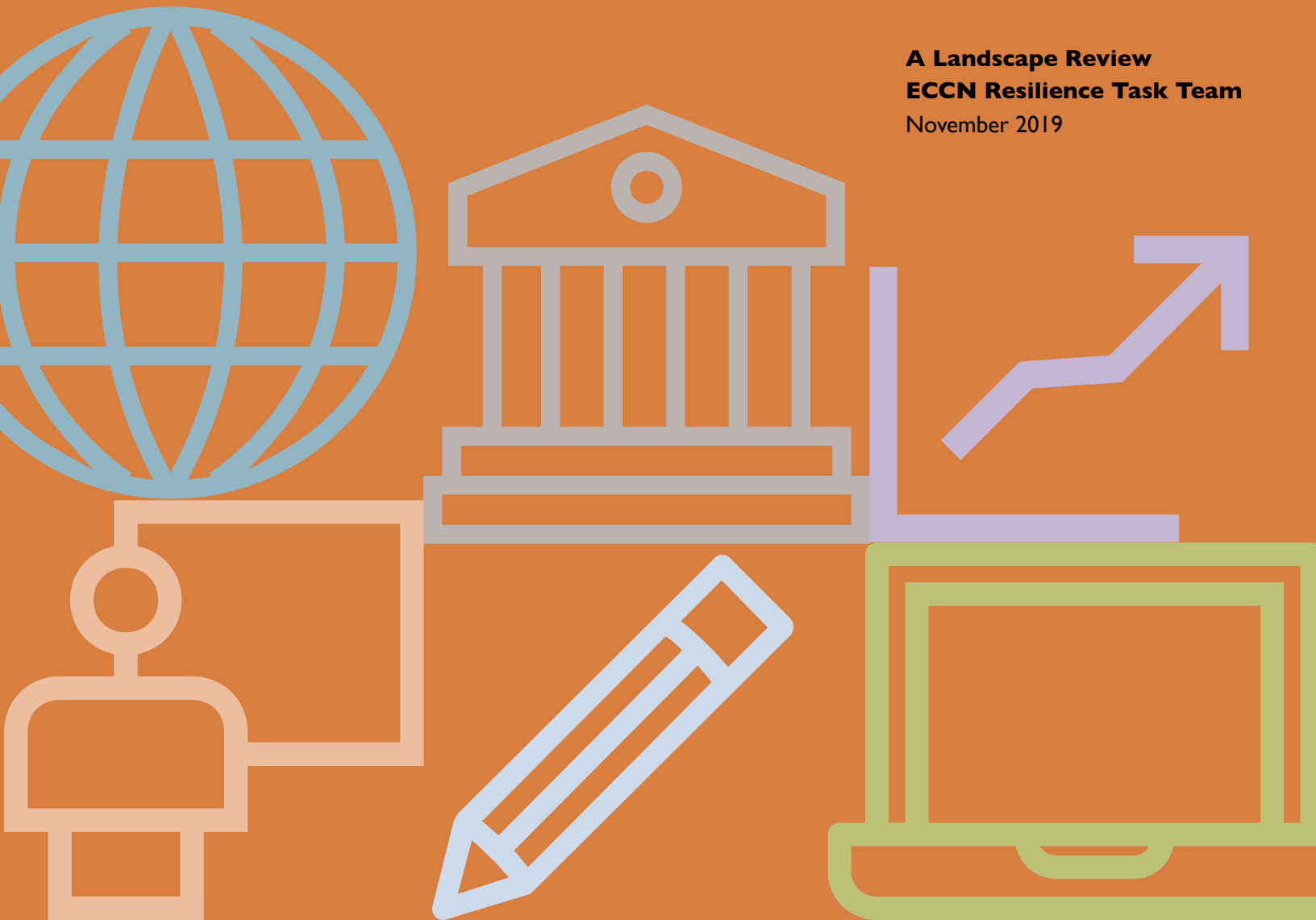# LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
FOR EDUCATION IN CRISIS AND
CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

A Landscape Review
ECCN Resilience Task Team
November 2019

CONTENTS

ACRONYM LIST

AGLC	adolescent girls learning center
CLA	collaborating, learning, and adapting
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	civil society organization
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EiCC	education in crisis and conflict-affected environment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country fund
IDP	internally displaced person
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies
LICD	local institutional capacity development
LRRD	linking relief, rehabilitation, and development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDTF	multi donor trust fund
MERLIN	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Innovations program

MOE	Ministry of Education
MTEF	medium-term expenditure framework
NFE	nonformal education
NFLC	nonformal learning center
NGO	nongovernmental organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDIA	Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation process
PFMRAF	Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTC	primary teacher college
PVO	private voluntary organization
SWAP	sector wide approach to programming
TDMS	Teacher Development and Management System
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YLC	youth learning center
YYC	Yes Youth Can!

INTRODUCTION

This landscape review provides an overview of the literature and good practices for local institutional capacity development (LICD) for education in crisis and conflict-affected environments (EiCC). It focuses on the transition from humanitarian crisis to development, and it is informed by conflict sensitive education and the importance of building resilience in these contexts. It draws on research, literature reviews, and evidence-based guidance from the following:

- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Multilateral agencies of the United Nations (UN), including UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank
- International nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and networks, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Union (EU), International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
- Research institutes and academic literature

The purpose of the review is to establish a basis for a scope of work that will result in guidance on LICD to those at USAID and ECCN's Community of Practice for the design, implementation, and evaluation of EiCC programs and projects.[1] USAID's mission in support of the goal of strengthening local institutional capacity is succinctly articulated by USAID Administrator Mark Green: "The purpose of foreign aid is to end the need for its existence" (USAID, 2018, p. 7). This fundamental goal is elaborated by the Agency guidance: "the core of our mission is a deep commitment to work as partners in fostering sustainable development. Rather than impose, we seek to empower and support through collaboration. We work hand-in-hand with those we seek to assist as well as others striving to support the most vulnerable. Nations and communities must increasingly be able to meet the needs of their citizens, whether by providing health care, education, or economic opportunity" (USAID, 2017).

The selection of literature for this review was guided by the degree to which each source addressed at least two of the following three domains: (1) institutional capacity development,[2] (2) crisis and conflict-affected contexts, and (3) increasing equitable access to quality basic education. **This review draws key sources of theory and evidence from this body of literature to accomplish the following:**

- Describe current concepts and models of capacity development
- Present current analysis and research on effective principles
- Articulate challenges in implementing these principles
- Identify illustrative cases of good practice

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1   In this paper, we follow conventional usage of the terms *program* (large scale, systemic, and long-term set of funded activities with a common goal) and project (a time-bound, focused enterprise designed to achieve a specific objective). It should be noted that US AID uses the term project to describe a set of activities (i.e., projects) within a sector that have an overall objective, and the term activity is used to describe a particular contract, grant, or cooperative agreement with an implementing partner or partners.

2   The term *institutional capacity* includes government institutions (e.g., a ministry of education at central, regional, and district levels) and non-state institutions; organizations (e.g., departments within a government institution), local civil society organizations (CSO), and NGOs; public and non-state schools; and alternative, nonformal, and accelerated education programs.

I. WHY LICD MATTERS FOR EICC

USAID assistance, while it provides projects that point the way to system change, cannot sustain the delivery of education services and reform—this must ultimately be accomplished by host-country institutions. However, it is precisely in countries affected by conflict where institutions have the weakest capacity to deliver and support basic education.

Strengthening local institutions to provide needed goods and services after a project ends is a critical part of development. The fundamental objective for capacity development is to help partner countries on their own development journey to self-reliance. (USAID, 2018, p. 8).

II. A SHORT HISTORY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LICD
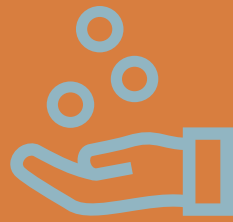
The history of donor support for institutional capacity development over the past 70 years has generally not resulted in stronger and more effective local institutions, particularly in crisis and conflict-affected states. Early donor efforts typically consisted of efforts to expand higher education and higher level manpower (Harbison and Myers, 1964), and projects focused on training for skill-building and infrastructure. These development projects avoided reforms to change the political, economic, and bureaucratic environment within which local institutions operated (Brinkerhoff, 2010). By the 1980s, it became evident that this strategy did not lead to more effective educational institutions and improved school performance, and it often contributed to a large brain drain of qualified individuals out of the institutions for which they had been trained.[3]

The 1980s saw the introduction of structural adjustment as a response to increasing debt in less developed countries, which sought to reduce public expenditures while improving government efficiency. This period also saw a rise in state fragility and conflict, caused in part by the failure of government to deliver on its promises of improved social services, including education. Donors adopted the position that a country would be eligible for aid based on the quality of its governance. Under this donor policy, the poorest, most conflicted countries were those least qualified to receive aid.

Owen Barder (2014) of the Center for Global Development notes the fallacy of the policy that aid should be channeled to those countries with the strongest governance. He writes, "what it is to be a developed country is to have institutions, whether government or private sector, that can deliver medicines or fresh water or food or textbooks to people who need them. If developing countries could do these things, they wouldn't be developing countries."

By the 1990s, a number of mechanisms were introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank that provided financial and institutional relief to strengthen social services, which had been devastated by structural adjustment. The World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) initiative was linked to debt relief through the Highly Indebted Poor Country fund (HIPC),[4] so that country debt forgiveness was tied to the use of savings to support social sector plans and programs. This decade saw USAID financing for education in Africa shift to the support of country sector-wide plans through budgetary support (called non-project assistance), supported with technical assistance. By 1995, almost two-thirds of USAID funding was for non-project assistance, while the remaining one-third typically provided technical assistance to strengthen ministry of education capacity to effectively utilize USAID and multi-donor funding for implementing education sector plans (USAID/Africa Bureau, 1995).

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3   See Ridker, R. (1994). The world bank's role in human resource development in sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/654871468739233319/pdf/multi-page.pdf

4   See http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEDS14/Resources/PRSP_Evaluation.pdf for details on the World Banks PRSP initiative and its objective to strengthen country-level strategy and planning.

