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Operationalizing Experience: Donor Approaches to Service Delivery in Fragile States

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the different approaches to service delivery in fragile states by surveying donors' own evaluations of their existing fragile states policies. Because there is limited understanding of what works in risky environments, monitoring and evaluation are critical components of effective assistance. By highlighting trends in the strategies that donors have developed to implement acknowledged good practices, we can better understand how these experiences might contribute to future project and evaluation design.

Key words: fragile states, donor policy, foreign aid, healthcare, water and sanitation, security and justice, education

JEL Codes: O19, O22, H41, H84, I38

I. INTRODUCTION

In January 2010, Haiti was hit by a powerful earthquake that caused massive devastation to both physical and human infrastructure. The country had long been in persistent humanitarian crisis, and had required numerous United Nations (UN) interventions over the previous 2 decades to restore core services and security. The media called the earthquake an opportunity to rebuild the country from scratch—a long term project. But an approaching hurricane season and the images produced of people trapped and starving demanded immediate assistance. A year on, evaluations showed that in the rush to deliver humanitarian assistance, implemented projects bypassed civil society and local government. This resulted in weak domestic ownership and social tensions which threatened the viability of projects when donors attempted to turn them over to local staff (Tulane University 2011).

The post-earthquake situation in Haiti illustrates the larger problem of engagement with fragile states. Development assistance must balance the tension between the urgent need to reach a crisis-affected population with the longer term goal of building state capacity to meet those needs in the future.

The inability to provide basic services to the population is both a defining characteristic and an outcome of fragility. It is also an area where fragile states have moved so far off-track that there is little hope that they will achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹ And in regions such as the Sub-Saharan Africa, the recent food and financial crises have exacerbated existing weaknesses and are likely to slow poverty reduction (EC 2010). By assisting in service delivery, donors can simultaneously address humanitarian needs and promote capacity development. However, interventions need to be carefully considered to account for the local context which impacts the effectiveness of delivery channels.

Over the past decade, donors have developed various approaches to streamline assistance to fragile states, but program evaluations continue to turn up difficulties with project design and execution. Though a set of principles for engagement has been developed, the recommendations are highly generalized and for many of them, it is unclear how to operationalize suggestions in practice.² Though both country and sector case studies are available to guide donors, these are underutilized.³ This problem is compounded by a persistent disconnect between available academic research and assistance practices (Paris 2011).

This study explores the different approaches to service delivery in fragile states by surveying donors' own evaluations of their existing fragile states policies. Because there is limited understanding of what works in risky environments, monitoring and evaluation are critical components of effective assistance. By highlighting trends in the strategies that donors have developed to implement acknowledged good practices,⁴ we can better understand how these experiences might contribute to future project and evaluation design.

¹ As of 2011, fragile states as a group have not achieved a single MDG (OECD 2011).

² OECD principles are drawn from the experiences of its members. In part then, any strategies that adhere to these guidelines are endogenous.

³ The need for political economy analysis is not just at the beginning of engagement in a fragile state. It occurs anytime there is a change in programming. When DFID attempted a significant scaling up of their engagement in Yemen, resulting changes in the political economy dynamics were not taken into account and subsequently led to implementation problems (Bennet et al. 2010).

⁴ OECD principles are drawn from the experiences of its members. In part then, any strategies that adhere to these guidelines are endogenous.

The aim of this study is to understand what types of engagement have resulted in successful service delivery and to what extent this can be expected to promote economic development more broadly. To answer these questions, we supplement our survey of donors' evaluations with recent academic literature on fragile states.⁵ By drawing on both quantitative and qualitative studies from a variety of disciplines, we create a systematic overview of the current state of knowledge.

Section I introduces the concept of state fragility. States in this category are distinct from other developing countries both in terms of country-specific indicators and also in terms of their aid profiles. The typology offered here previews the variety of challenges that donors face in tailoring an engagement strategy which is appropriate for all beneficiary countries.

Despite the challenges, as of 2011, many major donors have articulated specific assistance strategies towards fragile states. Section II looks into the mechanics of assessing development assistance. This section details the differences in methodologies employed by different agencies in our sample. It also highlights the unique challenges that donors have identified in their efforts to undertake monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in fragile situations.

Sections III and IV evaluate trends in service delivery from two different perspectives. Section III takes four of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) principles of engagement that were consistently cited as problematic to operationalize and describes both the dimensions of the challenges and how specific donors have addressed them. Section IV looks into trends that are specific to four of the main service sectors including healthcare, water and sanitation, education, and security and justice. This approach allows us to explore program innovations that have occurred across countries in each of these sectors. Section five concludes.

II. OVERVIEW OF FRAGILE STATES

Fragile statehood is a concept that distinguishes a subgroup of low-income countries both in terms of characteristics specific to the state, and features of the assistance that they receive from the international community. Though the international community has articulated a set of general principles for engagement with this group of states, there is not yet a universally accepted approach, terminology or set of indicators that can identify when a state should be included in this group.

Part of the difficulty in producing a typology of states in this cohort lies in the recent emergence of the term. While it has long been clear that certain states require different types of interventions, until a decade ago there was no common identifier. This led donors to define their own categories such as weak states, low income countries under stress, and post-conflict states.

The inability to produce a common typology of states has limited the development of group-specific modalities specific to engagement with fragile states. By comparison, universal agreement about the list of least developed countries (LDCs) based on transparent (though not uncontested) indicators, has enabled the international community to develop a unique set of modalities specifically suited for countries on this list. Like LDCs, it is clear that fragile states need to be engaged differently in order to account for the specific challenges they face.

⁵ We restrict the literature survey to works published since 2005.

In this section, we will highlight some of the most common characteristics of fragile states. But first we briefly turn to the question of what the international community expects to accomplish through a differentiated development approach to fragile states.

A. Why Engage Fragile States Differently?

Fragile states present a number of new challenges to existing rules of engagement with developing countries. In many cases, donors are entering into situations where their institutional risk assessments would have kept them out. Once they are engaged, there is a high potential for disruption and discontinuity of progress, which renders existing benchmarks inapplicable.

For this reason, the OECD has produced guidelines for donors that are involved in fragile states (Figure 1). Yet these suggestions are operationally vague and it is not clear how to put many of them into practice.

Figure 1: 2007 Policy Commitment and Set of Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (OECD)

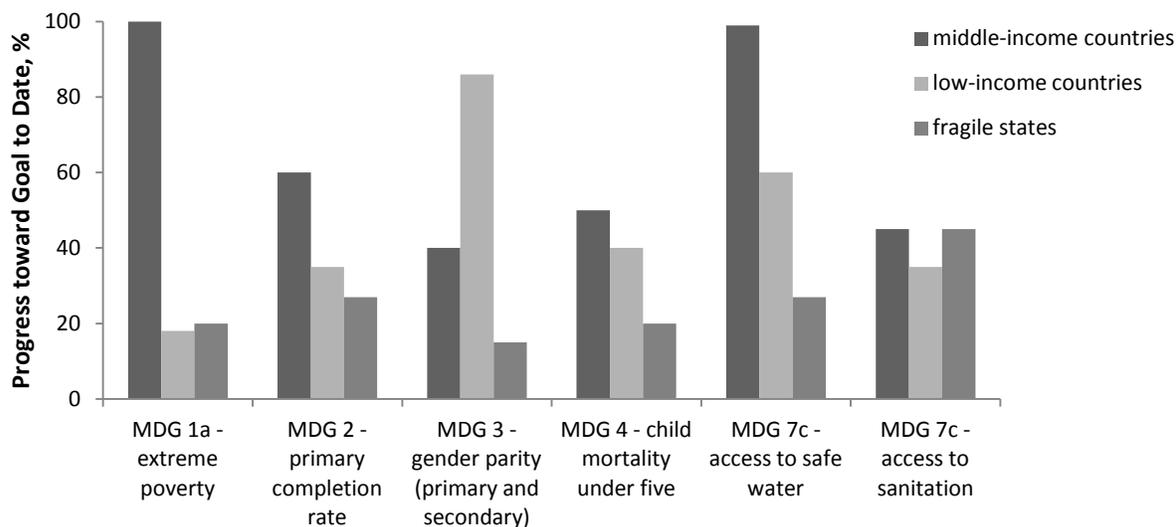
- Take context as the starting point
- Ensure all activities do no harm
- Focus on state-building as the central objective
- Prioritise prevention
- Recognise the links between, political, security and development objectives
- Promote non discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
- Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
- Agree on practical co-ordination mechanisms between international actors
- Act fast...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
- Avoid pockets of exclusion (“aid orphans”)

The assumption inherent in these principles is that even in the most problematic situations, economic development is possible and that donor assistance can be designed in a way that goes beyond emergency assistance.

