

# the **Education Commission**

Background Paper
The Learning Generation

Lighting the Way
Inside the School Resilience Agenda

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# Lighting the Way: Inside the School Resilience Agenda

"It is better to light a single candle than curse the darkness"

Anonymous

Victoria Collis Director, River Path Associates

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#### **Abbreviations**

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CCA Climate Change Adaptation

DRR Disaster Risk Reduction

ECW Education Cannot Wait

EFA Education for All

GADRRRES Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector

GMR Global Education Monitoring Report

GPE Global Partnership for Education

HDI Human Development Indicator

INEE Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

ODI Overseas Development Institute

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

SSI Safe Schools Initiative

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNISDR The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNWRA United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

WASH Water, sanitation, and hygiene

WISS Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools

### **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements are due to Lewis Broadway and Marlies de Groot for their research and design assistance, and to Jane Frewer for editorial support. The author also benefitted from the valuable contribution of many colleagues and friends working on education in a range of fragile and conflict affected contexts. These include Fenton Whelan, Chris Berry, Eva Ahlen and Barbara Payne for specific thoughts on this commission.

Above all, I want to thank all those I have had the privilege of working alongside in Pakistan, Nigeria, Syria and Lebanon over the past five years. I am particularly indebted to those government officials from whom I have learned so many lessons in the art of negotiation and service delivery in complex political and cultural situations. We may not always see eye-to-eye on the detail, but I respect you all immensely for the work you do.

Preparing this paper for publication was timely, in light of my current work in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Beirut. Lebanon is an excellent example of a country where a protracted emergency has reshaped public education profoundly. Today there are almost as many Syrian children in public schools as there are Lebanese children, with serious consequences not only for service delivery capacity, but also for public perceptions about resource allocation, equity and fairness.

Calibrating and striking the best balance between technocratic and political solutions, between development and humanitarian objectives has never seemed so important to me as it does today.

Victoria Collis River Path Associates Beirut, November 2016

### **Executive Summary**

The Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity commissioned this background paper in February 2016 to inform discussions on how it might contribute to the school resilience agenda. In particular, Commissioners sought insights into how governments, donors, multilaterals and others might work together to ensure investment in this area is increasingly shaped by considerations of value for money in its broadest sense, as well as the political imperatives that have tended to define decision making in the past.

The paper is organised into four sections, and draws heavily on the available literature to provide relevant background in condensed form. A full bibliography is available at Annex 1.

Section One is an overview of existing and recent frameworks and groupings on disaster risk reduction, their development and focus. It finds that:

- Education has emerged as a priority sector, and there is also growing acknowledgement of the multiple sources of school insecurity including conflict and complex emergencies, as well as natural disasters.
- There is an increasing focus on the *need for disaster risk reduction to insure education systems* against attack of any kind. However, there are few examples of governments committing resources to prevention systematically. Sector plans in particular are weak on this issue.
- The emphasis within disaster risk reduction in education continues to be on *investing in school* infrastructure at the expense of other types of intervention. In many developing world contexts, the scale of investment required in buildings is sufficient to deter governments from pursuing the issue of school safety.
- Existing frameworks are voluntary, and there is little evidence of urgent action. There also appears to be relatively little coordination between leading networks and development frameworks.

Section Two develops these observations to unpack the three linked barriers to substantive investment in, and therefore progress on, the school resilience agenda at present. It identifies:

- The fragility spiral: countries where schools are at most risk from conflict, natural disasters or other emergencies are often also the least well equipped to manage either relief operations or planning for a more resilient education system. They may lack the capacity to plan effectively, and find it difficult to access resources particularly for disaster risk reduction investments.
- The politicisation of resources: resources for emergency related work in education tend to cluster around humanitarian response, with little available for ensuring the safety of systems in advance. This is driven by the historical line drawn between humanitarian and development work by donors, with the behaviours that encourages among governments in order to attract funding. It is compounded by the difficulty donors experience in providing resources to fragile states with weak governance which are often in most need of support to make their schools safe. Meanwhile, governments and donors alike are susceptible to political pressure to privilege visible investments, including in humanitarian work, over insuring schools and students against future events.

A mono focused approach: as a result of political and optical pressures, governments and donors who do invest tend to focus inevitably on construction and technological interventions which are highly visible. While technology can provide innovative solutions, and construction of safe school buildings is important, many fragile school systems do not currently feature inexpensive or cost neutral safety interventions, such as emergency drills.

These obstacles to substantive investment in ensuring schools are safe for students and teachers, protecting the right to education, collectively highlight the need for governments and donors to pay more attention to how they select and prioritise interventions. This is the focus of Section Three, which makes a range of recommendations on how the international community should work together to build capacity to do this. It considers:

- Dismantling barriers to investment: providing a series of recommendations for donors and multilateral organisations in turn that will help governments see disaster risk reduction in education as a priority, and provide them with the technical support they need to make the case for investment.
- Approaches to assessing investments: acknowledging the complexities of conducting a classic cost benefit analysis in this area, but recommending collective action on the part of the international community. Potentially led by the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Fund, the aim would be to create a set of guidelines that combine sufficient rigour, with a simple enough approach to enable education departments in developing countries to conduct analysis and make more strategic choices.
- Identifying quick wins: providing a list of types of intervention that are either cost neutral, or low cost, with the potential to improve significantly student and teacher safety at school. In many countries where education is at greatest risk, these are not currently implemented.

