have been known to escalate into confrontation and even fighting (Deane 2016).

In terms of specific programming and systemic interventions, the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2011) states that for education to improve the prospects for peace the following must be taken into account:

- Language of instruction – Using of a single national language as the medium of instruction in schools can foster a sense of shared identity or fuel violence.
- Reforming the curriculum – In particular teaching subjects such as history and religion. Education can be used to erode deeply entrenched divisions by getting students to reflect on multiple identities, and on what unites rather than divides them.
- Devolution of education governance – Decentralisation and devolution lead to greater accountability and equity, or a weak government role could hamper peacebuilding efforts.
- Making schools non-violent environments – The normalisation of violence in society must be challenged to achieve peace. Corporal punishment needs to be prohibited.

(UNESCO 2011)

A number of international bodies advocate for conflict-sensitive approaches within education policy and practice as a means of addressing circumstances in conflict and post-conflict settings. Furthermore, a number of resources have been developed that seek to provide guidance for states seeking to implement appropriate changes and approaches in the education system. These include INEE's Conflict-Sensitive Education Pack, launched in 2013, and UNICEF's four-year, cross-sectoral Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), launched in 2012 (Jacob 2013).

A number of evaluations measured the impact of similar multi-component, holistic programs on reduced violence and increased tolerance, and found that conflict affected youth decreased their participation in violent and illicit activities as a result of programming (Blattman & Annan 2011a; Buj, et al 2003; Dahal, Kafle, Bhattarai 2008; Right to Play 2011; Shrestha & Gautam 2010; Yeager 2006; YouthBuild 2010, in Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013). Some of these studies attribute this change in behaviour to the inclusion of interventions such as civic engagement, civic education, conflict mediation, and peacebuilding. Changes were also noted in youth attitudes about conflict or violence, along with youth having a better understanding of differences in peers and more positive feelings toward community leaders when offered a holistic programme that often included civic education or conflict mediation (Addy & Stevens 2006; Mercy Corps 2012; Fauth & Daniels 2001; Yeager 2006; Nigmatov 2011; Buj et al 2003; Gouley, Kanyatsi 2010, in Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013).

In terms of educational content and curriculum, Burde et al. (2015) found a lack of evidence regarding the relationship between educational content and participation in/support for violence. They note that programmes such as human rights education and conflict resolution education were rarely evaluated in a rigorous manner, and it is often not possible to assess their impact on student attitudes and behaviour. They found that peace education programmes were among the most widely evaluated type of programmes regarding learning outcomes, but that few studies used experimental designs and most evaluations tended to look at the impact of programmes as a whole, without looking at the impact of different components. Finally, such studies generally evaluate the short term effects and there is a lack of evidence on the longer term outcomes (Naylor 2015).

In general terms, while it is accepted that while there is a relationship between education plus peace and stability, it is heavily mediated by the quality and distribution of services (Winthrop & Matsui 2014). Inequitable access to educational opportunity as between different ethnic or other groups enhances tensions that can give rise to civil conflict. Curricula and textbooks that privilege certain ethnic groups can have the same effect (Sinclair 2010). However, the degree to which peace-building and stabilisation interventions within education can offset the likelihood of conflict reoccurring over the medium and longer term are difficult to attribute exclusively (Burde et al. 2015; Sinclair 2010). Longer-term comparative studies on the

positive correlation between education and stability are needed to analyse further causation (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; Sinclair 2010).

Key factors and interventions that can support education's contribution to peace-building and stabilisation include the following:

Systemic inputs to education to contribute to peace-building and stabilisation during and in the aftermath of conflict:

Access to schooling and the impact on stability

There is some inconclusive evidence of the link between out-of-school youth and increased likelihood of conflict. Evidence from a number of quantitative case studies and cross-national surveys showed that states with large populations of predominately male youth were more likely to experience conflict if their populations had lower levels of education (Barakat & Urdal 2009; Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Collier et al. 2004; Ostby & Urdal 2010, in Burde et al. 2015). However, this relationship was mediated by various other factors in these countries, such as income level, national resources, and regime type. Observational research from Sierra Leone indicates that youth without access to education were nine times more likely to join violent conflict than those who attended school (Humphreys & Weinstein 2008, in Burde et al. 2015). Children who are not formally educated are more likely to feel marginalised and hopeless, making them vulnerable targets for radicalisation. In the Syrian context, for example, it is reported that ISIS is believed to be actively recruiting Syrian youth in Lebanon, taking advantage of the high levels of alienation and hostility they are experiencing as refugees (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin 2015).

At a community level, surveys among parents in conflict-affected settings revealed anecdotal evidence that when children were occupied and in school, they were less likely to be involved in community-level disruption, and less likely to be involved in criminal and militia activity (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

However, in achieving this, there is a need to ensure that conflict sensitive programmes and policies are implemented in order to address inequitable access to education, and reduce the likelihood of tension between groups, or between citizens and the state (Thompson 2015). This involves overcoming administrative and cost barriers to enrolment; providing learning opportunities that are inclusive and accessible to all, including speakers of non-dominant language groups, refugees, displaced persons, and students with disabilities; eliminating discriminatory registration, admission, or graduation practices; and, in the context of IDP and refugee communities, ensuring grant recognition and equivalency certificates for refugee education programmes and implementing processes for validating academic achievements gained by students in another country, for example refugee students or students returning home after being refugees (INEE 2013; UNICEF 2012; Koons 2015).