The international community has sought to engage differently with fragile states for both humanitarian and national interest reasons. Developmental concerns prompted many donors to adjust their aid strategies to account for the additional challenges they found in certain types of states. As the World Bank pointed out, extreme poverty rates, though they have decreased in non-fragile states over the past 15 years, have remained unchanged in fragile states (IDA, 2007).

While the specific state types included in fragile situations differ by donor, what is common is an understanding that these states required more frequent humanitarian assistance and more hands-on assistance as a result of weak government capacity. This is particularly important in the global push to achieve the MDGs. Though fragile countries have made progress (Harttgen and Klasen 2012) they will not meet any of the MDGs. ADB (2010) points out that existing approaches do not work in situations of low capacity and fluid political conditions.

Figure 2 illustrates the difficulty fragile states are having in meeting the MDGs. As there are more frequent and prolonged global crises, we might expect that more states will move into this category which makes understanding how to engage them highly relevant.

Figure 2: Fragile States will not meet MDGs

MDG = Millennium Development Goal.

Source: Global Monitoring Report, 2010 (figure 1.14, p. 23).

In addition to the potential for destabilization of the state itself, fragile states often have regional and global spillover effects. They can be a source of instability for their neighbors by fomenting conflict, sending refugees, and destroying shared natural resources. In 2011, Kenya received more than 380,000 Somali refugees who were fleeing from the worst drought in 60 years. And even though the United Nations had paid for new camps, the Kenyan government prevented them from opening out of fear that once the refugees enter Kenya, they will not leave (Gettleman 2011). The World Bank estimates that states that border fragile states lose an average of more than 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) each year (World Bank 2007).

Globally, the use of national interest as a reason for engagement with fragile states has become prominent since the rise of massive acts of international terrorism facilitated by some fragile states. The instability of these states has led to their use as a haven for terrorists, pirates, and other groups that thrive in unstable environments. Subsequently some donor countries have raised their engagement efforts to the level of a national security target.

B. Fragile States Typology

Fragile states are those in which the government is unable or unwilling to deliver core functions to its people (DFID 2005). As Pritchett and de Weijer (2010) point out, the state apparatus in fragile situations may be able to create the institutions of a state, but it may not be able to carry out the functions of those institutions. While the roots of fragility cross the spectrum from persistent domestic conflict to vulnerability to exogenous shocks, the binding constraint is the inability of the state to absorb, deter and/or recover from shocks.

There are a number of structural and governance challenges that are common in fragile states. In addition, states often display weak performance over multiple, but not all measures. Fragile states are most often identified using measures of governance and administrative capacity, and

the potential for instability as measured by the existence or potential for conflict, or susceptibility to exogenous shocks. States that are defined by these weaknesses often display characteristics such as:

Figure 3: Characteristics of Fragility

Structural and Economic Factors	Political and Institutional Factors	Social Factors	International Factors
Conflict	Crisis of state legitimacy	Inequality	Global shocks
Natural resource wealth	Political repression	Social exclusion	Legacy of colonialism
Export concentration	Weak institutions	Sharp social divisions	Climate change
Poverty	Limited public resources	Weak civil society	

Source: Adapted from Mcloughlin, 2010.

Though not all fragile states are subject to conflict, this is often a key source of instability. And once countries experience conflict, over 50% of countries fall back into conflict within 5 years (World Bank 2007).

In the absence of an accepted set of diagnostic tools, many donors have adopted some lower limit of the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment to identify fragility. However, a recent study finds that there is little evidence that these scores shape donors' country assistance programs, or that its use provides fragile states with any signal to improve their performance in these indicators (Sending and Lie 2010).

The international community defines fragile states by characteristics of the domestic environment. However, the assistance that goes to fragile states also exhibits unique characteristics that can also contribute to the fragile situations.

C. Assistance Profile of Fragile States

Fragile states are further differentiated from non-fragile situations in terms of the assistance that they receive from the international community. The efforts by donors over the past 5 years to restructure their engagement with fragile states come from the recognition that aid flows themselves were insufficient, unstable, and poorly targeted. In this section, we highlight some of the characteristics of aid flows that contribute to the lack of effective engagement.

The first characteristic of aid flows to fragile states is that, even as the overall volume is increasing,⁶ studies find it is lower than would be expected given their need. States receive 43% less aid per capita than would be predicted based on their poverty level, performance, and population (Levin and Dollar 2005).

Of the aid that reaches fragile states, it is highly concentrated in only a few beneficiaries. In 2006, 75% of ODA for the 38 fragile states in the OECD list was allocated to five countries—Nigeria, Afghanistan, Sudan, DR Congo, and Cameroon (OECD 2007).

While most donors agree that more assistance should go to fragile states, this imbalance among states suggests that more specific criteria would be needed in order to equitably enact

⁶ OECD (2010) shows that in 2009, official development assistance to fragile states increased by 11% year-on-year. DFID for example doubled spending on fragile states over the last 5 years.

such a plan. Absorptive capacity also varies greatly, so simply increasing the volume of aid may increase rather than decrease existing imbalances.

Assistance to fragile states is also more volatile and unpredictable than in other developing countries. McGillivray (2008) points out that aid flows to fragile states are twice as volatile as those to other low income countries. While volatility has negative impacts in all situations (see e.g., Kharas 2008) it is most pronounced for fragile states where programs are often wholly dependent on donor assistance and may cease to function in the absence of aid. The volatility comes in part from lack of internal coordination within donor organizations.

Price instability and cost escalation are more common in some fragile states and can significantly increase the costs of a project where, as Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID) points out, operations are already more expensive and labor intensive than elsewhere. Citing the cases of Nepal and Tuvalu, ADB (2010) notes that projects can suddenly exceed available resources because of security concerns, transportation costs, rising costs of materials from a building boom in neighboring countries, and the devaluation of the US dollar.

Aid also tends to be temporally concentrated in a way that limits its effectiveness. Disbursements are highest directly after a conflict or other shock which is exactly when the government is least able to absorb it (Collier 2007). But later, once the bureaucracy can refocus, the aid levels have already fallen. There is also a fundamental tension between the need to respond quickly and the time needed to design project properly. ADB (2010) noted that in many cases when designs were fast-tracked for quick response, implementation was weak and institutionally-required assessments were not followed.

Another characteristic of foreign assistance in fragile states is that there is a much larger focus on humanitarian assistance rather than development assistance. DFID (2009) finds that humanitarian assistance (largely disaster relief) takes up almost 30% of its expenditure in fragile states and only 5% in non-fragile lending. The reason for concern is that humanitarian aid is short-term and intended to respond to an emergency which therefore largely bypasses the state. Development aid is longer term. OECD (2010) suggests that this imbalance exists because humanitarian aid is more flexible, but that in using a short term instrument to address longer term problems, this may be inappropriate.

III. THE MECHANICS OF ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The tendency of conditions in fragile states to shift rapidly means that assistance is often designed with limited information about what works and what is needed. This goes for both humanitarian and development assistance. The deadly December 2004 tsunami in Asia affected coastal regions that had little experience with large-scale disaster and forced donors to reassess and adjust their hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness measures (Steckley and Doberstein 2011).

It is clear that M&E of aid projects can produce valuable information which can then be used to improve performance of future projects. In practice however, problems with data availability and dangerous conditions in some areas can pose constraints to evaluation in some states and regions.

One outcome of such limitations is that even strategic aid may not be used effectively. For example, a study of United States (US) assistance in Pakistan points out that assistance is given for highly strategic reasons, and yet, there is almost no analysis of its effectiveness (Wilder 2010). Looking historically at episodes of stabilization, Barakat, Deely, and Zyck (2010) show that this leads to a situation where today's interventions build on and repeat the mistakes of the past.

