Chapter 20
Mainstreaming Conflict Sensitivity in Education Programming

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ABSTRACT

Conflict sensitivity has successfully entered the mainstreaming agenda of development agencies with much institutionalization and conceptualization. In general terms however, a system for conflict sensitive education programming appears to be absent. This chapter provides a guide to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in education programming. It argues that whereas education is central to the advancement of human society, yet if not sensitively conceived, planned and delivered could put a knife on the string that seems to hold the society together. The chapter further contends that analysis of the context of education programming, participation/community ownership, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the design and delivery of the education programme is central to effective mainstreaming. At its core, mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in education programming is about recognizing that education can be a force for conflict or peace.

INTRODUCTION

Peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA), first formulated by Kenneth Bush, is a means of anticipating and evaluating the impacts of development projects on structures and processes that strengthen prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of violence (Bush, 1998).

Conflict sensitivity applies to a broad range of conflict-prone contexts, ranging from areas of severe violence to situations where underlying tensions have not recently resulted in violence (Brown et al, 2009). While PCIA was originally developed in the context of militarized conflict, it has since been applied to less or non-militarized contexts(Bush, 2009). The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) notes that institutional commitment can be fostered through buy-in at leadership and senior management

levels, commitment across the organisation, organizational policy on conflict sensitivity, and integration of conflict sensitivity into strategic plans.

The frequency and nature of conflict has made conflict sensitive education even more urgent. This is so because the essence of conflict management is to support the process of transforming actors, issues and context especially in the light of the fact that wars that were largely interstate have become mostly intrastate with its attendant challenges. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2011:2), of the 61 million children worldwide who are out of primary school, 28 million girls and boys live in conflict-affected fragile states representing 42% of the worlds' total. Millions more youth lack access to relevant learning opportunities and skills for employment in these contexts. Again, in conflict-affected countries, gross enrollment ratios in secondary school is 30% lower than in other countries and 21% of young people are illiterate (UNESCO, 2011: 132).

It is now widely recognized and documented that education and conflict have a bi-directional and complex relationship (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Conflict can disrupt education and education can contribute to conflict. However, education can also contribute to social transformation and a society of cooperation. In order to ensure the right to education for the 28 million children out of primary school in conflict contexts, education policy makers and practitioners must give attention to the dynamics of conflict and ensure that education does no harm (INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education 2013). It is within these complex contexts, and with knowledge of the power of education to impact conflict or peace, that the education policy makers and practitioners must work to ensure that education is planned and delivered in such a way that it would not radicalize the students or predispose them to 'hate doctrine/curricula'. Education policies and programmes that only focus on technical solutions are not sufficient to address the challenges found especially in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

By supporting conflict sensitive education, actors may therefore avoid contributing to conflict and pursue contributing to peace. Thus in many ways too, this chapter would lay a foundation for a new research endeavor and will hopefully provide the background for a much broader future exploration of how conflict sensitivity can be mainstreamed in other aspects of the polity.

The general objective of this chapter is therefore, to provide a relevant reference tool on how to mainstream conflict sensitivity in education programming in all contexts. More specifically, the chapter seeks:

1. To identify strategies for conflict sensitive analysis, participation and coordination.
2. To examine measures for conflict sensitive access and learning environment.
3. To establish measures for conflict sensitive teaching and learning.
4. To identify strategies for conflict sensitive practices for teachers and other education personnel.
5. To identify strategies for conflict sensitive education policy programming.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Anderson's research and the Do No Harm project led the way in the field of conflict sensitivity. In 1998, Kenneth Bush developed the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) methodology, comparable to environmental or gender impact assessment. Both Do No Harm and PCIA were originally focused on the project level and targeted at NGOs, however they were soon adopted and adapted by donor agencies and other organizations. By the mid to late 2000s, the term 'conflict sensitivity' was used extensively in the development field and agencies increasingly aimed to

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