The role of community engagement in education in conflict-affected settings

Engaging the community has been proven to support the reintegration of youth after conflict and crisis and the achievement of long-term stability (Corazon de la Paz 2007, in Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013). For the most part, capacity building in the community involves ensuring that the environments where youth come to learn are supportive and enabling, and that the content of what they are learning is relevant to their lives (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013). Such approaches are being advocated for in the context of education for Syrian children in Lebanon (Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014).

In discussing the role of community engagement in providing support to education in conflict-affected contexts, Burde et al. (2015) note that, according to observational research, and depending on national context, some community-based interventions for school-based management, school administration and other activities may have effects on resolving or exacerbating social and political tensions. In support of this, Gladwell & Tanner (2014) cite a

case in North Kivu, DRC, where people from different groups displaced by inter-ethnic clashes were rebuilding their homes around the school where their children play together. The school setting where community children were teaching, playing and learning together was perceived to support the development of more cohesive communities. Social cohesion helped children to form social connections and combine the interests of different groups under institutional setting. It also helped children, young people, teachers and parents to deal better with differences and create a more integrated community, limiting the likelihood of small incidents escalating into violence (Pigozzi 1999, Martinez 2013 in Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

However, in other contexts, where communities were already largely homogenous and isolated, community participation did not improve ethnic relations among parents (Burde et al. 2015).

Educational inputs to contribute to peace-building and stabilisation during and in the aftermath of conflict

Integration of conflict-sensitive curricula

In general terms, it is recognised that the content and style of standard educational processes can and has contributed to conflict. In addressing this, a number of commentators advocate for the role of curriculum reform in avoiding or addressing intergroup tensions, negating a culture of violence, and overcoming stereotypes (Alexander et al 2010; Sinclair 2010). Specific curricula contributions that can contribute to a peaceful society include topics such as: critical thinking; conflict prevention; peaceful conflict resolution; peace education; human rights; humanitarian action and law; respect for diversity; and responsible citizenship. This is accompanied by revised teaching and learning materials that include content and graphics representing all identity groups, and exclude content and graphics biased against any identity groups (Koons 2015; Sinclair 2010).

Peace education

Peace education is founded upon the idea that education can be used for conflict resolution and peace-building by fostering an atmosphere of non-violence and reconciliation among learners, typically through direct contact between groups, on the assumption that it will diffuse into the community. Key components of peace education include activities and lessons on sharing and working in groups, interacting with others, and dealing with emotional stress positively (Webster 2013, in Burde et al. 2015).

Existing observational evidence shows that peace education often positively affects attitudes and perceptions. Where populations are living in protracted or post-conflict contexts, peace education activities that require contact between groups show promise in affecting attitudes and perceptions positively in the short term (Gladwell & Tanner 2014; Burde et al. 2015).

For example, the UNHCR Peace Education Programme was initially developed by UNHCR in camps for Sudanese and Somali refugees in Kenya, and has been used widely with many other conflict affected communities, both within and outside of camp settings (UNESCO 2011; Baxter 2013). It delivers peace education as a separate subject, and includes a number of specific components including a teacher training programme, with a training manual, community education components and reinforcement through informal education including street drama, posters and sporting events (Baxter 2013). Evaluations have shown that success (e.g. increased problem-solving skills in relation to local conflicts, falling crime rates, and increased community ownership) was dependent on the interaction between these components, and could not be attributed to a specific activity within the programme (Jäger 2014). A similar programme implemented by Help the Afghan Children features a number of components including: a set of storybooks for reading, discussing and using as the basis for drama; a designated space in schools for teaching and learning about peace; a teacher

training course; and training for local school committees on peace education, in their schools and communities. Initial results in the schools where the programme was first implemented showed a reduction in observed aggressive behaviour (e.g. bullying, fighting) and an increase in students modelling peaceful positive behaviour, including the development of friendships between different ethnic groups who had previously fought (Sadeed 2013).

The above evaluations assessed the short-term impact of peace education. There is a paucity of evidence on long-term effects of peace education on conflict-affected communities (Burde et al. 2015).

Civic education

Some evidence shows that educational inputs covering issues of citizenship and political engagement can help youth better understand the role of government and their civic responsibilities (Abdalla 2012; Rea 2011; Gouley & Kanyatsi 2010; Shrestha & Gautam 2010; Dahal, Kafle, & Bhattarai 2008, cited in Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013). In these studies, youth reported increased civic awareness and involvement in political processes (Olenik & Takyi-Laryea 2013).