A. Different Approaches to Evaluation

Attempts to create a unified approach to assistance in fragile states have occurred only within the past decade, and mostly within the past five years. Before the term fragile states entered into the popular lexicon, donors maintained a variety of approaches to weak or conflict-affected countries. And some donors do not yet have any differentiated policy towards fragile states (such as Sida for example). The legacy is that even today objectives for engagement with fragile states are donor-specific—United States Agency for International Development (USAID) focuses on security for example, while DFID has a greater emphasis on state building (see figure below). These differing objectives are linked to different perceptions of when a project can be considered to be a “success” and contribute to the inability to aggregate trends among donors.

Figure 4: Objectives of Donors’ Fragile States Policies

	ADB	World Bank	OECD	AfDB	DFID	AusAID	USAID
Objective for engagement	Improve aid effectiveness	Statebuilding Peacebuilding Capacity dev.	Statebuilding	Statebuilding Peacebuilding	Statebuilding Peacebuilding	Economic development	Enhance aid effectiveness Dev outcomes US Security
Year recognized	2007	2002	2005	2008	2005	2005	2006

AfDB = African Development Bank, AusAID = Australian Agency for International Development, DFID = Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, USAID = United States Agency for International Development.

Source: Adapted from ADB 2010.

In this study, we review a number of donor evaluations in order to create a picture of the common and unique methods that have been used to assess existing assistance (see appendix A for the full list). While the objectives against which each donor was evaluating success differed in each case, there were enough commonalities to distill four sources of variation among donors in their methods of evaluation—frequency of assessment, sample size, coverage period, and the objective on which the project is being evaluated.

The frequency with which organizational policies governing their aid to fragile states are reviewed is, for most donors, not yet settled. As the Figure 4 illustrates, specific aid frameworks designed for fragile states are relatively recent for most donors. Yet some, such as DFID (each year evaluates the implementation of their organizational policy governing aid to fragile states in a selected sample of countries) have been considerably more active than others such as ADB (only intermittently conducts single country evaluations). As mentioned earlier, constant engagement is important in situations where conditions may change quickly. There is no discernable connection between project monitoring and full strategic evaluation.

Sample is another key variable. Not all institutions are currently engaged with all of the fragile states that they have identified. There were two approaches used—case studies and full population coverage. In the case study approach, the evaluator would select a sample of the covered countries to explore in detail how the institutional strategy has been implemented and what lessons can be drawn from the experience. This approach allows for more detailed assessments, but makes meta-analysis nearly impossible for the full sample group. DFID for example, samples nine countries a year. OECD samples four. The second approach is for the evaluation to include all fragile states that are engaged by a particular donor. Since a full survey of all projects in all targeted fragile states is a resource-intensive exercise, this approach is infrequent or done only once. ADB has used it, but chose their sample by projects rather than countries. They chose from all countries that had projects in place from 2000–2006.

A third source of variation is in coverage period of the evaluation. Some evaluators looked at the previous year, while others looked at a multi-year time span the longest of which was the entire engagement period. DFID has used both types in their four synthesis reports since 2005. The first two reports looked at a sample of countries over a single year, while the next two covered the period since the last review. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also used a multi-year review (2000–2005) although the justification for that particular timeline was unclear. The African Development Bank (AfDB) used a single year of data to cover the period in which they had a fragile states policy. Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) took a historical approach and looked at the historically relevant period for the country and type of program under evaluation.

The final source of variation among donors is the indicators on which countries are being evaluated. Most donors articulated some version of the acknowledgement that a specific policy towards fragile states was put in place too recently for evaluators to see development results from that specific policy. Public evaluation reports are often not clear on exactly which objectives are being sought in different projects. The criteria for ADB include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. BMZ did not offer any specific criteria for evaluation and concentrated case studies on one sector per country. A report issued in 2009 responded to OECD-DAC criticism that there was no single institutional method of evaluation for any development projects by reviewing existing programs and offering a plan of action (Borrmann and Stockmann 2009).

B. Challenges in the Evaluation Process

One of the results of the multitude of functional and operation objectives is that, as the Australian Office of Development Effectiveness points out, even though programs are being delivered, their actual impact on poverty is unclear (Buhl-Nielson 2009). Yet, without an understanding of the ultimate objective being sought by engagement, donors run the risk of inefficient resource allocation, engagement fatigue, and violating the “do not harm” principle. In this context, Lindley-French (cited in Elhawary, Foresti, and Pantuliano 2010) has argued that defining success is one of the central components of coordinating agendas. Traditional assessments of aid effectiveness cannot work in fragile states since, by definition, they do not have the capacity to use aid effectively.

Another challenge to evaluating the success of different assistance instruments and modalities comes from the time horizon required in the fragile states case. How long do we need to wait to see development results? Pritchett, Woolcock, and Andrews (2010) argue that given what we know about successful states such as the Republic of Korea, many fragile states

would take hundreds of years to reach such development levels. In addition, as de Groot and Shortland (2010) remind us, as certain indicators of development improve, they may promote perverse results, such as the increase in pirates coming from parts of Somalia with better-than-average rule of law. As states move out of fragility, in some areas, this may enable certain negative activities to begin along with the expected positive growth.

One of the challenges identified by all donors in the evaluation process is the difficulty in monitoring, either because of incomplete project reporting, lack of data, insecurity, or inability of field offices to adopt the standards expected by headquarters. The reasons for these problems range from the lack of staff to overly complex reporting standards. In relation to this, surveys have found a lingering disconnect between headquarters and field offices. When ADB surveyed staff offices, evaluators found that 70% of respondents were unaware that a specific approach to fragile states existed. While the approach had been articulated in 2007, 2 years later it still “has not yet taken root” (ADB 2010).

Ideally there would be a unified model of evaluation that would allow for donors to compare cases. However, in its absence there is still a great deal of information available in existing reports. The next two sections use these reports to distill the most common challenges donors face in service delivery and the ways that they have attempted to address them.

IV. SOME COMMON DESIGN CHALLENGES AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

In a whole-of-government approach, state building and service delivery are targeted simultaneously. Over time, best practices have emerged which are intended to guide the design of projects in a way that promotes both state building and service delivery. Yet while the principles are based in practice, they are articulated with a low level of clarity. In this section, we look into those guidelines that were continually cited by donors as most challenging to implement and present examples of how different donors have addressed them.⁷

A. Incorporating Local Context

Integrating the context-sensitive analysis into program design is among the most frequently articulated challenges to successful engagement in fragile states. Donors have struggled both with supply issues, such as recruitment of expert and local staff; and absorption issues such as how to integrate the information provided by field offices, and how to adjust projects as conditions change.

The importance of understanding the political economy behind development challenges is an issue that has received increasing profile among development practitioners. Because economic development is embedded in the social and political context of the country (Rodrik 2010); without an understanding of its dynamics, otherwise well-designed projects may have adverse and unintended results. Assistance cannot properly target fragility without an understating of the drivers and agents of change (Norad 2010).

⁷ These roughly reflect some of the OECD principles, but are drawn from a survey of donors own evaluations and so do not match exactly.

To the extent that a country receives assistance from multiple donors, the difficulty of understanding the country context may be, in part, addressed by sharing M&E reports.⁸ Particularly in heavily-aided countries such as Afghanistan and Uganda, there are multiple case studies available that highlight what works and what does not work in different sectors of service delivery. And given that fragility is a long-term condition, and that states are likely to fall back into fragility-producing conflict even after it has ended, there is great value to mining past evaluations for evidence about how the political context was integrated into successful projects.

The fact that evaluations of the same country by different donors often reflect similar problems suggests that sharing data about what works and what does not work could be of value for future development projects. In part, the difficulty of aggregation is the lack of a single conceptual framework. Case studies are donor specific and focus on projects, outcomes and considerations that are unique to the donor agency.

Ideally, all development projects are designed to meet a clear domestic need, target a specific population and account for cultural norms and political realities. But as we saw in the Haiti example, the domestic situation may change quickly and the need to act fast may pre-empt plans to hire experts and plan for sustainable project rollout. This failure to account for local realities can result in project failure, as BMZ found when some of their services turned out to be culturally unacceptable. The challenge then is both how to find appropriate staff and how to translate their recommendations into project design.