The cases of post-civil war Uganda and Ethiopia illustrate the effectiveness of this approach by the sharp increase in access to basic education that accompanied the strengthening of government planning and financial, management, and evaluation systems to support that expansion. Summaries of each of these two illustrative cases are provided at the end of this review.

Another development during the 1990s that had an important, if indirect, impact on donor support to education reform in developing countries was the work of Michael Fullen (1999) and Peter Senge (2000) on concepts of education reform, adaptive management, and organizational learning. Their work has had a significant influence on recent education development policy, notably in USAID's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Framework (USAID, 2016).

> **Over the past two decades, the High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness at Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011) have reached a global consensus that capacity development must be nationally owned and led, and driven by nationally identified needs and priorities, rather than by donor agendas.**

Over the past two decades, the High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness at Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011) have reached a global consensus that capacity development must be nationally owned and led, and driven by nationally identified needs and priorities, rather than by donor agendas. Country leadership in development implies developing policies and programs through outreach and coalition-building, reducing resistance of different groups to priorities and plans, and establishing transparent evaluations and indicators of progress (Baser, 2011).

However, in practice, donors have a high aversion to risk and are disinclined to finance institutions in states marked by conflict, deficiency in the rule of law, and institutions that are weakened by corrupt political leadership. This has meant that in crisis and conflict-affected contexts, where power is contested and opposition to the national government is strong, donors reduce risk by taking on greater responsibility for the delivery of education services, rather than developing sustainable local capacities (Lucas, 2014).

In the past decade, a greater appreciation of the complexity of development progress in fragile states and of development agencies' limited influence on the enabling environment and organizational culture has emerged from critical reviews of program failures to achieve sustained LICD. Between 1990 and 2006, the World Bank spent about $20 billion on public sector reform activities, with significantly higher levels of funding since 2000. According to a 2008 World Bank report, "Despite the continued efforts and some modification of the approach over the last decade, civil service reform has remained relatively unsuccessful, even in a relatively supportive environment. The main causes . . . were first and foremost a lack of political commitment to reform" (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2008, p. 53).

Lynne Bethke notes in *Capacity Development in Education Planning and Management in Fragile States* (IIEP/UNESCO, 2009) that there is considerable dissatisfaction within the international community regarding the impact of capacity development efforts, and that activities strengthening the skills of individuals have not generally succeeded in improving the performance of the organizations where they work. For example, a number of studies have demonstrated the relatively weak or absent sustained impact of pre- and in-service teacher training focused on developing effective pedagogies. Burns and Lawrie (2015) note in *Where It's Needed Most: Quality Professional Development for All Teachers* that the research in both stable and conflict-affected countries shows that "teachers regularly fail to apply—or fail to implement with any degree of quality or fidelity—what they have learned from the 'trainings' they have received."

The critique and analysis of the poor performance in developing local capacity have led to a recent and radical shift in development agencies' thinking about development and institutional capacity change (Dichter, 2014). At the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Department for International Development (DFID), this is reflected in the work on complex systems from Root, Jones, and Wild (2015) and Ramalingam (2014), and the advocacy for locally led development, adaptive management, and better feedback loops from Booth (2008) and Valters (2015). Likewise, at USAID, the development of and guidance for the CLA Framework (USAID, 2016) and the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Innovations program (MERLIN),[5] has signaled an important shift toward an adaptive management approach.

USAID is increasingly working in countries that are unstable or in transition, and even in the most stable environments, it is difficult to reliably predict how events or circumstances will evolve and impact programs. Therefore, USAID must be able to readily adapt programs in response to changes in context and new information. To do this, the Agency must create an enabling environment that encourages the design of more flexible programs, promotes intentional learning, minimizes the obstacles to modifying programs, and creates incentives for learning and managing adaptively (Dexis, 2016).[6]

Whether the CLA framework will be effectively integrated within USAID country and project designs and result in more effective local institutional capacity is still an open question (Dichter, 2014; Dexis, 2017). Still, there is strong theoretical and emerging evidence that this approach, if applied consistently over time, may be able to overcome many of the shortfalls of traditional approaches to strengthening local institutional capacity in fragile and conflicted countries.

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5   See USAID MERLIN at https://www.usaid.gov/GlobalDevLab/fact-sheets/monitoring-evaluation-research-and-learning-innovations-program-merlin
6   See DEXIS (2016). Collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA). An analysis of what CLA looks like in development programming. Produced for USAID by DEXIS. Retrieved from https://www.globalcommunities.org/publications/2017-USAID-CLA.pdf

Definitions, Models, and Characterizations

It is difficult to discuss capacity development without determining what is actually meant by the term *capacity development*, and how it is defined. Pact, an organization working in 40 developing countries, notes: "Currently, no industry standards exist to measure organizational capacity. Each organization has its own tool, and few organizations have reliable, valid tools that measure how [capacity development] links to organizational performance" (2016, p. 5). After reviewing approximately 250 documents and interviewing 600 individuals from 325 organizations in nine countries, Thomas Dichter (2014, p. 84) writes, "It is hard not to be staggered by the number of frameworks, numbered lists, grids, and graphs that tell us what are the important capacities for a development organization."

Definitions of Capacity Development

To simplify, four definitions reflecting major bodies of analysis and research on LICD are provided here:

- Brinkerhoff (2010) focuses on the various levels and types of institutional capacity development.

- USAID's *Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook* (2011) addresses the institutional conditions that influence capacity.

- Dichter (2014) and Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcott (2017) each emphasize organizational problem-solving as well as learning and flexibility in the face of changing conditions.

Dichter (2014), in basic agreement with USAID's CLA Framework and an adaptive management perspective, focuses on organizational problem-solving and learning: "Capacity development is anything that enhances an . . . organization's ability to solve its, and its constituents, problems, adapt to changing circumstances, and to learn from experience." (p. 87)

Brinkerhoff (2010) provides the following definition:

Capacity deals with the aptitudes, resources, relationships, and facilitating conditions necessary to act effectively to achieve some intended purpose… A commonly used set of levels includes the following: (1) individuals, (2) organizations, and (3) institutions. Institutions concern the rules, policies, laws, customs, and practices that govern how societies function. Donors sometimes refer to this level as the enabling environment (pp. 66–67).

Andrews, et al. (2017) agree with this focus on problem-solving, but add that, "Organizational capability is the ability of an organization to equip, enable, and induce their agents to do the right thing at the right time to achieve a normative policy objective." (p. 95)

Virtually all contemporary sources agree that sustained[8] institutional capacity must focus on specific policy objectives to be achieved. In the field of basic education in crisis and conflict-affected environments, these policy objectives are to (1) increase equitable access to education and to achieve basic learning results; (2) provide the organizational resources that support agents to achieve this goal; (3) lead a process of learning, problem-solving, and adapting to a changing environment; and thereby (4) increase organizational resiliency and sustainability and to reduce risk.

Approaches and Models

The brief historical description of the concepts and approaches to institutional capacity development reveals a history of changing approaches and models. Figure 1 shows this shift in focus from individual training and infrastructure in the 1960s to a focus on effective schools and the support of community in the 1970s, and then starting in the 1980s and growing into the 1990s, a priority on organizational capacities at district and national levels. The final shift was to a whole-systems perspective, influenced by global donor agendas. These agendas included the World Bank's PRSPs and HIPC, the increased use of the Sector-Wide Approach to Programming (SWAP), and for USAID, Non-Project Assistance (1995), the FTI Progressive Framework (2008), as well as the Paris, Ghana, and Busan agreements on aid effectiveness that advocated national ownership and the use of national systems.

These historical shifts in the focus for institutional capacity development reflect a growing appreciation of the political and institutional systems within which individuals and organizations operate. Each historical stage does not so much repudiate the previous paradigm as incorporate it into a larger systems perspective.

A comprehensive definition of institutional capacity comes from the USAID's *Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook*:

Institutional capacity is defined as the quality of leadership, incentives, systems, resources, and personnel that produce results based on the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution. It refers to both the organizational capacity as reflected by the institution's public mandate, legitimacy, resources, and systems and the human capacity reflected by the motivation, status, technical, and managerial skills of its leaders and staff.[7]

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7   Adapted from USAID. (2011a). Human and institutional capacity development handbook: A USAID model for sustainable performance improvement (pp. 6–7). Washington, DC: Author.

8   Sustained institutional capacity means the institution or organization is able to continually produce good results in the face of changing needs and contexts.

Figure 1: Focus of institutional capacity development in education projects

The interdependence between these levels is illustrated by the following example (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Tembo, 2008):

- The capacity of a local school teacher to contribute to pupil learning outcomes is based on her commitment, training, and experience and shaped by the conditions, capacity, and leadership of the school where she is based.

- The conditions, capacity, and leadership of the school is affected by its relationship and support from the District Education Office (DEO), as well as by the community and local leadership.

- The capacity of the DEO depends on the technical and financial support it receives from the national Ministry of Education (MOE), as well as other partners (e.g., NGOs, donors).

- The capacity of the MOE to provide for districts and schools is conditioned by the policies governing how education services are financed and managed, by the resources it receives from the national government and by the kinds of support received from donors and their implementing partners.

- The national policies and resources are shaped by the political leadership, by the institutional culture and capacity (including levels and types of corruption), by the kinds of public services societal elites and key political groups support, and by the broad social attitudes and demand for education.

Capacity and performance result from the interactions of all these levels.

Models and Characteristics

Bethke (2009) notes that, "Capacity development efforts in fragile states face many of the same challenges as are found in other developing countries—for example, the high turnover of staff … [and] low and irregular salaries." (p. 16). Davies (2009) shows that in conflicted states, governments often lack both the capacity and willingness to provide basic services, so that capacity development requires more than strengthening the knowledge and skills of individuals (e.g., teachers, school heads, DEO staff). It must address administrative systems, the development and application of standards, regulatory functions, financing and financial control systems, and supervision and support at the school level. Brinkerhoff (2010) identifies specific conditions influencing capacity in what he terms *fragile and non-fragile states*, which could also be labeled *humanitarian and development contexts*.