In their review of the literature on the impact of civics and citizenship education within the secondary school curriculum, Lopes Cardozo et al. (2015) note that there is great potential, in theory, for civics education to promote peacebuilding behaviours and attitudes among youth. However, empirical studies of citizenship education in conflict-affected settings frequently find that the lessons fail to engage young people, and in some cases, when badly delivered, may thwart rather than enhance young people's peacebuilding agency. Citizenship courses were often found to be very abstract and decontextualised, and failed to relate to lived experiences. The review cites studies in Lebanon and Northern Ireland where citizenship education classes were considered by students to be irrelevant as they failed to address key issues that mattered to them. The pedagogical approaches used were found to be too reliant on rote learning with limited space for discussion. In general terms, these findings are also confirmed by Osler & Yahya (2013) in their study of similar education interventions in post-conflict Kurdistan-Iraq.

Schooling models

In addition to what children learn in school, there is some anecdotal evidence that how the school environment expects them to learn is essential in transforming values, attitudes and behaviours through sensitivity to community dynamics and an awareness of the underlying causes of conflict. When a conflict-sensitive, peace-oriented schooling model is adopted, positive critical thinking and self-reflection can be promoted among children (Sinclair 2010).

When combined with school-level codes of conduct for students and teachers, sustainable teacher training and active partnerships with the community, it is reported that learning can challenge the use of violence to solve problems and act as a catalyst for peace-building at community level. In such school settings, children report of changes in thinking as a result of learning, including respect of others, both in their immediate family, and in the community more broadly. This in turn is reported to have translated into an ability to solve problems without resorting to violence. In one study, more than 80% of parents consulted confirmed that they had seen changes in their children since they started learning about respect and peace at school (Gladwell & Tanner 2014).

Conversely, the presence of violence in schools, including corporal punishment, has physical, psychological and social effects. Firstly, evidence suggests it has a significant impact on participation and attainment in education. Secondly, it increases the risk of children themselves behaving aggressively. Thirdly, some evidence exists that shows that violence in schools can contribute towards a community- or social-level cycle of conflict (UNESCO 2011).

Approaches to history education

History education in conflict-affected settings is frequently seen as problematic, given differing community perspectives on historical events, particularly at national levels. Historical educational content may be associated by some with state political repression or control, or it may also act as a tool of war, sustaining hostilities among students (Cole 2013). Currently, in Syria, the basic curriculum taught in non-state controlled areas omits History as a subject, whereas the basic curriculum taught in government controlled areas retains History as a subject (UNICEF 2015).

However, the avoidance of history as a subject is also problematic. Existing observational evidence shows that silence in classrooms on contested and painful histories is related to negative outcomes in learner perceptions and attitudes of history and identity (Cole 2013). For example, structured and unstructured interviews with 30 teachers and observations of their classrooms showed that history textbooks and history teaching were silent about Lebanon's civil war because 'talking history means talking politics. And, talking politics will only ignite new wars' (van Ommering 2015). Based on interviews and informal conversations with 350 students aged 7–15, Lebanese students had difficulty in understanding their social and political surroundings and in drawing lessons from the past (van Ommering 2015). As vital historical events were neglected in the schools, students resorted to alternative sources of information such as family, peers, and political media and clubs that often reinforced one-sided and groundless historical accounts (Burde et al. 2015).

Language of instruction

The choice of language of instruction can be a highly divisive issue in fragile and conflict affected countries. Imposition of a dominant language as the language of instruction may serve to repress or further marginalise speakers of other languages and act as a barrier to learning. In some cases this can lead to resentment that can fuel conflict (Naylor, 2015).

In multilingual societies there may be a strong case for using a single language of instruction to promote national unity and shared identity. The 2011 Education For All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2011) compares indicators of national unity in Tanzania, which uses Kiswahili as the medium of instruction at primary schools, with Kenya, which uses both mother tongue and English. Tanzanians showed much higher levels of identifying with their nationality over their ethnicity, of trusting other nationals and sense of fair treatment, contributing to reductions in the likelihood of conflict. In contrast, Uganda has a mother tongue education policy which aims, in part, to address marginalisation of groups in the North which has led to conflict in the past. However, this policy is perceived very negatively by beneficiaries, who claim it exacerbates inequality by limiting their access to education in English (Naylor 2015; Omoeva and Gale 2015, in Naylor 2015).

These conflicting issues are highlighted in the current context of education for Syrian children in Lebanon (Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014). Lebanon's languages of instruction (Arabic, French and English) compound the learning challenge for the small minority of Syrian refugees currently in formal education. In Lebanon, English and French are taught as second languages, and the language of instruction for maths and science is either French or English. In Syria, English and French are taught as foreign languages rather than second languages (Deane 2016). The linguistic challenges facing Syrian children are a substantial disincentive to engagement with schooling (Shuayb, Makkouk, & Tuttunj 2014). However, in one non-formal education location, when bilingual Arabic-English children's books were being distributed to refugee children, the teacher expressed surprise when a child who had not spoken in class before volunteered to read the book in English to the whole class. Engaging in English rather than in Arabic facilitated a new route to communication (Deane 2016).

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8. Additional information

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This query response was prepared by **Chris Joynes**

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