The first dimension of this challenge is how to gain information about the domestic context. M&E reports detail a variety of human resource difficulties. On the most basic level, some donors simply do not have field offices. For the African Development Bank (2010), they note that “currently, only four fragile states have [AfDB] field offices” which they tagged as their greatest challenge in peace and state building. Other donors cited a lack of human resources including both experts and skilled locals.

The solutions that donors have used include expanding the network of field offices and hiring booms. Both AfDB and DFID have opened more delegated country offices to promote better alignment. DFID for example, doubled the number of its Senior Civil Service led overseas offices and staff between 1999 and 2009 (Korski 2010). Yet the problem may be more fundamental than simply hiring more staff. ADB (2010) points out that, within their organization, there are no compensatory measures in place to attract staff to work in fragile states. They cite the case of Papua New Guinea (PNG) where an overvalued currency put budgeting pressures on staff and is an obvious disincentive to working there. A DFID study also mentions that despite a focus on increasing the number of country offices, there were still some countries where DFID staffing caps were found to be unrealistically low (Chapman and Vaillant 2010).

The second dimension is how to use local information once it is available. Even where field offices and skilled local staff exist, a DFID study found that locally appointed staff was “underutilized and not promoted.” Another feature of incorporation is how to coordinate and consult with local actors. Coordination and consultation with the Afghan government were cited as major problems for program outcomes (Chapman and Vaillant 2010).

⁸ The World Bank (IEG 2006) points out that for the case of Lao People’s Democratic Republic, by using existing analyses, they were able to save great cost in preparing their own.

B. Coordination of Multiple Donors

More aid is not necessarily better aid. In 2008, Iraq received its core aid funding from no less than 25 different donors (OECD 2010). This presented a weak government with the need to process various funds attached to different conditionalities and objectives and with varying reporting timelines and standards. While this is an extreme case, it highlights one of the ways in which donor interventions themselves can be a source of dysfunction and fragility. It also raises the possibility that without coordination, particular sectors or countries may be overfunded and that there may be competing projects. While it is clear that harmonization of donor approaches would alleviate these problems, the reality is that coordination has been limited.

There are several types of approaches that have risen to prominence to address this problem. The most popular are Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF) which pool resources and allow for multi-year commitments. The AfDB (2008) suggests that these are useful particularly where the government demonstrates political will, but lacks capacity. Leader and Colenso (2005) seconded this by offering the example of how this instrument enabled the shoring up of legitimacy of the weak post-Taliban government in Afghanistan. MDTFs have great potential to reduce transactions costs, increase domestic ownership (Barakat 2009) and mobilize resources (Leader and Colenso 2005).

Yet MDTFs have seen only limited application in practice because of scepticism about their utility in promoting economic development. While DFID has participated in these funds, they have been critical about their impacts, in particular on the ability of the donor to remain flexible in their commitments. In a report for DFID, Chapman and Vaillant (2010, p. 14) point out that joint funds “have often been judged as achieving more in terms of aid effectiveness than in delivering development impact.” They also argue that “at the country level they are slow to set up, costly to manage and...have achieved modest development impacts.” For the case of Southern Sudan, both Fenton (2007) and Pantuliano (2009) suggest that the use of joint funds ultimately worked to the detriment of service delivery. In that case, the MDTF was slow to disburse and inefficient to the point that ultimately, donors simply bypassed the funds and continued to disburse bilaterally.

Another solution is strategic partnerships between donors. This is one of the pillars of ADB's approach to fragile states. DFID has had some success especially coordinating with the World Bank and USAID. But similar to the case of pooled funding, while collaboration is mentioned by all donors as important, they all also acknowledge the difficulty of implementing it in practice. ADB (2010) points out that while they had limited success in cooperation on country strategies, there was “no strong evidence of effective joint work among development partners at the project level.” Although, at an individual level, they mentioned that for the case of PNG and the Solomon Islands, maintaining field offices in the same building as the World Bank has facilitated communication and coordination.

C. Building in Flexibility and Adaptability

Fragile states are, by nature, volatile and subject to sudden changes in domestic conditions. This is in part why they fare so poorly in performance-based assessments of interventions. Donors recognize that projects need to incorporate the ability to accommodate and adapt to new situations. Yet this has proven to be a challenge since projects need to be flexible throughout the life of the intervention in order to transform a shock that would normally lead to project disruption into an opportunity for learning and readjustment.

One way to account for inevitable changes is to build adjustment into the project timeline. ADB (2010) pointed out that adjustments to projects are highly likely during the implementation phase, which has led to delays and even cancellations. This would be addressed by sequenced implementation that allows adjustments to project design during implementation rather than cancellation. This can account for the anticipated, but unforeseen difficulties that come from implementing projects in countries with weak institutions and uneven capacities across states.

Another approach is more frequent assessment of projects in order to enable flexibility. The World Bank for example, normally uses 3–4 year country assistance strategies, but in fragile states, 1–2 year Interim Strategy Notes are used. They are also “regularly updating country analysis even in countries in non-accrual” which they point out was useful in the case of Central African Republic, Haiti, Somalia, and Sudan which repeatedly returned to crisis (World Bank 2005).

The accommodation of flexibility is particularly important for donors that aim for development outcomes. The World Bank claims that no country has been able to transform its institutions in less than a generation and suggesting that reforms take from 15 to 30 years (World Bank 2011). Pritchett and de Weijer (2010) make the point that almost any scenario for fragile states is operating under an overly-optimistic timeline by citing estimates that the UK had a higher GDP per capita in 1500 than Afghanistan had in 2003. Project longevity can be extended in various ways. In a water project in Nepal, ADB allowed for project longevity by introducing a revolving funding mechanism where funds are re-lent to users which is supplemented by taxes (ADB 2010). This also addressed the issue of sustainable funding once the project had been completed as ADB (2010) points out that investments are often eroded by lack of operation and maintenance *ex post*.

D. Combining State-Building Activities with Community Empowerment

Capacity building in fragile states often incorporates a conceptualization of governance that goes beyond government. Donors such as DFID are increasingly reaching out to NGOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) as a way to build accountability, improve understanding of domestic needs, and increase local ownership to complement their efforts at the central government level (Warrener and Loehr 2005). As Waldman, Strong, and Wali (2006) points out, governments may be legitimate (or not), but it is civil society that confers legitimacy (or not). Even ADB, which has traditionally engaged largely with sovereign entities, has recognized that it is necessary to engage subnational actors in fragile situations (ADB 2007). These examples suggest that donors are increasingly seeing engagement with civil society as a useful component of their engagement with fragile states.

When local communities are not included in the assistance process there are a number of problems that can arise. Donors may be increasing the capacity of an illegitimate government for example. They may be setting out channels for assistance that are at odds with cultural norms. They may be ignoring issues that then become intractable problems. In the 2011 World Development Report, the World Bank points out that unemployment facilitates recruitment into gangs and militias which perpetuate violence and conflict.

Yet even with the recognition of the need to engage, donors have made only limited progress. Chapman and Vaillant (2010) point out that no DFID country office has met its strategic targets in supporting the indigenous capacity of civil society organizations. Wennmann

(2010) suggests that this is because for the most part development aid still treats the government as the primary instrument of governance.

The revealed preference for working with governments appears to be in part because donors have difficulty in holding non-state actors to account. DFID in particular noted the lack of viable partners often limits their success with civil society engagement. Their attempt to support indigenous CSOs resulted in mixed performance and suggested that the independence of civil society from politicization was overestimated (Chapman and Vaillant 2010). This experience is not atypical, as Batley and Mcloughlin (2010) suggest that it is relatively common for nonstate service provision to be poorly monitored and poorly undertaken. DFID provided several examples where working with other donors and through NGOs could dilute the message and focus of the funding.

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is piloting the use of churches in their service delivery efforts in PNG (Clarke, 2011). They introduced this non-traditional delivery system not only because of its ubiquity in the country, but also because of its close links to local communities and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). The donor requires that the churches are linked to local NGOs as a means of providing some distinction between their religious mission and service delivery operations.

This section illustrated the diversity of approaches that donors have taken to meet some of the challenges that were common across sectors and across countries. While the solutions listed here addressed these issues, they also remind us that little consistent forward movement has been made in an overall assistance framework for fragile states. The next section highlights sector-specific intervention innovations that have succeeded in incorporating the issues raised in this section.