These conditions can be seen along vectors from humanitarian crisis to stable development, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: **From humanitarian crisis to stable development**

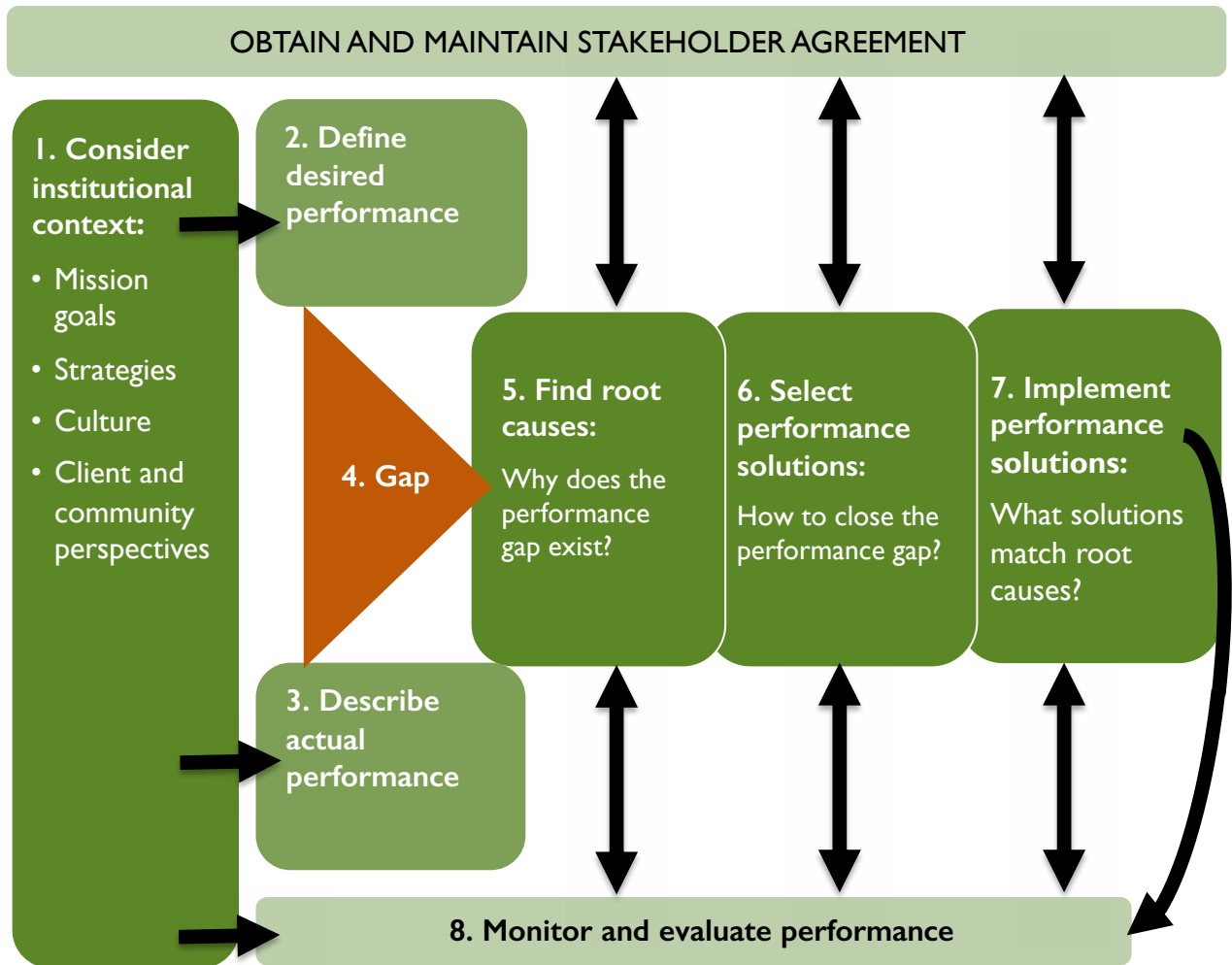| Humanitarian Crisis	→	Stable Development
Pressure to restore education services and security quickly	→	Long time frame for planning and development
Frequent changes in MOE and other institutional leadership; uncertain policy commitments	→	Stable political leadership and policy priorities for education
Weak and missing institutional systems and procedures	→	Base of institutional capacity, rules, and systems that function
Policy and program decisions driven by political agendas, without the support of evidence or consensus building	→	Reliance on evidence, intervention experience, and stakeholder consensus to adapt policy and programs
Institutions, organizations of government, and donors fragmented; lack of coordination	→	Institutional systems perspective that copes with complexity and interconnections

Bearing in mind the similarities and differences in capacity development for crisis and conflict-affected and non-fragile environments, following are descriptions of four capacity development models. These models illustrate major approaches in the current literature.

Model 1: USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development

The Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Framework (USAID, 2011a) is an eight-step process (see Figure 2) with a focus on identifying the gap between the desired performance and the actual performance in achieving institutional mission goals.[9]

Figure 2. USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development Framework

OBTAIN AND MAINTAIN STAKEHOLDER AGREEMENT

1. Consider institutional context:
- Mission goals
- Strategies
- Culture
- Client and community perspectives

2. Define desired performance

3. Describe actual performance

4. Gap

5. Find root causes: Why does the performance gap exist?

6. Select performance solutions: How to close the performance gap?

7. Implement performance solutions: What solutions match root causes?

8. Monitor and evaluate performance

Source: USAID. (2011a). *Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook*, p. 9

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9   This conceptual framework was initially developed by Rondinelli, D., Middleton, J., & Verspoor, A. (1990). *Planning education reforms in developing countries: The contingency approach.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

The eight steps of the process are as follows:

STEP 1: Consider the institutional context and get stakeholder agreement on HICD process and plans.

Examine the total performance system in which the organization functions, including its mission, goals, strategies, and organizational culture, as well as the perspectives of clients and communities. Foster and maintain stakeholder agreement on the objective of the HICD process and the plans for addressing performance problems.

STEP 2: Define desired performance in measurable terms, if possible.

Desired performance takes into account international or national standards and the perspective of stakeholders. The description of desired performance creates a manageable set of objectives for the process.

STEP 3: Describe actual performance.

The description of actual performance as it relates to the defined performance is based on observations and interviews of organization staff members and clients and on reviews of records and other documents.

STEP 4: Measure or describe the performance gap.

The difference between desired and actual performance is the organization's performance gap.

STEP 5: Find the root causes of the performance gap.

Analyze the reasons for the gap and identify the most basic reasons, or root causes. Root causes should be linked to the performance factors that affect people in doing their work, such as information, resources, incentives, knowledge and skills, capacity, and motives. Linking the root causes of performance gaps to specific factors helps HICD practitioners generate solutions that address those root causes.

STEP 6: Select performance solutions.

Consider recommendations for performance solutions to address the root cause of performance gaps and the related performance factors. Then rank and select these performance solutions according to cost, benefit, or other criteria.

STEP 7: Implement performance solutions.

With support from stakeholders, as needed, the organization implements the selected performance solutions, maintaining an environment of transparency and managing the change process by consistently communicating the intended results of the HICD initiative to staff and stakeholders.

STEP 8: Monitor and evaluate performance.

The organization, in consultation with its stakeholders, keeps the solutions on track and evaluates performance on an ongoing basis to re-measure the performance gap and assess the effect of the solutions.

USAID has provided a key resource for measuring institutional capacity in its TIPS series on performance monitoring and evaluation (USAID, 2011b). Although this practical guide does not provide education-sector-specific guidance, its framework is applicable across government, NGOs, and private voluntary organizations (PVOs), technical program functions, structure and culture, and resources.

It is notable that the top line in the HICD model, "obtain and maintain stakeholder agreement" (USAID, 2011a), is not included as one of the Framework's implementation steps. In crisis and conflict-affected environments, achieving collective agreement across often conflicted stakeholders is a significant challenge. Often, it is the most difficult and time-consuming activity as well as an underappreciated, step. However, this agreement is essential to engage and commit organizational leadership to an HICD process.

Model 2: The Fast Track Initiative's Capacity Development in the Education Sector

In 2008, the World Bank Fast Track Initiative Working Group on Fragile States developed a *Progressive Framework* (Fast Track Initiative, 2008b) that described the stages by which education systems in fragile states could acquire the institutional capacity needed to move forward toward Education for All goals. The FTI Progressive Framework matrix (see Table 3) provides a model with a set of indicators along the path from crisis, where a country receives humanitarian relief, to the development target, which is achieving the benchmarks for Fast Track Initiative (FTI) endorsement and financing.

The FTI recognized that the problems of developing institutional capacity to move toward development in conflicted and fragile environments involve a set of challenges (Table 2; Fast Track Initiative, 2008a), which, while not unique to fragile states, have a greater intensity and different priorities from more stable countries.

Table 2: Capacity development challenges and strategies for fragile states

Capacity Development Challenges in Fragile States Are More Complex and Urgent

- Fewer individuals with capacity (history of neglect and discrimination, concentration of power)
- More profound organizational disintegration (less organized civil society, less formal and accountable private sector, weaker political will and capacity)
- A more "disabling environment" (insecurity, poor governance, less funding, less data)
- Additional stakeholders (more local and international NGOs, new leaders, rebel groups and armed forces, child soldiers, alienated/demobilized youth, refugees and displaced communities)
- Additional pressing issues (security, reconstruction, nation building)
- Trade-offs between strong need for speedy delivery and long-term capacity development

Capacity Development Strategies in Fragile States Need to Be More Varied and Flexible

- Prioritize key capabilities: Delivering basic services, addressing critical inequities and sources of fragility, developing strategic policies and frameworks.
- Capitalize on local capacity: State fragility usually impacts capacity at the central level, but education capacity at the local level often remains; it should be protected and can be enhanced.
- Support the development of "interim arrangements" for laws and regulations.
- Where nongovernment provision is necessary, involve government stakeholders.
- Use local languages; make explicit plans to phase out external expertise.
- Bridge donor support and funding between humanitarian assistance and development assistance and commit to consistent and sustained partnerships.