The concluding Section uses evidence and arguments developed throughout the paper to identify seven options for discussion:

- Coherent support for governments: bringing together the multiplicity of frameworks and networks with an interest in school safety, to create a clear set of guidelines and support.
- A complete view of the school safety issue: strengthening the recent acknowledgement that emergencies can have many causes, and that in many countries these are often combined.
- A stronger focus on prevention and risk reduction: including work on the historical separation of humanitarian and development resourcing, and realigning political incentives.
- *Technical support for strategic planning:* mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in education sector planning, and bringing together sources of funding to support this.
- A global framework for cost benefit analysis: creating approaches that governments can apply, which also provide robust economic analysis for prioritisation.
- A stronger focus on implementing quick wins: more serious consideration and planning for simple, cost effective approaches to reducing risks in schools.
- Specific action to tackle the fragility spiral: how to implement the six recommendations above in the most vulnerable states in particular.

Action by the Commission on some or all of these, in conjunction with multilateral networks and frameworks, and the donor community, has the potential to transform levels of investment in disaster risk reduction in the world's education systems. This in turn would be a significant contribution to realising the stretching aims of Agenda 2030, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

## One | Frameworks and Approaches



Figure 1: International & Regional Frameworks on Disaster Risk Reduction from 20001

#### **Cross Sectoral Frameworks: From Hyogo to Sendai**

Cross-sectoral work on disaster risk reduction (DRR) over the last decade has been substantively shaped by the 2005-15 Hyogo Framework, described by UNISDR as a "ten year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards." 169 countries signed up to this voluntary agreement. A mid-term review found that: "significant progress…has been made over the past five years in disaster risk reduction…[but that] implementation is uneven across the world, reflecting broad economic and institutional differences among regions and countries."

Hyogo's focus on natural disasters reflects its heritage in the climate change debate. Thinking has shifted significantly in the last decade, particularly in education which has been heavily affected by conflict and migration related emergencies. For example, ODI estimated in 2015 that fully half of the children directly affected by crisis each year are living in some form of conflict situation, compared with 17% dealing with the aftermath of a natural disaster. With hindsight, Hyogo's focus seems narrow when considering resilience and the scale of its impact on people rather than places, and, in the case of schools, on children's right to education.

At the same time, Hyogo did not include a specific focus on education beyond the ambition to mainstream disaster risk reduction into school curricula. There was no emphasis on improving the safety of school buildings, although the framework's fourth priority of reducing underlying risk factors did specify that approaches should be "integrated into health sector and safe hospitals." The omission of schools from Hyogo perhaps reflects the wider and well-articulated concern that the education sector has historically been neglected and underfunded in humanitarian work, in spite of its importance to children as well as economic recovery and development post-disaster.

The new Sendai Framework, successor to Hyogo for the Agenda 2030 period, has learned from many of these limitations. Most critically perhaps, it broadens the definition of relevant risks to include: "disasters, caused by natural or manmade hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks." While Sendai does not mention conflict specifically, there is clearly scope here for those working on school resilience to build their approaches based on how risk affects people, and particularly children, whatever its cause.

The new framework also includes a much stronger emphasis on education as a priority sector. It retains Hyogo's message that disaster risk reduction education can have an important trickledown effect, but adds to that the recognition that: "damage and destruction of schools by disasters not only leads to the loss of children's and teachers' lives but also wastes valuable public investment in social infrastructure and interrupts education, with lifelong implications. In order to progress this goal, schools should incorporate disaster-resistant structures and adapt to local risks."<sup>7</sup>

In addition, Sendai is an important opportunity for the school resilience agenda specifically because:

It acknowledges that education is a valuable asset, personally and collectively, from both rights and economic perspectives, and that it is important it should not be interrupted. This supports the aspirations of SDG4 from a resilience perspective, and could have substantial implications for the prominence given to resourcing for disaster risk reduction, as well as humanitarian response.

- The reference to the risk of "[wasting] valuable public investment", linked to disaster risk reduction, rather than humanitarian response, offers a useful prompt for developing new approaches to decision making on how to deploy resources most effectively.
- At the same time, there is clear acknowledgement that this is not a simple issue to manage with the reference to local risks, and therefore the importance of context in assessing options and disaster risk reduction approaches. Understanding the highly context specific nature of disaster and security risks as they affect schools, students and teachers, and developing well-tailored responses will be essential to ensuring work is as effective as possible for the resources available.

Yet Sendai does not tackle all obstacles to delivering more strongly on safe schools. While 187 countries have signed up to it, it too is voluntary. Similarly, while the framework identifies four priorities which move the agenda beyond Hyogo's focus on risk analysis and governance,<sup>8</sup> the language on school safety concentrates exclusively on infrastructure. There is no reference to investing in other types of preparedness – an omission that reflects the broader tendency to equate school safety with buildings and facilities.