V. SECTOR-SPECIFIC TRENDS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The ways in which service delivery in fragile situations link to economic development outcomes are highly sector specific. This section turns to look at four strategically important sectors—health; education; water and sanitation; and security and justice. For each, we describe the unique characteristics of engagement, the challenges specific to engagement, trends in policies or instruments, and finally, how service delivery in that sector is expected to impact long term development outcomes.

We draw data primarily from donor's own evaluation reports of the outcomes of their institutional fragile states policies. As described in Section IIIA, these reports varied in several parameters and did not always cover all fragile states or all interventions. In order to build a comprehensive picture of assistance to fragile states in specific service delivery sectors, we therefore supplemented these policy evaluation reports with country case studies done by the same donors on states they had defined as fragile. A literature review was also conducted on each sector to determine where innovations had been identified.

A. Healthcare

Health services are one of the most well-funded areas of donor assistance. In part, this is because it is one of the least likely among service delivery sectors to become politicised, which makes it a widely accepted entry point for donor engagement (BMZ, 2007). It is often prioritized by states regardless of their stability or other aims. Thus the stakeholders in this sector include

both the population of the country and the government, as well as non-state service providers such as NGOs.

Because it is a fundamental human need, the provision of health services has consequences beyond health outcomes. It can reduce conflict and potentially the recidivism of conflict as the burden of disease is lowered (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). It can also contribute to state building more generally by providing optimism about the future (Newbrander 2007).

In contrast to other sectors, health has well-established multilateral facilities that are able to target and disburse billions of dollars of assistance.⁹ Pooled donor funding facilities are new to other sectors, but in health, The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization are just two very well-funded organizations that can attract and coordinate support from multiple donors.

1. Challenges

The challenges of service delivery in this sector stem from the complexity of delivery points and the variety of interventions which range from horizontal (building capacity of service delivery generally) to vertical (focusing on a specific disease or problem). In addition, this is a sector characterized by informational challenges where recipients may not be able to judge the competence of the care that they receive and where interventions are difficult to monitor (OECD 2008).

A problem that is particularly challenging in fragile states is that improvements in health outcomes are easily reversed. Health professionals are often in short supply and can be the target of violence. And in the absence of qualified staff who can diagnose and provide treatment, gains that had been made up to that point are unlikely to be maintained. This rapid loss of gains is in contrast to other sectors where gains are more sustainable even after a shock to infrastructure, such as in education where once a child learns to read that gain will stay with them.

Another challenge is the need to decide which services to provide. Each state's needs will be different, but the state may not have the capacity to guide donors, particularly in the event of a humanitarian crisis. NGOs may also not have the purview to provide this guidance. In Yemen, DFID attempted to channel support for health services through UN agencies, only to find that they had poor capacity and had only been substituting for even lower capacity by the Ministry of Public Health Policy (Bennett et al. 2010).

A particularly intractable problem has been the difficulty in linking health outcomes to specific interventions. This is the result of two related challenges. The first is that many health outcomes are often not directly the result of the health infrastructure (nutrition for example) so it is often unclear whether a particular program should be replicated. As an example, a recent article in the New York Times on the health impacts of Sierra Leone's waiving of medical fees presented statistics that appear to show that more of the needy are getting care, while at the same time quoting researchers who say that they cannot link the elimination of fees to health outcomes just yet (Nossiter 2011).

⁹ While pooled fund facilities are present in other areas—such as the United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund—these are not sector-specific.

A second linking challenge is that in some cases the success of a single instrument depends on the presence of other complementary instruments. Because health outcomes are often the product of a web of interventions rather than a single program, it is important to interpret health outcomes as a part of a wider set of changes that are occurring in service delivery. This also applies to the role of service delivery in capacity building. Eldon, Waddington, and Hadi (2008) point out that while it has been shown that health sector interventions increase state capacity in health, it is unclear if it promotes state building more generally.

2. Trends in Service Delivery

One trend in healthcare delivery is the promotion of a national strategy often called a Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS). This allows donors to coordinate horizontal and vertical interventions without necessarily limiting instruments. Where the Ministry of Health is capable and involved, this strategy can both increase capacity at the same time as it provides services. Zivetz (2006) offers Afghanistan and Timor-Leste governments as two examples where this was the case. In addition, for the case of the DR Congo, Waldman, Strong, and Wali (2006) suggests that it offered peacebuilding spillovers by bringing different factions together to construct the strategy.

Contracting out health services beyond the state is also popular in this sector (Palmer et al. 2006). In Afghanistan before 2002, 70% of healthcare was delivered by NGOs, which was a strategy promoted by the World Bank and others in order to deliver care quickly. Waldman, Strong, and Wali (2006) conclude that the BPHS in Afghanistan has enabled the Ministry of Public Health to increase its capacity by delegating provider roles to nonstate actors, which has contributed to the perception that the health sector is among the best performing reconstruction areas in Afghanistan. However, evaluations also warn that this approach should not be done at the expense of working through the formal state structure if it is available. While health ministries are often relatively weak, The Global Fund disbursed most funds to government ministries and found that they performed well; although they remarked that “this is entirely unexpected” (Nantulya 2005, p. 25).

A related approach is the use of public–private partnerships. The DFID-funded Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems Programme has found success in several states in Nigeria. According to Green (2008), this is a replicable approach for increasing demand for, and access to, emergency maternal health services within the context of a large-scale health systems strengthening program. The underlying assumption of this program is that health is most effectively provided through public–private partnerships. It has the additional component that seeks to change behaviors by generating social approval for new behaviours.

Finally, it has been shown that sectoral advisory services are still feasible even under political breakdown. BMZ's experience in Cote D'Ivoire offers evidence that health services can continue to be delivered even with ongoing political disruptions and civil war. Even as war caused most foreign workers to depart, the national program continued to provide services, supported by BMZ. In the BMZ example, even though its project staff left the country in 2002, the project continued through foreign coordination, operating in areas where there was less unrest. Country directors have been seconded to the country. Services include distribution of contraceptives, HIV tests, and education of personnel. They also suggest that programs with narrower technical and sector-specific focus are good entry points. A lesson is to begin with technical questions instead of policy (BMZ 2007).

3. Linking with Development

Health indicators are closely linked to a country's growth potential. The channels include both direct impacts through productivity and indirect impacts through education. Directly, improvements in health services can improve productivity of workers and reduce the time lost from illness.

Indirectly, improved maternal health produces healthier babies. And health and nutrition affects cognitive abilities such that healthy children learn faster and more effectively (Ding et al. 2006). In addition, improved child health will have important impacts on future growth as healthy children become productive adults.

Poor health indicators can result in a "poverty trap" which is a negative and self-reinforcing situation that enables poverty to persist. In many fragile states, workers are employed in challenging or labor-intensive jobs where nutrition affects productivity. A health shock may lead to reduced productivity, which reduces income, which results in reduced nutrition, which causes the health shock and reduced productivity to persist. Health interventions and development assistance can break this cycle.

B. Water and Sanitation

Water is necessary for daily survival and therefore is one of the most important emergency interventions of those described in this report. It is always in high demand, and it may be the first intervention to be requested by communities (OECD 2006). As a result, where building government legitimacy is a concern, service delivery in this sector can make a particularly visible and rapid contribution (OECD 2006).

In terms of prioritization, while water is often included on the national agenda, sanitation services drop off in most cases. This makes the lack of national prioritization one of the biggest problems in sanitation. The differential attention to these two related areas is also reflected by the fact that water is one of the few MDGs that is expected to be achieved while sanitation is considered to be among the MDGs that are most off-track. An evaluation by AusAid suggests that part of the explanation lies in the fact that while the provision of water infrastructure is straightforward, sanitation systems often need to be accompanied by behavioural changes in order to achieve results (Buhl-Neilson 2009).

In terms of both needs and access, there is a significant urban–rural divide in both water and sanitation (WHO 2006). The majority of the population that lacks access to both is in rural areas. The challenges of service delivery also reflect a divide—rural users are dispersed and the role of community level actors is less; urban users often have access to a utility. In rural areas, access to water services is important, while, in urban areas, diseases spread quickly and there is a need for services focused on sanitation and hygiene.