Table 3: FTI Progressive Framework[10]

Interim Status → Development Target

Sector Assessment, Planning, and Coordination

Interim Status		Development Target
Working group established with education authorities for assessment and strategic planning with IASC Education Cluster coordination	Agency and government joint task force established to assess, plan, and provide oversight to education sector program	• Government-/country-led coordinating mechanism for aid management, delivery, and results • Endorsed for FTI
• Assessment of fragility • Strategies and priorities developed to support targeted regions and subsectors • Reaching underserved groups, including nonformal education (NFE) programs for youth	• Mid-term education strategy (at national and sub-national levels, inclusive of formal and nonformal education • Coordinated aid management (with some pooled funding, multi donor trust fund [MDTF], etc.)	**National education sector plan embedded within a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (or equivalent) and a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).**
• Community authorities' participation in education planning and provision • Establishment of representative school-community boards (gender, ethnicity, etc.).	Coordinated planning mechanisms for representative community and local government, inclusive of underserved groups	Civil society involvement in system planning and community participation in school improvement and management

10 From Fast Track Initiative. (2008b).

NOTE: The Interim Status column in the matrix includes descriptive education indicators for *fragile states* at pre-conflict, relief, recovery, and reconstruction stages. The Development Target indicators include the benchmarks for FTI endorsement, indicated in ***bold italics***. The arrow at the top of the Matrix is pointed in both directions, reflecting the reality that progress is not linear or inevitable, and forces and events that lead to state fragility, while influenced by education, are beyond the government's power to control.

Resource Mobilization and Financial Management

Internal and external resources mobilized to complement community inputs for basic service delivery →	Increased national revenue base and more predictable external support for investment and, where necessary, recurrent expenditure	• **FTI standards for public domestic revenue as share of GDP** • **Education share of recurrent expenditure** • **Primary share of education recurrent expenditure** • Consolidated budget (public resources and predictable external flows reflected in budget using national PFM systems)
Targeted grants and technical assistance to local, regional, and possibly national authorities to develop financial management capacity for transparent use of funds	• Resources linked to strategic priorities; budget and expenditure analysis • TA provided to develop and strengthen regional and national financial control systems	
Basic system financial flows and controls (accounting, procurement, fiduciary risk management) assessed	• Accounting, procurement, audit functions, and standards established • PFM (budgeting, fiduciary) initiated; PETS[11]	• Transparency in public financing and expenditures, with sanctions against corruption publicly enforced
Programs to prevent exclusion on economic and other grounds (e.g., gender, language, disability, ethnicity)	Planned and phased support for inclusion and removal of primary user fees	Publicly financed provision of inclusive basic education and support for other levels

Access and Learning Spaces

Assessment and provision of education programs for priority groups and regions to reduce fragility: underserved areas, girls, youth, etc. →	• Establishment of norms for school and classroom design and construction (especially for rural, underserved areas) • Program to provide for schools, facilities—water and latrines—and classes in underserved areas	• National educational plan with indicators and targets for achieving EFA goals of access and completion • Adequate pupil-classroom ratio: schools appropriately equipped for quality learning
Establishment of safe learning spaces, including school-based codes of fairness, prevention of abuse and bullying, and students active in school governance	Policy measures to promote safe access, security, child protection, and community involvement in conflict prevention	Community and school environments are secure and promote psychosocial well-being
Introduction/enhancement of skills development programs and accelerated learning, especially for out-of-school youth, IDPs, former gang, militia, or combatants	Out-of-school youth involvement (and leadership) in social needs assessments, civic projects, enterprise development, and volunteer service (e.g., teacher aides) related to social and economic rehabilitation	• National integrated system of technical and vocational training, including apprenticeships • NFE youth training and enterprise development • Second chance basic and secondary education • National service scheme

11 World Bank: PFM (Public Finance Management); PETS (Public Expenditure Tracking Survey)

Registration of private providers, including publicly subsidized and exclusively privately financed institutions	Regulatory framework functioning for private provision	*FTI < 10% in exclusively privately financed schools*

Teaching Personnel		
• Identification and appointment of teachers with parateachers and community support • Orientation to prevent abuse and address student needs	Establishing norms for teacher recruitment, training, accreditation, conduct, and supervision	• Adequate pupil-teacher ratio *(FTI ≤40:1)* • Equitable teacher distribution • Teacher service regulatory framework • Adequate supervisory system
Introduction of standardized stipends/incentives for teachers	Interim salary structure and payroll system	• National teacher salary scale and payroll system • *FTI = Teacher salary at 3.5 per capita income*
Short-term priority provision of coordinated teacher orientation and training inclusive of psycho-social support, methods, and materials	Introduction of a system of teacher education, training, and accreditation, including psycho-social competencies and methodologies to enhance learning (especially for literacy)	National system of teacher accreditation, training, and code of conduct

Learning Process		
• Review of learning content and materials consistent with human dignity and rights for all, gender equality, rule of law, unity with diversity; basic learning needs	Interim curriculum updating and building of institutional capacity for curriculum development, including elements of peacebuilding	New curriculum framework reflects national consensus on political, economic, and human development strategy, inclusive of human rights, rule of law, and unity in diversity
Emergency provision of basic learning inputs, including materials, teacher guides, pupil workbooks, and texts, reflecting principles noted above	Improvement of quality inputs (e.g., textbooks, materials, and pedagogical approaches)	Equitable distribution of quality inputs for improved learning outcomes and inclusive social relationships
Community/local authority oversight on teacher and pupil attendance and contact hours	Determination of national norms for contact hours and monitoring mechanisms	• Actual instructional hours measured and conform to national norms; *FTI = 850–1,000 hours per annum*
Curriculum materials include assessment of reading fluency, comprehension, and numeracy	Standards and milestones established for literacy and numeracy (in L1 and L2)	Reading fluency, comprehension, and numeracy standards for proficiency mastered by set % of pupils

Monitoring Student Flows and Learning		
Rapid assessment and survey of education provision in primary schools and basic NFE programs, including enrollments, teachers, facilities, and materials—by gender and by region	• Introduction of measures to assess net and gross enrollment rates, with official data complemented by survey data of NFE basic education for youth • Establishment of an assessment process for literacy and numeracy	• Measurement of intake rates, completion rates, and repetition • *FTI Indicative Framework Indicators* and a national assessment of literacy and numeracy in primary schools
Annual assessment of education program activities, performance, and challenges involving key stakeholders and representatives from civil society	An annual assessment of education sector developments, expenditures, performance, and challenges involving key stakeholders and representatives from civil society	• An annual sector performance review, linked to key indicators of the sector plan, utilizing an external audit of public expenditures • Prioritize a limited number of reform actions
Basic demographic, social, and economic data from Joint Appraisal Mission(s) as the source of information for education strategy	Development of information system, based on demographic and poverty assessments, school surveys and mapping, household surveys, and learning assessments	A functioning and integrated Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Financial Management Information System (FMIS) and learning achievement assessments

Model 3: The World Bank's Capacity Results Framework

The Capacity Development Results Framework (Otoo, Agapitova, & Behrens, 2009; Figure 3) provides a broad model of capacity development, which includes an in-depth assessment of the socio-political, policy, and organizational context.

Figure 3: Principal elements of the Capacity Development Results Framework
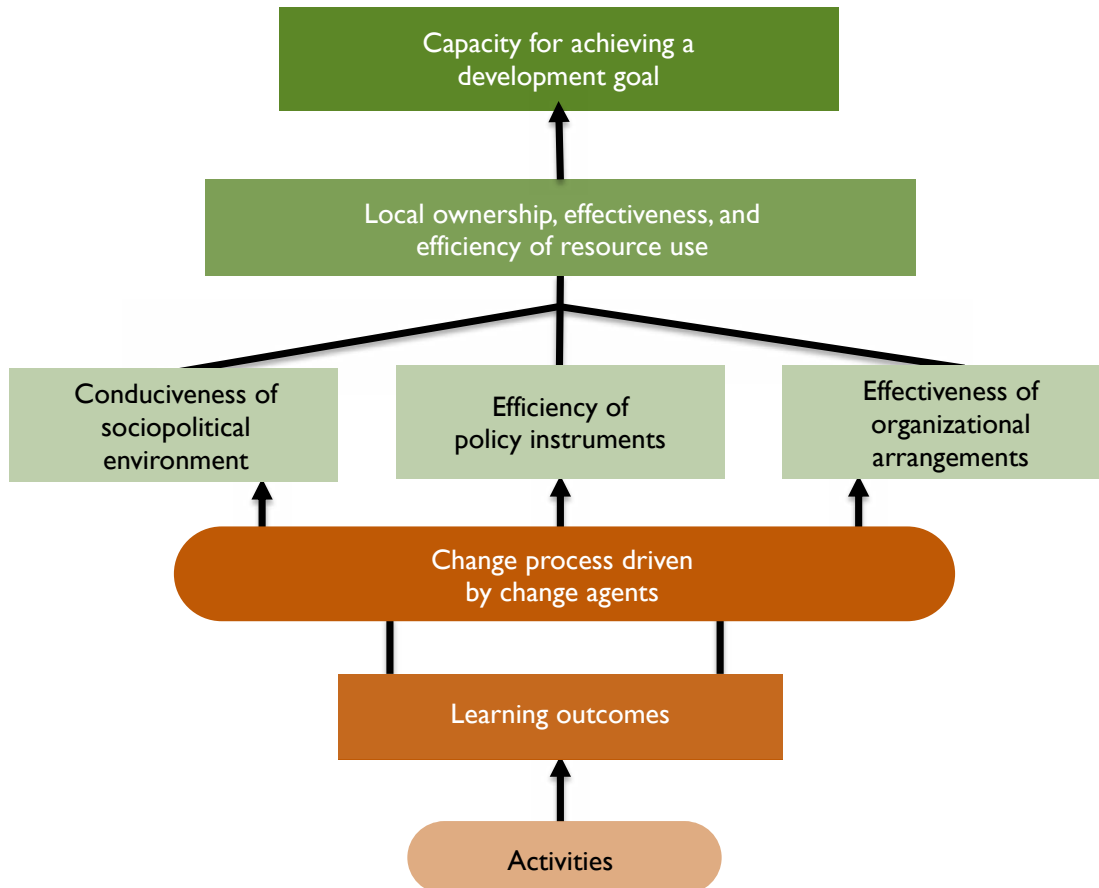
As explained in the World Bank's guidance paper on its Capacity Results Framework (Otoo, et al., 2009), in addition to the human and financial capital, natural resources, and other endowments that influence whether a development goal can be achieved in a given time frame, there are three further key factors that determine an institution's capacity to achieve specific goals. Those are as follows:

1. **Conduciveness of the socio-political environment,** made up of the political and social forces that determine the priority given to the development goal by the government, the private sector, and civil society

2. **Efficiency of policy instruments**, or the formal mechanisms to be used to guide stakeholder actions toward achievement of the development goal. These formal mechanisms include administrative rules, laws, regulations, and standards.