1. Challenges

Challenges in this sector are dominated by issues of sustainability. As Plummer and Slaymaker (2007) point out, technical issues with water delivery have made advances and are largely standardized. However, the degradation and lack of upkeep of infrastructure is the source of major problems for both water and sanitation service delivery in fragile states (OECD 2008).

The first challenge is that communities must be able to maintain built systems on their own. Donors are adept at building water and sanitation infrastructure, but once they withdraw, local communities may not have the ability to maintain the new systems. The use of appropriate technologies is therefore particularly important in this sector. In addition, often the breakdown of a small component of the system may halt supply. Because of the need to ensure sustainability of systems, short funding cycles pose a particular problem in this sector (Welle 2008).

Another feature of the maintenance issue is the need to identify which actors will be responsible for maintaining the system. AusAID found that many of their water projects were not sustainable in the longer run because of a mismatch in capacity building (Buhl-Nielson 2009). While the technologies introduced in AusAID were simple, robust, and affordable, uptake was limited because while NGOs implemented systems, it was the government which was held responsible when systems failed.

Challenges of service delivery in this sector are amplified in conflict situations since water and sanitation services are often targeted. Once national systems have broken down, community or private providers often take over which can result in fragmented operating standards (Carlson et al. 2005). Beyond this, once assistance begins, design procedures may be dispensed with in favor of meeting urgent needs. An ADB emergency water system rehabilitation project in Timor-Leste “fixed” systems that had been inadequate in the first place, which then quickly broke down.

2. Trends in Service Delivery

In response to the recognition that community involvement is critical for the success of water and sanitation systems, demand responsive approaches (DRAs) have become the most common method of service delivery. In a DRA, end users are involved in designing and financing water projects in an explicit turn away from supply-based approaches where water points are established without community consultation. DRAs emphasize community level governance and maintenance, which has made this approach particularly popular where governments are very weak or conflict has not died down (Slaymaker, Christiansen, and Hemming 2005).

One controversial trend has been to engage private providers in service delivery for water and sanitation (W&S). While the appropriateness of private provision of W&S services has been contested (Davis 2005), innovative approaches have seen some success. DFID has introduced the Sustainable Services Through Domestic Private Sector Participation Initiative (SS-DPSPI). There are 16 countries that currently have SS-DPSPI programs: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda. The idea behind this model is that when the government is unable, private providers can be engaged to enable continued service delivery to underserved populations.

In sanitation, many innovations are technical—such as inventing toilets that are cheap, simple, and scalable. However, there are two trends in service delivery that are seeing increasing success. The first comes out of the Orangi Pilot Project that started in Pakistan in the 1980s. Its focus was on integrating communities with the upgrading of infrastructure. Sewer projects are designed and maintained by communities, while the state provides the main sewer pipes to remove waste.

A second innovation addresses the need to include behavioural changes along with service provision. The Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS)¹⁰ approach originated in a project in Bangladesh and is now a strategy advocated by the Water and Sanitation Program, an African interest group formed to make progress towards the MDGs related to this area. CLTS fights the issue of open defecation and was conceived to respond to the fact that simply providing toilets did not result in their use (see e.g., Hanchett et al. 2011). This program promotes behavioral change that is designed in consultation with communities. This is effectively a rural strategy but has recently seen some redesign for use in urban areas. AusAid for example, began CLTS as a pilot project in urban and peri-urban areas, and it has now been fully adopted by the government (Buhl-Neilson 2009).

3. Linking with Development

Functioning water and sanitation systems have development impacts through both the health and the infrastructure channel. In a recent multi-country study, Gunther and Fink (2010) find that depending on the technology and country, W&S infrastructure lowers child diarrhea by 7%–17%, and lowers under-5 child mortality by 5%–20%. There are also important links to education and gender. Functioning water systems increase productive activity through improved nutrient uptake, they can empower women and improve school attendance.

Because of the need to engage community groups, water initiatives seem as important for social cohesion that can contribute to peace building. In addition, a study on the political economy of sanitation found decentralized governance of sanitation can create the incentives for pro-poor investment (WSP 2011). In terms of infrastructure, W&S interventions can have impacts beyond simply providing the service. Even if a system becomes disabled, if it has been properly mapped can be rebuilt. It can also boost agricultural productivity.

OECD (2006) points out that while it is clear that there are development links from improved water and sanitation services, there is a lack of tools for political analysis of this sector. Related to this, AusAID found that while poverty alleviation was a specific goal, there was little poverty analysis and some factors (including how the districts were chosen) could have excluded the poor (Buhl-Neilson 2009).

C. Education

The provision of educational services has the potential to be one of the most transformative interventions in fragile states. This is because this sector is more likely than others to have spillovers that limit the impact of sources of fragility (OECD, 2008). It can confer normalcy, security, targeting for health and nutrition assistance. Education delivery can be a much needed tangible and immediate illustration in a post conflict situation that improvements are coming (UNESCO, 2011). In addition, the returns to education can be very high. According to AusAid (2006), investments in women's and girls' education and health yield some of the highest returns of all development investments.

Yet, in 2007, conflict-affected and fragile states were responsible for more than half the world-wide population of out-of-school children (Dolan and Perry, 2007). It stands apart from other sectors considered in this paper because it is not included in humanitarian aid responses. That is, it is not considered to be a necessary feature of emergency response. In a recent

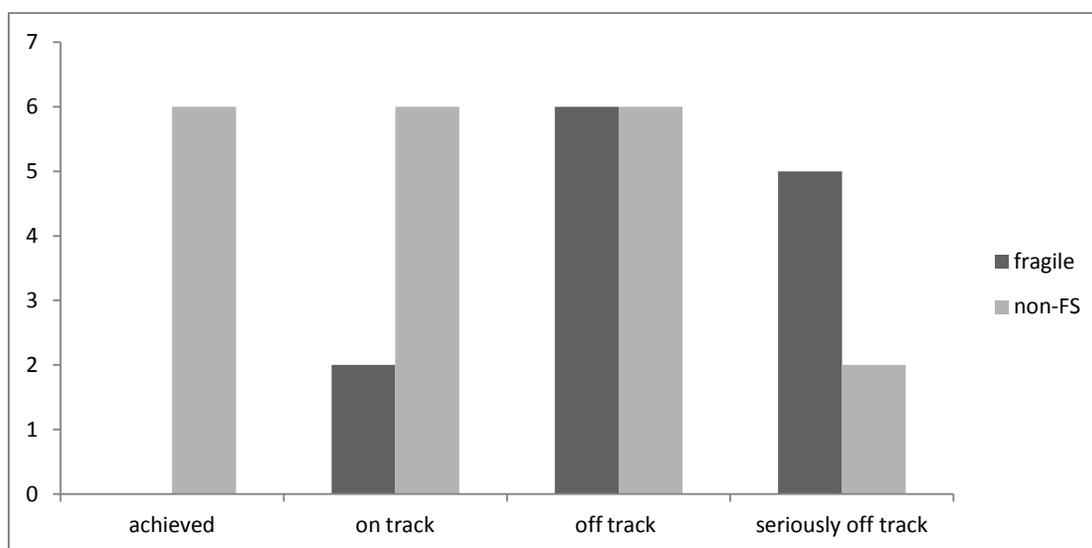
¹⁰ <http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/>

report, UNESCO (2011) points out that even while educational infrastructure is often damaged in conflict situations it is almost never counted in damage assessments.

1. Challenges

Education delivery has proven to be so problematic that in 2005, Save the Children launched an international campaign to bring awareness to the challenges of service provision in education in fragile states. Yet this acknowledgement has not, as Dom (2009) points out, translated into high levels of support for education. While fragile states are the source of half of the world's out-of-school population, they receive only one-fifth of total education aid (Dolan and Perry 2007).

Figure 5: 84% of Fragile States off-track to Achieve the MDG of Universal Primary Education



Source: Adapted from Dom (2009) table B3.

The first challenge is that educational services are easily polarized. If this occurs, the classroom can become an incubator for class tensions, a venue for intolerance and a breeding ground for violence (UNESCO 2011). Polarization is not just a feature of curriculum, but can be fomented by excluding different ethnic or regional groups or girls.

A second challenge is the trajectory of assistance. Unlike other sectors, education projects are not generally a part of humanitarian assistance, so there is no opportunity for a transition to development aid. This is an important problem since many fragile states become caught between short term humanitarian aid and longer term development aid. This is an issue that must be dealt with at the donor level, as the OECD–DAC (2010) points out that most donors continue to separate these two types of assistance in a way that shortchanges education.