3. **Effectiveness of organizational arrangements,** or the systems, rules of action, processes, personnel, and other resources that government and nongovernment stakeholders bring together to achieve development goals.

Model 4: Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcott's Building State Capacity: Evidence, Analysis, and Action

A fourth model reflects the principles of adaptive management and USAID's CLA Framework. This approach emphasizes institutional resilience, defined as "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country, or a region to withstand, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks . . . [It is] a broad concept that features democracy, trust in institutions, sustainable development, and the capacity to reform" (European Union, 2017. p. 3.)

Andrews et al. (2017) critique standard approaches to capacity building, noting that these begin with a deficit analysis so as to identify the gaps in institutional knowledge and performance. They explain the perils of filling these gaps with practices of "isomorphic mimicry" and "capability traps," where indicators of short-term success are superficial and fail to build resilience and sustainable capacity. Isomorphic mimicry is the superficial replication of an innovation or model, which leads to a capability trap, in which the model or innovation is mistaken for the solution to a somewhat different problem in a different context.

To avoid these traps, Andrews, et al. (2017) propose the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) process. PDIA is a process of organizational learning, an iterative process by which an organization creates its own capacity through planned trial and error. This is in contrast to the two previous models, where training prepares personnel and the organizations they work within to accomplish established organizational objectives and goals. PDIA is a process of identifying and focusing on local problems, authorizing and pushing positive deviations and innovation to solve these problems, iterating with feedback to develop solutions, and diffusing solutions through horizontal and interlinked non-organizational networks. It begins with the observation that "more successful efforts to establish complex state capabilities are problem driven; focused relentlessly on solving a specific, attention-grabbing problem. In contrast, many less -successful initiatives often seem to be more solution driven (and do not pay attention to the problem or the context in which the problem is felt). In fact, this seems to be the biggest difference between 'best practice' experiences and those that try to replicate such practices" (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcott, 2015, p. 140). Figure 4 illustrates this process.

Figure 4: Process for building state capacity
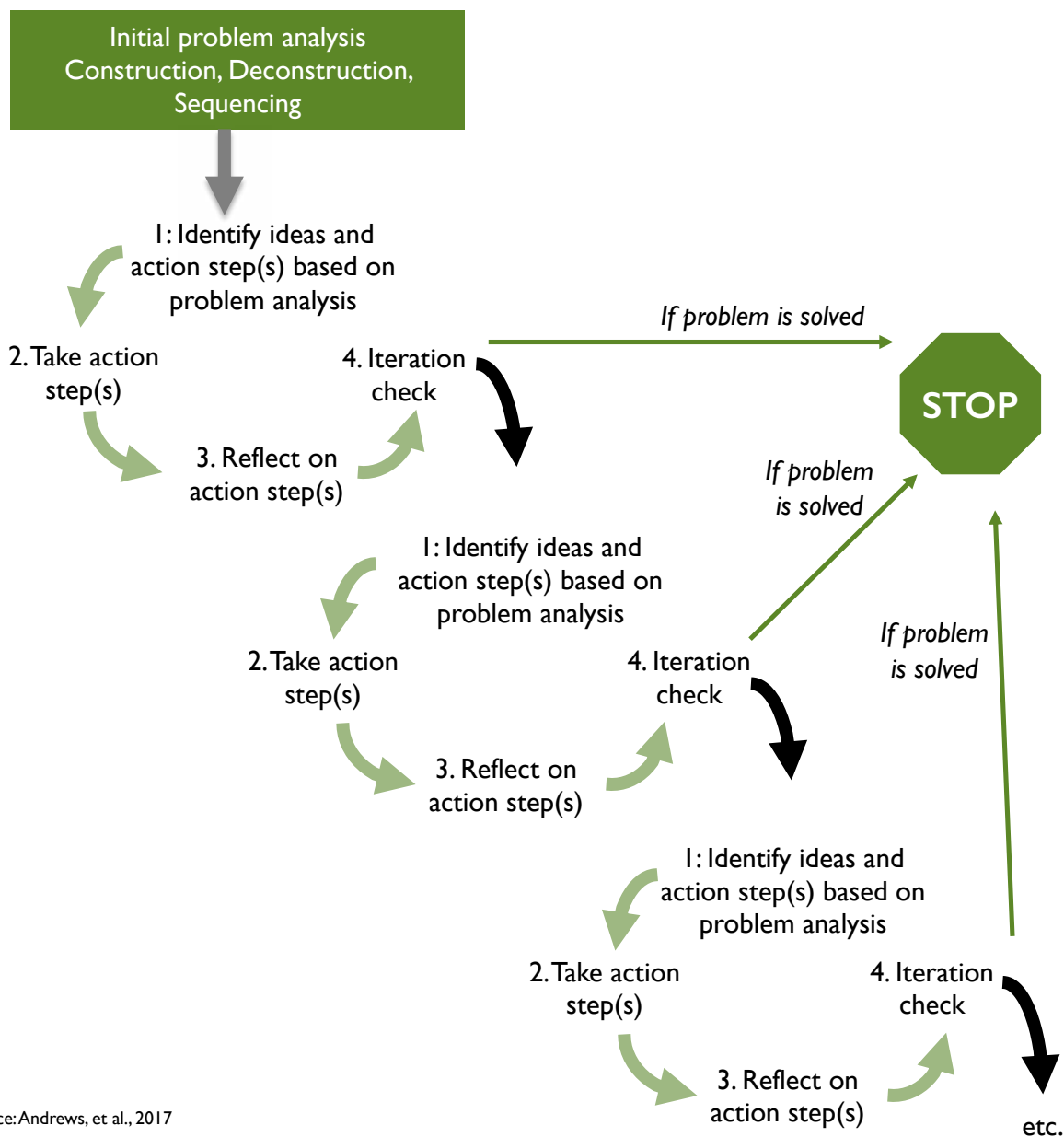
Source: Andrews, et al., 2017

This approach is quite different from how conventional capacity development initiatives are structured, in which specialists initially conduct studies to decide on a solution, then design how the solution should be introduced into a context, and then design training and implementation plans for local implementers. Such an approach yields limited learning, opportunity for adaptation, problem-solving capacity, or resilience. An experimental, iterative process, in contrast, has the following characteristics:

- Multiple solution ideas incorporate local knowledge and know-how and are put into action.
- Experimental, iterative steps progressively allow more practical and locally legitimate solutions to emerge.
- Disciplined, experiential learning and flexibility foster adaptation to the complex challenges of the local context in crisis and conflict-affected environments.
- The problem-solving process and results have local ownership, which contributes to sustainable institutional capacity (Andrews, et al., 2017, pp. 170–171).

USAID's CLA Framework (USAID/DRC, 2015) draws on these principles and can be represented with a diagram (Figure 5) that illustrates a cycle of collaboration, learning through feedback loops linked to key outcome indicators, and utilizing that learning to make adaptations to the project theory of change and implementation strategies.

Figure 5: USAID's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Cycle

This diagram indicates four stages through which an organization learns how to improve its performance and results:

1. **The processes** of collaboration with stakeholders to establish consensus around outcomes and a theory of change

2. **The identification** of key outcome indicators and the means of collecting these through a systematic and regular cycle of data collection and analysis

3. **The use** of that data as feedback loops to inform consultations based on stakeholders' inputs and insights

4. **The process** of creative problem-solving to arrive at solutions so as to improve organizational performance and results

The CLA cycle is the process that can lead to strengthening an organization's capacity to identify and address both problems and opportunities to improve shared outcomes.

III. CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

The technical knowledge of the conditions needed to increase equitable access to quality basic education, even in crisis and conflict-affected environments, is well established.[12] Those conditions include:

- Child health and well-being

- Parent and community support

- Conflict sensitive curricula with adequate and appropriate texts and instructional materials

- Capable teachers supported by effective school leadership, supervision, and professional development

- Adequate infrastructure, including furnished classrooms, offices, stores, and access to water and gender-specific toilets

- A regular process for assessing learning achievement and addressing learning gaps.

Strengthening institutional capacity for education in crisis and conflict-affected environments means that local organizations can deliver the inputs and services that create these conditions, monitor their delivery, and evaluate impact. However, in crisis and conflict-affected environments, as noted by Brinkerhoff (2010) and the Fast Track Initiative (2008a), barriers, including insecurity, weak institutions, inequalities, historical grievances, and social cleavages, make it difficult to provide these elements.

In the face of these barriers to effective education service delivery, the literature identifies a number of good capacity development practices supported by evidence and experience. These include the following:

1. **Build on existing capacities** by engaging organizations (e.g., schools, school management committees, parent-teacher associations, local education offices, and NGOs) in problem identification and problem-solving and finding solutions that fit the culture and needs and that are owned by the respective organization

2. **Bridge the current gap** between humanitarian and development modalities so that local capacity development is at the center of relief to development work

3. **Focus on local organizations** achieving specific measurable results

4. **Provide support** for the time that it takes for local organizations to develop technical skills, problem-solving capacity, and resilience

5. **Seek the means** (within tolerable levels of risk) for channeling resources and financing through local public organizations

6. **Have a systems focus**, rather than a narrow sectoral focus, to ensure that solutions address the resilience and sustainability of local organizations

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12 See, for example, Lockheed, M., & Verspoor, A. (1991). *Improving primary education in developing countries*. Washington, DC: The World Bank; Heneveld (2007). Whose reality counts? Local educators as researchers on the quality of primary education. *International Review of Education*, 53(5–6), 639–663. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/journal/11159/53/5/page/1; and INEE. (2010) Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, and recovery. Retrieved from https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/INEE_Minimum_Standards_2010.pdf

Dichter (2014) and others provide strong evidence that certain characteristics of donor agency policies constrain the application of these practices. These challenges to effective capacity development practice are described below, along with the lessons for evidence-based good practice.

↗ Challenge 1: Building Resilience from Existing Capacities

There is frequently a poor fit between development models and skills training and the organizational culture and the local resources of the host country or region. For example, the following is a case of isomorphic mimicry (Andrews, et al., 2015): An effective community school project was created and then subsequently evolved in rural Afghanistan to increase girls' access to basic education. Although this project was based on a rigorous and positive evaluation, it cannot be replicated effectively in rural Honduras (although an adaptation of that project may be possible).

In situations where humanitarian relief calls for rapid response, and there are multiple agencies and implementers addressing a crisis, the likelihood is high that local organizations are required to implement reforms promoted and funded by development agencies, rather than seeking locally created responses.

Andrews, et al. (2017) explain why this does not build capacity:

> *Finding and fitting solutions to local problems is a collective capability, acquired only through the process of trial and error. Just as individuals learn skills such as speaking a language, riding a bicycle, or playing a musical instrument by being awful before they become good, so too must organizations charged with responding to "wicked hard" problems learn how to struggle together to implement an optimal solution. Taking lots of training seminars on how to ride a bike is no substitute for actually sitting on it at the top of long slope, falling off multiple times on the way down, and bravely persisting until one's brain eventually figures out how to stay upright while in motion on two wheels (p. 51).*

The Lesson: However pressing the need and the pressures to achieve short-term progress—such as reaching a large number of out-of-school, overage children and youth—ensure that achieving results is seen as a set of problems to be solved by local partner organizations, rather than simply training local organizations to implement a fully defined intervention. This approach avoids isomorphic mimicry and builds resilience. Capacity development requires this struggle to learn and solve problems. Dichter (2014) notes, "in our interviews with hundreds of local organizations we found that . . . they do not need or want to follow donor-led project designs. Rather, they want knowledge exchanges, peer-to-peer opportunities, platforms for discourse, and help in meeting the basic needs of the organization." (p. 97)

Challenge 2: Bridging the Humanitarian and Development Gap

Education has historically been undervalued and underfunded in humanitarian response programs. Further, institutional capacity development is understood to be a long-term process, and weak local institutions are not trusted with donor funding to provide quick or easily measurable results. Local public organizations are often seriously underfunded, understaffed, and burdened with unrealistic expectations.[13] Indeed, the poor performance of these organizations to deliver services is often a driver of conflict. Thus, donors and NGOs have generally led in providing education services within humanitarian responses. However, this has often undermined local institutional capacity as capable staff from local organizations are recruited to higher paying international donor-funded NGOs. Davies (2009) notes: "Humanitarian interventions during the bloody civil war have left Southern Sudan with a legacy of dependence on outside agencies for leadership and services. Today, some local leaders believe that many Southern Sudanese people see schools as being owned by UNICEF or NGOs rather than by their communities." (p. 34)

In many regions and environments, conflict continues over many years. Therefore, the practice of providing relief for and developing the capacity and resilience of those affected requires a long-term strategy. UNHCR (2016) estimates that the average time a refugee spends in exile is 20 years, with major refugee settlements, such as Dadaab in northeastern Kenya, existing for more than 25 years. The internal conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), northern Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia have each continued over decades, while the effects of natural disasters in Honduras, Guatemala, Haiti, Nepal, and Myanmar have created long-term dislocations of people and huge challenges to under-resourced local institutions. These effects set back many development investments and reverse the progress of capacity development. Schools and education programs are particularly vulnerable to these conflicts and natural disasters.

Increasingly, international and bilateral agencies are moving toward the integration of humanitarian crisis response with development aid. Thus, there is a recognition of the need for local capacity development at the outset of humanitarian relief, as well as the integration of emergency preparedness and capacity building for resilience within existing development programs.

One early initiative that recognized and examined the integration of humanitarian and development assistance for education was the World Bank Fast Track Initiative's (FTI) Progressive Framework, which was intended to map the path from humanitarian crisis to the point where a country could qualify for FTI support (INEE, 2008). The principles of the Progressive Framework (Table 4) emphasized the importance of LICD to deliver basic education at the earliest stages of recovery from crisis or conflict.

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13 In the district of Arua in northwest Uganda, where hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, mostly women and children, have fled from South Sudan, there are four coordinating center tutors (CCTs) to provide professional guidance to teachers. Each CCT is supposed to work with about 15 schools and 150 teachers. In fact, due to budget cuts and staff shortages, they had an average of more than 130 schools and 1,600 primary school teachers to support. This overwhelming caseload was before the influx of about 250 thousand school-age refugees to the district. (Based on author's notes: Rahman, A. O. (DEO Yumbe). *Report of the district education officer of Yumbe, Yumbe district summary presentation as a case of refugees and host community response.* Presented at District Education Officers Planning Workshop, Arua, October, 28, 2017).

Table 4. FTI Progressive Framework Principles

The FTI Progressive Framework: Principles

- **Integration within the international architecture of humanitarian aid and development assistance.** The Progressive Framework is designed as a path from humanitarian relief in emergencies through an interim status to meeting criteria for FTI endorsement. It seeks country coordination of donor agency and NGO assistance.

- **Country level dialogue** by key agencies, stakeholders, and education authorities (national and local) to arrive at a shared and coordinated assessment of priorities, strategies, and program modalities for strengthening capacity to provide equitable, quality basic education.

- **Commitment to capacity building at national, regional, and community levels,** with a balance among strengthening education authorities' leadership, community involvement, and psycho-social well-being.

- **Balancing short-term service delivery with longer-term reconstruction/institution building,** thereby reducing the forces contributing to state fragility.

- **Commitment to balanced system-wide development,** inclusive of multi-sectoral priorities and strategies, addressing the education needs of children and youth, through both formal and nonformal education.

More recently, organizations such as UNICEF, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and the EU are promoting the concept of resilience by linking relief, rehabilitation, and development (LRRD; UNICEF, 2011; Mosel and Levine, 2014). The implication of LRRD is that even in crisis response contexts, donors and implementers need to consider how efforts to improve capacity can be built into all activities, and they must analyze all projects for capacity development opportunities that may exist within them.

One application of the LRRD approach can be found in Uganda's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).[14] The Government of Uganda serves as a model example in affording refugees in Uganda asylum and access to the same rights as its citizens, including the right to education. The Uganda CRRF integrates refugee education with host-community public education and includes the refugee response plan within the national education sector strategy. This approach ensures that the Ministry of Education at national and district levels will increase its capacity to play a leadership role in the implementation of the refugee/host-community education plan (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018).

The Lesson: Developing country institutional capacity, informed by the goal of increasing resilience, should be integrated at all stages of education in crisis and conflict-affected programs, from humanitarian crisis to full development.

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14 Uganda's CRRF arises from the New York Declaration 2015. Based on the humanitarian premise to save lives, protect rights, and share the burden, the New York Declaration urges countries to move toward an open-door policy for admission, protection, and assistance to refugees. The declaration commits countries to free access to social services by refugees, including participation in economic endeavors. This declaration was embraced in Africa, in 2017, when Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia each agreed to apply the CRRF.

Challenge 3: Providing the time needed for local organizations to achieve specific measurable results

Brinkerhoff (2010) notes that, "For donors, the overarching dilemma is between providing for basic needs and delivering services in the near-term and contributing to capacity development for the long-term." (p. 5). Organizational capacity is the product of deeply embedded processes connected to both societal and individual abilities and motivations, and it therefore takes time, leadership, and persistence.

USAID's EQUIP2 project examined cases where there had been a long history of LICD for education reforms. The project undertook an in-depth analysis of five national education systems that had achieved and maintained significant institutional reforms (Egypt, El Salvador, Namibia, Nicaragua, and Zambia), supported by USAID over the period from 1990 to 2009.[15] The most important finding from these case studies is that effective reform of the education institutions within the national system, reaching down to the classroom, is not the result of short-term (two- to three-year) projects, but requires persistent leadership and commitment to long-term goals through the development of robust host-country education institutions (Gillies, 2010).

Bethke (2009) notes that one of the main challenges with institutional capacity development is that it is a long-term process, while in emergency and post-conflict situations, donors, authorities, and beneficiaries want quick results. Typically, project time periods are too short to result in a meaningful improvement in organizational capacities, particularly when these capacities depend on increased domestic financing and establishing or reforming management and personnel systems. Capacity development in these contexts is often acknowledged to be an important objective, but, in fact, it is sidelined.

Dichter (2014) and his team interviewed hundreds of local organizations and found that "a majority of our interviewees see the worst characteristics of an outdated aid approach becoming worse: Project time frames are as short if not shorter than ever; an increase in the number of and complexity of partnerships; . . . greater fickleness in donor priorities; the lack of core support; the lack of space and time to reflect, to adapt, to be flexible." (p. 85).

The Lesson: In situations affected by crisis and conflict, the demand for basic education is high from those most victimized, and the actual needs for facilities, teachers, materials, management, and financing are great. Further, national and local institutions are typically seriously understaffed and underfinanced, thus increasing the pressure on USAID/donors to become the deliverers of education services through contracts and grants to implementing partners, and through implementing partners to local NGOs. These contracts and grants are typically short term (1 to 3 years) and prioritize delivering services and getting results in terms of increasing access for those most victimized. This will not be helpful unless it becomes the first step in a longer-term process of support for building effective, resilient local organizations, both NGOs and the Ministry of Education. **It is essential to partner with local government or NGOs and collaborate in problem-solving to address specific problems,** and thereby strengthen their capacity to plan, manage, monitor, and provide services.