A third challenge is the need to engage government in the provision of education, or at least to design programs that can be transferred to the government once they are completed. Many initial efforts begin at the community level, however scaling up innovative community level approaches has proven to be difficult in post-conflict environments. Carlson et al. (2005) note

that fragile states often cannot sustain donor education initiatives since they do not have ownership.

A fourth challenge is the need to also include a focus on the quality of education. Visible reforms, such as the abolition of school fees, can be accomplished quickly. But less visible reforms, such as improving the quality of education, require just as much attention. Studies have shown that the patterns of school abandonment in fragile situations are often not simply because of fees, but based on illness, the need to look for food, the need to care for siblings, and social stigma (Sempere 2009).

2. Trends in Service Delivery

As education has increasingly been moved up the international agenda, donors have been introducing education interventions earlier in the assistance process and consequently in less stable environments. The result is that trends in education service delivery are primarily program innovations in particularly difficult environments.

The first set of innovations is aimed at countries where the state is unable or unwilling to provide educational services to the entire population. These innovations seek to engage NGOs to provide services while at the same time increasing the capacity of the central state to take over that role. In Nepal, at a time when only about 10% of the country was under government control, ADB used a modified sectorwide approach to improve enrollment. This included support for assessment and strategy development that “substantially reduced the government’s workload in managing...systems and meeting different reporting requirements.” The gains in enrollment and teacher training have been modest, but show that it is possible to deliver education services even in the midst of conflict (Berry 2009).

A related strategy is what Rose and Greeley (2006) call a system of shadow alignment. In this scenario, provision is started at the community or NGO level, but structures are built in such a way that the state can inherit it once it is able. This was used in the Child-friendly Community Initiative (CFCI) used by UNICEF in Sudan. It was a community-driven approach which increased capacity from the bottom-up (Moreno-Torres 2005).

The second type of innovation target situations where formal schools are not accessible to the population either because children are required to work, populations are nomadic, or the situation is not safe for children to regularly attend school. In Somalia, a compressed learning approach has been successfully piloted to enable learning in Somaliland where enrollment rates are among the world’s lowest. Smith (2007) describes innovations that included a condensed curriculum and flexible timing models. Compressed learning is not a new instrument, but previously had been used more commonly for older children or adults whose education had been interrupted

The third innovation seeks to address enrollment in situations where education is not trusted by the population often because of volatile political situations. In Nepal, education had been used as a propaganda tool and therefore the provision of services by NGOs were viewed with suspicion (Rose and Greeley 2006). At the time there was a divide between government and Maoists. Save the Children was able to provide services by gathering data and presenting community leaders with the tools to demand education. This brought the rebels and community leaders together. This is in line with the model advocated by some of accountability from below, which closely integrates beneficiaries with providers.

Efforts are also moving forward to reform international financing for education in fragile states. In the general case, the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was created in 2002 to attempt to coordinate and target donor funding for education, and thereby increase the availability of aid. But it is not specific to fragile states and evidence suggests that fragile states have difficulty in meeting some of the requirements such as a national educational plan, which results in their low representation. The recent creation of the Education Transition Fund is intended to help fragile states move towards the Education for All (EFA) initiative goals.

3. Linking with Development

Economists have proposed many channels through which education should affect economic growth, innovation, peace, and health outcomes and we will discuss these below. However it is important to note that the empirical evidence that education has such outcomes is limited. The reason is that it is extremely difficult to isolate the impact of schooling on outcomes that are outcomes of the learning process.

First, education is a powerful agent of intergenerational change. It does this through the socialization of youth. In addition, the establishment of a neutral space for learning can itself have important impacts. Vaux and Visman (2005) suggest that it can also protect them from being recruited into inappropriate activities such as prostitution, forced labor, trafficking, etc. OECD (2008) produces evidence that each additional year of education of the school age population reduces the risk of conflict by about 20%. Employment growth and education are also effective ways of dealing with the youth “bulge.”

Second, educational spaces can serve alternative functions simultaneously. The establishment of working schools can also serve as a base for other forms of assistance such as healthcare and food delivery. OECD (2008) points out that it can also be used to target children for other interventions such as malnutrition or violence prevention. In addition, it can help donors to identify sources of social tensions and address them through curriculum development.

A more educated population can also improve resilience to shocks. Paul and Routray (2009) for example, show that the in a flood-prone region of Bangladesh, those households with more education were better able to understand and use flood-forecasting information and therefore reduce vulnerability from flooding.

Finally, the provision of education has a strong link to building state legitimacy. Save the Children points out that the inclusion of education in a post-conflict development plan indicates the government's willingness to be held accountable for its promises (Wedge 2008).

D. Security and Justice

Security and Justice (S&J) is a constitutive element of a functioning state. Without order, no other public goods can be delivered. Despite the recognition of its importance, most donors either report modest spending or are prohibited from participating in this sector.¹¹ Yet in fragile states, overall governance depends in no small part on improvements in this sector (Ball 2005). Unlike the other sectors examined in this study, donor involvement in service delivery in S&J is primarily indirect and is affected through strengthening domestic processes and reform.

¹¹ This appears to be the case for multilateral development banks for example (Hammergren 2008).

Violence and conflict are a particularly widespread and intractable problem in fragile states. While the number of countries experiencing conflict has decreased over time, existing conflicts are becoming more entrenched. This is particularly true of fragile states which are often involved in repeated cycles of conflict (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Most Conflict Today in States that Have Experienced Previous Conflict

Decade	Violence Onsets in Countries with no Previous Conflict (%)	Violence Onsets in Countries with a Previous Conflict (%)	Total Number of Onsets
1960s	57	43	35
1970s	43	57	44
1980s	38	62	39
1990s	33	67	81
2000s	10	90	39

Source: World Bank, 2011

Similar to the case of education, simply building a security infrastructure may have negative impacts since it is easily politicized. While it is critical that security forces are linked to the state and do not operate independently, this does not preclude corruption and brutality or guarantee that police and military forces will be seen as a source of stability and justice.

1. Challenges

Service delivery in the security sector cannot be advanced without the cooperation of the state. Yet, the state often uses S&J as a tool for oppression or violence. Thus donors face the challenge of both increasing confidence in the state and at the same time promoting security for all while being aware that it cannot sustainably be provided outside of the state.

The first major challenge in this sector is finding legitimate entry points. The World Bank suggests that anticorruption efforts can be an effective way to achieve visible early results which can then be transferred into sustained activity (World Bank 2011). But once a donor has entered the sector, there is often a closing window of legitimacy. In Afghanistan, a BMZ evaluation finds that in a period of only 2 years, the perception of foreign security forces as helpful declined by 20% (Bohnke, Koehler, and Zurcher 2010).

Another challenge is the need to build confidence. Because S&J can only sustainably be provided by the state, projects must concurrently provide security and build up state legitimacy. World Bank (2011) suggests that there is a high degree of commonality among countries in the measures that inspire confidence. These include transparency and the removal of measures that are perceived to be particularly unfair or corrupt (e.g., legislation or the presence of soldiers).

The third challenge is the need to understand and incorporate the domestic context. While understanding the country context is important for the success of most services, OECD (2007) argues that in the case of security “context trumps everything.” One example of the difficulty donors face comes from the fact that in fragile states, customary systems may be the dominant form of justice and security.¹² In Sudan, DFID’s interventions resulted in the rise of a

¹² OECD (2007) suggests that 80% of people in fragile states rely on non-state actors for these services.

dual system of customary and formal courts. This unexpected result led to the slowing of funds disbursement as DFID did not have sufficient experience with this model (Foster et al. 2010).

There is little consensus about the objectives or modalities of working with this sector. Hammergren (2008) has characterized the consensus problem as being over whether the goal is to create a set of institutions to resolve questions about the law, or if it is to empower the poor. This has led to increasing calls for better understanding of this sector. Yet even under this uncertainty, assistance is pushed ahead. For example, UN peacekeeping expenditures have almost tripled (OECD 2009) and the World Bank's latest World Development Report recommends major shifts in funding priorities in fragile states, urging an increased focus on supporting effective, legitimate police forces, and justice systems.