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15 USAID has also supported education rehabilitation and reform over the 1990–2010+ period in Ethiopia and Uganda (both countries having emerged from protracted civil wars), and the capacity development results in these countries are consistent with the EQUIP 2 findings.

Challenge 4: Seeking the means (within tolerable levels of risk) for channeling resources and financing through local public organizations

In fragile and conflict-affected states, key capacities for public administration (i.e., public financial management, monitoring and evaluation, statistics and information management, and procurement) are usually weak. International agencies are wary of channeling funding through country systems and, instead, have been inclined to set up alternative mechanisms (such as multi-donor trust funds, and project implementation units) to deliver results more quickly and reduce risk. There are strong disincentives to using country systems for both donors and recipients that relate to trust, risk, benefits, visibility, and control. Procedures for recruitment and procurement are often copied from those used in stable environments and not adapted to conditions in fragile states (Lucas, 2014).

In crisis and conflict-affected environments, donors have often made commitments to fund and deliver basic education services. A DFID study found that in post-conflict countries, a large percentage of available funding is project-based, where donors choose to bypass the state by contracting directly with NGOs or local community groups (Leader and Colenso, 2005, as cited in Brinkerhoff, 2010). However, since 2011, USAID has promoted the use of government-to-government (G2G) financing, which, according to the Aid Forward policy directive, should amount to 30 percent of USAID allocations. Still, channeling funds through national systems does not necessarily strengthen these systems. Numerous cases show that funding government or local institutions inevitably comes with significant conditions and specifications, and these can overwhelm already weak national financial control systems. Booth (2008, p. ix) elaborates: "The vision of aid helping countries to own and lead their development will not be realized by greater volumes of aid through weak systems, but by incrementally building government systems while increasing budget support that is targeted to specific, collectively agreed, outcomes and indicators."

The Lesson: Seek the means of channeling financing to either government or local organizations, and provide technical assistance to and within those organizations to strengthen systems of financial control and project monitoring. Accept that this will involve a certain level of risk, which can be mitigated by careful assessments and conditions and the provision of relevant technical assistance.[16] To reduce the risks of direct budgetary support, donor agencies often impose guidelines that overburden weak government institutions, or they establish external accounts, thereby reducing incentives to strengthen government financial systems. While risk avoidance is an important part of any design, it should not override the primary objective of providing direct budgetary support to strengthen local institutions.

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16 USAID's Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework (PFMRAF) provides a multi-stage methodology to assess fiduciary risks of utilizing government systems to deliver aid. The PFMRAF must be used in order for a USAID Mission to use G2G financing.

Summary

Donor agencies face daunting challenges when strengthening local education institutions in crisis and conflict-affected environments. Yet there are cases and examples that demonstrate what is possible. Five such cases are described in the final section of this review. It is important to analyze the particular national and sub-national contexts to arrive at strategies that may work to strengthen more local institutions, while awaiting favorable political and institutional conditions at a regional or national level. In Figure 6, three persistent challenges are indicated: (1) pressure to produce short-term results, (2) weakness of management and financial controls of local institutions, and (3) the long time frame for developing institutional capacity through training. The diagram also summarizes strategies for addressing these challenges—strategies that are supported by sources and evidence cited in this review. These strategies are further elaborated in the following section.

Figure 6: Challenges and Responses for LICD

CHALLENGE:
Pressure to produce results in short time frame
RESPONSE:
Scale back expectations, lengthen project support

Achieving Results: Equitable Access

Long-term, sustainable development for Education

Using Government Systems

Strengthen Institutional Capacity & Resilience

CHALLENGE:
High risk and low trust in financial control
RESPONSE:
Couple financing with technical support

CHALLENGE:
Long-term process to develop local institutional capacity
RESPONSE:
Structure collaboration in problem-solving, implementation and M&E

IV. STRATEGIES

Resources for Building Institutional Resilience and Capacity

There is broad international agreement on principles that should guide the process of capacity development in conflict-affected states. These include enhancing country leadership; using country systems, reforming the modalities of technical assistance and training, adapting support projects to local contexts, focusing on CLA, focusing on results, and improving coordination of donors and government (Lucas, 2014; UNDP, 2012). These agreements, reflected in the Paris, Accra, and Busan Accords as well as the Sustainable Development Goals, do not necessarily translate into donor agency practice.

This landscape review strongly supports the critiques of conventional capacity development found in Andrews, et al. (2017) and Dichter (2014), especially in crisis and conflict-affected contexts. The review finds that the strongest base of experience and evidence support the use of the concepts of institutional resilience and a problem-solving CLA approach. Worthwhile resources for implementing this approach are as follows:

- Andrews, et al.'s (2017) *Building State Capacity*
- USAID's Learning Lab and the guidance and cases provided on CLA, particularly Dexis Consulting Group's (2017) *Evidence Base for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting: Summary of the Literature Review*
- Weijer's (2012) *Rethinking Approaches to Managing Change in Fragile States*
- Davies's (2009) *Capacity Development for Education Systems in Fragile Contexts*
- Dichter's (2014) *The Capable Partners Learning Agenda on Local Organization Capacity Development*
- Faustino and Booth's (2014) *Development Entrepreneurship: How Donors and Leaders Can Foster Institutional Change*
- Pact's (2012) *Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Handbook*
- Mosel and Levine's (2014) *Rethinking the Case for Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development*

Essential components and steps in this literature for developing local institutional capacity actually draw on the theory, frameworks, and guidance of Fullan's (1999) *Change Forces: The Sequel* and Senge's (2000) *The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. While these works were largely based on evidence and experience in North America, the principles and practices of adaptive management and CLA are also effective for EiCC contexts, as documented in Dexis Consulting Group (2017) *Evidence Base for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting: Summary of the Literature Review*.

Can It Work?

Many of those who have spent time in the field in EiCC contexts may consider the advocacy for capacity building through CLA and adaptive management naive and impractical, particularly given the expectations from donors (and from parents and communities) for quick results in providing schooling for those who have been victimized by crisis or conflict. As noted earlier, if USAID and implementing partners do deliver the education services needed to reach those who have been victimized, unless they work through local organizations and government, the evidence is clear that the services are unlikely to be sustained.

We close this review by briefly describing five cases, among a growing number, that demonstrate that USAID, donors, and implementing partners can achieve significant education results while simultaneously building local capacity. These cases demonstrate excellence in working with local partners and organizations that have gained resilience through problem-solving, adaptability, and a commitment to learning, as well as building effective networks with other local actors. The projects have provided training and mentorship for consultative problem-solving based on feedback loops and adaptive action, as well as for improving management systems. They work to support a long-term collective vision, even though a given project or activity may be short term.

Cases Of Local Institutional Capacity Development

Case 1: Northern Nigeria Education Crisis Response Project, 2014–2017

The Education Crisis Response project in northeast Nigeria, providing basic education services to those children and youth displaced by Boko Haram, was a winner of the 2017 CLA annual competition, demonstrating an effective approach to LICD in a highly conflicted and challenging environment.

Education Crisis Response: Northeastern Nigeria, 2014–2017[17]

By 2015, hundreds of thousands of families in northeast Nigeria had fled from the attacks of the Boko Haram insurgency originating from Borno State, seeking shelter in communities across those areas of northeast Nigeria that were not under attack. By August of that year, the number of IDPs had surged to over two million. An estimated 30 percent of the IDPs were children and youth of school-going age, between 6 and 17 years.

The Education Crisis Response was a three-year USAID-funded initiative for Nigeria's northeastern states. It was aimed at *expanding access to quality, protective, and relevant nonformal education and alternative education opportunities for internally displaced out-of-school children, ages 6 to 17, as well as out-of-school children in host communities, including the physically challenged.* To achieve this objective, Education Crisis Response developed partnerships with community groups and associations, community coalitions, local NGOs, and public sector institutions. These community-level groups and NGOs served as primary agents of Education Crisis Response project implementation. (information from Thompsen, 2017).

The project worked with local NGOs and communities to establish nonformal learning centers (NFLCs), youth learning centers (YLCs), and adolescent girls learning centers (AGLCs). These alternative educational opportunities were carried out in church schools, community centers, formal schools (using shift systems where classrooms were overcrowded), and other available alternate learning centers.

The project joined forces with host communities who had taken internally displaced persons (IDPs) into their homes, and in communities where IDPs lived in temporary settlements. Education Crisis Response also collaborated with state and local government authorities and civil society to support nonformal education and alternative education options with an aim to ensure government funding and policy support to sustain and expand nonformal education.

To enhance community engagement and support to learning centers, the project trained grantees to use feedback loops, reviewing data from the M&E system, through regular forums for stakeholders. These forums, including NGOs, government, and civil society organizations (CSOs), collaborated by sharing experiences, identifying key issues affecting project implementation in areas of access, learning performance, and safety, and assigning roles and responsibilities to address issues that would otherwise have remained unsolved. The project was distinguished by the degree to which it established effective collaborative and organizational capacity strengthening at local, state, and national levels with government, civil society, and partner NGOs. The results of the project were an exponential growth in enrollments, providing basic education to more than 80,000 children and youth in 1,400 nonformal learning centers.

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17 Adapted, with permission, from Thompsen, J. (2017). *Nigeria education crisis response: Using feedback loops to drive project success. [Submitted to the CLA Case Competition by Creative Associates.]* Retrieved from https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/nigeria-education-crisis-response-using-feedback-loops-drive-project-success

CASE 2: Kenya, Yes Youth Can!, 2011–2015

Kenya's **Yes Youth Can!** was a youth program that implemented a CLA approach formulated in response to the country's post-election violence of 2008.[18]

Kenya, Yes Youth Can! (YYC)

YYC was a $55 million program funded by USAID to promote youth empowerment in Kenya. The goal of YYC was to address the underlying social, economic, and political factors that drove youth marginalization in Kenya. In so doing, YYC sought to affect a range of outcomes related to these factors, as well as to prevent a recurrence of the violence that followed the 2007 elections in Kenya, in which youth played a significant role. At the time, YYC was the largest youth program in USAID's history, and as of mid-2012, it had reached nearly one million youth in Kenya.