2. Trends in Service Delivery

Innovations in security often seek to build coalitions across sectors and actors. This is necessary both to maintain legitimacy but also because progress in S&J is often intertwined with progress in other areas. Sherman (2010) points out, for example, that overcrowding in prisons is often not just a symptom of the need for new prison facilities, but rather is indicative of problems in other areas. Foster et al. (2010) detail one approach used in Southern Sudan called Community Security and Arms Control (CSAC) where DFID joined forces with other donors to combine recovery, conflict-resolution and small arms control. This multi-institutional approach allowed donors to recognize the interdependence of different problems.

The World Bank suggests that coalitions should be “inclusive enough” to make progress and represent most of society (World Bank 2011). Increasingly donors are looking to South–South or regional approaches to issues of S&J. This is not only because there is a great deal of regional spillover from violence and conflict, but also because regional bodies may be seen as more legitimate in their involvement than other foreign donors. The African Union for example, has been involved in regional peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

Increasingly, justice assistance seeks to incorporate traditional or customary systems of justice alongside modern state-run institutions. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the top–down approach of overhauling or creating formal justice systems is a slow process and may not, in the end, increase access. By contrast, customary systems have the potential to provide rapid and culturally-acceptable solutions that are accessible and affordable (Wojkowska 2006). The second reason is that as Pimentel (2010) points out, these systems are often highly functional, even in post-conflict situations. In Southern Sudan for example, 95% of people access security services through non-state mechanisms.¹³ Chirayeth, Sage, and Woolcock (2005) suggest that it may be more useful to engage and understand customary law than to ignore it. The World Bank's Justice for the Poor (J4P) program attempts to engage at this level by supporting pro-poor approaches to justice reform.

However, even as donors recognize the benefits of customary law structures, at least DFID has noted that it has struggled to incorporate customary justice courts in its programming (Chapman and Vaillant 2010). This is despite their articulated efforts to engage at the “interface of the state and society.” And often, traditional systems are not ideal in that they are often opaque, do not conform to international conceptions of justice, may be subject to power imbalances, are unsuitable for all types of adjudication, and treat different groups unequally (Wojkowska 2006).

¹³ http://www.ssrnetwork.net/documents/Events/security_justice_141207/Supporting%20state%20and%20non-state%20security%20and%20justice.pdf

3. Linking with Development

Development links are difficult to build when, for example, different agencies of the government have different ideas about the purpose of foreign S&J engagement as was the case in Afghanistan. Another potential pitfall is exemplified by US assistance to Yemen. Assistance was scaled up rapidly, from a few million before 2001 to a proposed 1.2 billion over the next 6 years. Yet this assistance focused on “automatic weapons, coastal patrol boats, transport planes, helicopters, and logistics advisors.” A senior US counterterrorism official pointed out that while this may limit terrorist acts, a long term solution needs credible institutions for economic and social progress (Sanok 2011).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study used program evaluations to understand the difficulties and successes that are common in engaging with fragile states. By embedding these experiences in the existing academic literature on fragile states we also sought to highlight the ways in which service delivery in fragile states can contribute to economic development.

The reports voiced a number of common operational challenges—staffing, engaging with local communities, and coordinating with other donors and government agencies. Despite acknowledgement of these difficulties, evaluation reports showed continuing uncertainty about how to address them. These challenges are not unique to fragile states, but they are amplified and often become more intractable in such situations.

The diversity of experiences with service delivery in fragile states nevertheless yields some common observations. Discrete deliverables tied to realistic project timelines improve the potential that development outcomes will be observed. Building sequencing into project timetables can facilitate flexibility that is critical when domestic situations are unstable. And including both local and national governments can allow for their roles to evolve as capacity and legitimacy change over time.

Measuring the impact of the delivery of services on economic development is difficult given lack of data and short period of engagement in most fragile states. For the four sectors included in this evaluation report, there is theoretical evidence that successful provision of services should improve development outcomes. A population that is healthy, educated, secure, and has access to water and sanitation facilities has the tools to surmount many of the negative characteristics of fragility. However empirical evidence is not yet consistent where data is poor, the economy is unstable and domestic conditions shift quickly.

Though evidence is limited, donors’ experiences revealed several steps that can be taken that appear to strengthen the link between service delivery and development. The first was to acknowledge the long term nature of development outcomes and either extend projects to at least 5 years or include shorter-run objectives. The second was to write flexibility into project design. This enabled projects to account for the sharp turns that often occur in the development trajectory of fragile states. And the third was to acknowledge that government capacity building should be a feature of service delivery, but not to get locked into it.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION REPORTS INCLUDED

Organization	Year	Title	# Countries Covered
Asian Development Bank	2010	ADB's Support to Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations	11 (entire covered population for ADB)
African Development Bank	2010	2009 Annual Report of the Fragile States Unit	15 (entire covered population)
AusAid	2009	Australian Aid to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in East Timor and Indonesia	2
BMZ	2007	Observations on Service Delivery in Fragile States and Situations – the German Perspective	5 (case studies)
BMZ	2010	Assessing the Impact of Development Cooperation in North East Afghanistan 2005-2009	1
DFID	2010	Evaluation of DFID Country Programmes: Yemen	1
DFID	2010	Synthesis of Country Programme Evaluations Conducted in Fragile States	9 (case studies)
DFID	2009	DFID Engagement in Countries in Fragile Situations: A Portfolio Review	33 (entire covered population)
DFID	2005	Improving the Delivery of Health and Education Services in Difficult Environments: Lessons from Case Studies	6
DFID	2005	Service Delivery in a Difficult Environment: The Child-friendly Initiative in Sudan	1
IEG	2006	Engaging with Fragile States: An IEG Review of World Bank Support to Low Income Countries Under Stress	25
IMF	2008	The Fund's Engagement in Fragile States and Post-Conflict Countries – a Review of Experience – Issues and Options	Unclear (entire covered population)
Open Society Justice Initiative	2008	Balanced Justice and Donor Programs: Lessons from Three Regions of the World	3
Save the Children	2007	Treading a Delicate Path: NGOs in Fragile States Draft Synthesis Report	7
Save the Children	2007	Treading a Delicate Path: NGOs in Fragile States: The Case of Southern Sudan	1
The Global Fund	2005	Global Fund Investments in Fragile States: Early Results	19
USAID	2006	Health Service Delivery in Early Recovery Fragile States: Lessons from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique and Timor Leste	4
Water and Sanitation Programme	2011	Long-term Sustainability of Improved Sanitation in Rural Bangladesh	1
World Bank	2005	Fragile States – Good Practices in Country Assistance Strategies	37 (entire covered population)

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE LISTS OF FRAGILE STATES

World Bank Harmonized List of Fragile Situations FY2010 ¹⁴	OECD-DAC ¹⁵
Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Angola	Angola
Bosnia	
Burundi	Burundi
Cameroon	Cameroon
CAR	CAR
Chad	Chad
Comoros	Comoros
Congo, DR	Congo, DR
Congo, Rep. Of	Congo, Rep. of
Cote D'Ivoire	Cote D'Ivoire
Djibouti	Djibouti
	Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea	Eritrea
	Ethiopia
Gambia	Gambia
Georgia	
Guinea	Guinea
Guinea Bissau	Guinea Bissau
Haiti	Haiti
	Iraq
	Kenya
Kosovo	
Kiribati	Kiribati
Liberia	Liberia
Myanmar	Myanmar
Nepal	Nepal
	Nigeria
	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
	Pakistan
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea
	Rwanda
Sao Tome & Principe	Sao Tome & Principe
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands
Somalia	Somalia
Sudan	Sudan
Tajikistan	Tajikistan
Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste
Togo	Togo
Tonga	Tonga
	Uganda
West Bank and Gaza	West Bank and Gaza
Western Sahara	
Yemen	Yemen
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe

¹⁴ Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/511777-1247506883703/Fragile_Situations_List_FY10_Nov_17_2009_EXT.pdf

¹⁵ List is for research purposes. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/17/47672264.pdf>

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Operationalizing Experience: Donor Approaches to Service Delivery in Fragile States

This study explores donor experiences with service delivery in fragile states. Because there is limited understanding of what works in risky environments, we aim to understand what types of engagement have been successful and to what extent this can be expected to promote economic development more broadly.

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