YYC had a youth-led, youth-owned, and youth-managed approach. The activity used county youth forums to mobilize youth to be agents of positive change in their communities. To achieve this goal, YYC developed a series of integrated activities that worked toward four objectives:

Mobilize and form youth representative structures at the village and county levels

Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs

Increase youth productivity, employment opportunities, and income

Increase young women's access to social, political, and economic opportunities

YYC's approach was to work with young people in communities to organize themselves into groups called bunges (Swahili for parliaments). These bunges were formed for a variety of purposes according to the activities that the youths themselves wish to pursue, ranging from income-generating activities to community service and arts. Once established, bunges could solicit funding from YYC to pursue their activities. YYC also provided training and sensitization activities to bunge members that covered topics of leadership, entrepreneurship, and life skills. YYC worked to involve bunges in national campaigns related to expanding access to national identity cards and reducing youth participation in political conflict and violence.

The theory of change behind YYC was multifaceted. Benefits were expected to arise not only from the funding provided to bunges, but also through the process of participating in YYC. By working together in a group toward a common goal, YYC fostered the development of leadership skills and self-confidence. Moreover, the bunge system was intended to provide a voice for youth that increased political empowerment and engagement and improved relations between youths and others in the community.

Findings from a rigorous impact evaluation completed in 2014 show that the experience of participating in the process of coming together and working toward a common goal led to important benefits for the youth who participated. The scale and engagement of the youth bunges also contributed to preventing post-election violence following the 2013 presidential elections.

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18 See https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jzqx.pdf

CASE 3: Ethiopia's Basic Education Projects, 1994–2009

An informative case for USAID's contribution to building state education institutions following prolonged conflict is documented in Method, et al. (2010).[19]

USAID's Education Program in Ethiopia, 1994–2009

During the communist DERG regime of the 1980s, the Ethiopian educational system declined severely, schools became unusable due to lack of repair; and community support for schools was either low or non-existent. Almost a full generation of students and teachers lost the opportunity for education.

Following the civil war from 1992 to 1993, USAID, in close consultation with the newly invigorated Ministry of Education (MOE), conducted a comprehensive assessment to identify the most critical educational needs, determine strategies for achieving and sustaining improvements, and design a robust program for U.S. government support. The assessment found that no less than a transformation of the entire primary system, from the top-down and bottom-up, was needed. It also concluded that while the system desperately needed to accommodate vast numbers of students, the MOE, along with other donor efforts, was capable of managing the physical aspects of this expansion. What needed attention during this rapid growth period was strengthening MOE's capacity to plan and deliver basic education quality and equity, areas that USAID decided were to be its principal focus.

An impact assessment carried out in 2010 found that USAID assistance through the projects BESO I and BESO II was key to Ethiopia's education progress over the past 15 years, both in terms of the specific impacts on management systems, quality improvement, and institutional capacity building and in terms of the capacity of Ethiopians to undertake essential functions of needs assessment, systems analysis, policy development, strategic planning, and coordination with decreasing reliance on external technical assistance. USAID supported these capacities with (1) budget support (non-project assistance) to central government and regions and (2) technical advisors who worked with Ethiopian offices and staff to develop these systems. As a result of the capacity-strengthening activities of the project, brought about by better trained supervisors and head teachers, well-defined administrative procedures supported by management information systems were put in place. A clear set of responsibilities from MOE to regions and on down to woredas (districts) and schools led to better prepared and more timely woreda and regional plans and improved financial planning and budget operations. Communities were also better able to engage in and implement school improvement projects, something that was unknown 15 years ago.

During this period, Ethiopia experienced an explosive growth in education capacity and enrollments (in many ways unprecedented in any country), from 22 percent GER in 1990 to 98 percent by 2008. There was a major decentralization, which required institutional restructuring and called for new capacities at the regional and local levels, as well as a strong commitment to full enrollment of girls, vulnerable children, and children in rural and pastoralist areas. Ethiopia also experienced numerous policy shifts on curriculum, language, teacher qualifications, and pedagogic support systems. The goal of BESO, to support the transformation of Ethiopia's primary education system, was achieved.

Thus, the first finding is that USAID has earned unique credibility as a reliable partner willing to support a variety of specific short-term project tasks and small-scale innovations addressing current needs. At the same time, it has provided longer-term support for systems improvement and institutional strengthening, some of which take considerable time to have full impact on education outcomes. The ability to support longer-term objectives and to continue that support long enough for the changes to have an impact, has been a unique strength of the USAID program approach.

19 See https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JZQX.pdf

CASE 4: Uganda's SUPER Project, 1993–2000

Support for Uganda's Primary Education Reform, 1993–2000

From 1971 to 1985, Uganda faced a series of severe crises and conflicts. Soon after the National Resistance Movement government came to power in 1986, Uganda launched ambitious reforms to extricate itself from this institutional collapse. In concert with USAID, the IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and other development partners, the nation embarked on a campaign of government decentralization, civil service reform, poverty reduction, and education sector reform. In 1993, USAID initiated the Ugandan Primary Education Reform (SUPER), a seven-year (1993–2000), $108-million program combining non-project ($83 million) and project ($25 million) technical assistance to support the government-led education sector reform (Management Systems International, 2017).

USAID's SUPER Project focused on three areas of policy reform for primary education: (1) professionalization of teachers, (2) enhancement of community participation in education, and (3) allocation of resources for instructional materials. Ultimately, the project's goals were to have more teachers spending more time at school teaching effective lessons, using more instructional materials, and having a better managed flow of resources to schools.

The major project activity was the development of an integrated teacher support system called the Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS). The principle objective of TDMS was to restructure the role of Uganda's primary teacher colleges (PTCs) away from residential, pre-service training and toward in-service, school-based support. The reformed PTCs, which required a new internal structure and revised staffing patterns, devoted at least half of their staff time and resources to working with teachers already in the classroom. TDMS was an innovative method to link Core PTCs to schools through a three-tiered network: (1) the PTC at the center; (2) coordinating centers (CCs) in the catchment areas of the PTC, equipped to serve as mini teacher resource centers; and (3) outreach schools linked to the CC. Each CC was staffed by a coordinating center tutor (CCT) who worked with a cluster of about 18 outreach schools. The CCT resided at one of the schools and daily served the teachers, head teachers, parents, school management committees, and others at his/her own school and the other schools in the cluster.

By the end of SUPER in 2000, key stakeholders in Uganda and USAID viewed TDMS as a success. The TDMS network included 47 PTCs, providing support to 539 fully operational CCs. Each of these centers provided continual in-service training to all state-supported schools in Uganda and 10,145 teachers nationwide. The reform was unusually successful in building the institutional capacity for this reformed teacher training and support system, and it became a model for other countries. The project consolidated the reforms and integrated them into the regular Ministry of Education structures.

One of USAID's most effective LICD projects helped Uganda's education system recover from a devastating 20 years of conflict during the Idi Amin period and the civil war that followed in the 1980s.

CASE 5: Local Educators as Researchers

This final case (Heneveld, 2007) demonstrates a process of successfully building local educator capacity for applied research, using a consultative, research-informed, problem-solving approach to improving school effectiveness in four African countries.

Local Educators as Researchers

Local educators can conduct structured analytic research on the quality of primary education. The methodology has been developed with four 20-person teams of local educators who carried out studies in rural regions of Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The methodology empowered those who had the most practical experience of an area's schools to take responsibility for the analysis and diagnosis of the problems of school effectiveness. In the four studies, each team of 20 local educators created their own empirical technical information on a sample of 30 schools in the region. They used the data and their experience of all the region's primary schools to arrive at shared particular truths about the region's primary schools.

This approach was based on the belief that the school is the key unit in improving learning. If student learning is to improve, educators in schools and those who work directly with them have to believe in and be committed to changing current practices school by school. Current research practices leave out those who know the most about the schools, local practicing educators. These people are the ones who are expected to make the changes that will improve learning, but they are not invited to contribute to deciding what are important issues, nor do they generally play a part in the research on those issues.

The results of this project corroborated other research on the factors that influence student outcomes in primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa. But more importantly, the study results demonstrated that the methodology offered practicing educators a tool that helped them define, collect, and rigorously analyze empirical information to reach shared insights about their schools, and then to formulate practical recommendations about what to do to improve student learning.

Eighty or so local educators in four African countries demonstrated that they were capable of being analytic, reflective, and synthetic in a structured research process. Though many of the participants found it hard at first to be as specific and organized in their thinking as research requires, most had improved their analytic skills by the time the studies were complete, and they had a pretty good idea of what they wanted to do next to improve student learning in their region. These practitioners had converted "a messy indeterminate situation: into a well-formed problem" (Heneveld, 2007, p. 257), thereby demonstrating how appropriately framed research can be a powerful tool for professional development. Many of the researchers went back to work with new perspectives on how to improve their schools.

This project demonstrated the potential of working with local educators to build and strengthen their problem-solving and research capacities as a strategy for improving sustainable, resilient local education reforms.
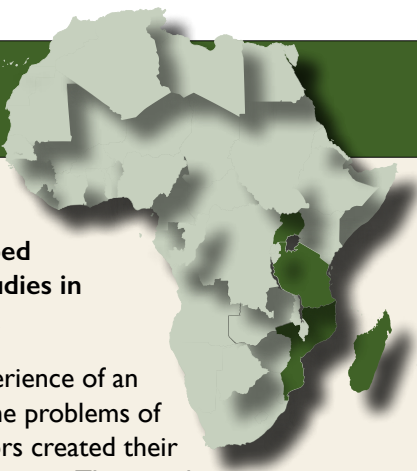
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FIND OUT MORE

Supporting local institutional capacity development in education, particularly in crisis and conflict-affected environments, is essential. But it also requires careful planning, design and monitoring. For more information about this important topic please consult the sources referenced in this document, as well as the USAID Education Links website (www.edu-links.org), as well as the ECCN, INEE, and the EERI websites.