#### Sector Specific Approaches: Agenda 2030 and WISS

Sendai's conflation of infrastructure and school resilience is also evident in Agenda 2030's approach to the issue. The first of three cross cutting targets for SDG4 is to: "Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all." While the last part of this uses the broad term 'learning environment' there is a clear emphasis on bricks and mortar. This is compounded in the indicators, released in March 2016:

"Percentage of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) single sex basic sanitation facilities; and (f) basic handwashing facilities." <sup>10</sup>

Not only do these focus on basic facilities, they fail to consider the complexity and context specific nature of the school safety and resilience agenda, unlike Sendai. The risk is that governments, donors and implementers will concentrate on these indicators as measures of 'success' for the next 15 years, to the detriment of other useful approaches. This could result in sub-optimal investment decisions, disappointing progress on safeguarding students and teachers, and, as a result, to limiting willingness to invest in school resilience on the part of both governments and donors.

Improving infrastructure is clearly a critical part of strengthening school safety. However, it is not a panacea. To take one recent example, the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and most of the other items listed as indicators would not have reduced the risk of 276 girls being kidnapped from their government secondary school in Chibok, north east Nigeria, in 2014. While some infrastructure modifications might have made the school more secure, other interventions, such as good, frequently rehearsed emergency planning and drills, as well as stronger safeguarding norms would have been highly relevant in this case. This tendency to focus on a single aspect of the school safety agenda is developed further in Section Two, as one of three major issues currently retarding efforts to strengthen investment in and work to improve standards of school resilience worldwide.

SDG4 is not the only current education framework seeking to strengthen school resilience. UNISDR and GADRRRES also launched the Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS) in 2015 as a mechanism for delivering on the Sendai Framework in education.

While WISS is still in its infancy, little concrete progress appears to have been made in its first year. To date, 32 governments have signed up (17% of those who have committed to Sendai), including leaders in the field such as Indonesia, as well as some countries with significant school resilience issues including Nigeria (conflict related insecurity), Nepal (conflict and natural disasters), and Cambodia (natural disasters). Of these, seven (4% of Sendai signatories) have made the full commitment of signing up to be a Safe Schools Leader, and attending both meetings convened to date, according to the initiative's website.<sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to find updates on resolutions passed at the second meeting, held in October 2015. For example, a "multi year...agenda...[to] provide strategic directions for...WISS implementation" was due at the end of March 2016, but there is no sign of progress yet on the website. Similarly, it is not possible to find promised plans for supporting the four countries (Nepal, Cambodia, St Vincent & Grenadines, and Kyrgyzstan) which have committed to implementing WISS by the end of 2016. 12

Some countries have shared information on work they are already doing. Much of this is focused on infrastructure, echoing the focus found throughout this review, but some innovative approaches have also surfaced:

- Nepal is focusing on developing disaster resilient schools (in the wake of the 2015 earthquake),
   featuring low cost materials. It is also working on nutrition as part of its safe schools strategy.
- Nigeria has invested \$10 million from the Federal government into the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI), matched by private sector investment and development funds. SSI will focus on incorporating DRR into the school curriculum.
- Iran has invested \$4 billion since 2006 in renovating and retrofitting schools for resilience. The government expresses results in the form of an increase in "students' life safety from 33% in 2006 to 67% in 2014."
- Brazil is using apps to encourage children to demand increasingly safe school environments.<sup>13</sup>

Among WISS's most promising aims is its interest in encouraging countries to include comprehensive approaches to school safety in their sector planning, as well as within broader risk reduction strategies. This has the potential to link the school resilience agenda closely to Education for All (EFA) and the aims of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – custodians not only of the way sector planning is structured, but also of significant financial resources to support governments in their implementation.

A 2013 paper that reviewed 75 national education sector plans found that disaster preparedness and management is not currently a standard feature of formal planning in most countries. Two thirds of those studied made no reference to the possibility of disruption as a result of conflict or natural disasters, and only 16% mentioned both. Most that did confined themselves to risk analysis, while some also integrated measures into their regular policy, planning and programming. Only 10 (13%) had developed a standalone strategy for managing conflict or preparing for disasters. <sup>14</sup> More

critically still, none had set aside or programmed resources for implementing work on school resilience, or for monitoring progress.

Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction strategies into sector planning, including setting aside resources would be a significant contribution for WISS to make to strengthening school resilience worldwide. One useful approach to convincing governments to move on this issue might be to work with a success story like Indonesia: possibly the best example of a country that used Hyogo in a sustained and focused way to transform the resilience of its schools as well as other public buildings and services.

Since the 2004 tsunami, the Indonesian government has invested consistently not only in refurbishing and rebuilding schools and recruiting teachers to replace those killed, but also in insuring the education system against future attack. It has been unusual in its commitment to spending more on disaster prevention and preparedness than any other type of humanitarian intervention. Other key elements have included strong co-operation between ministries and the development of a legal framework on disaster risk management that identified education as a priority sector. These are useful lessons for other governments.

Further, in 2011 Indonesia produced a national disaster financing strategy that seeks to identify suitable insurance instruments for potential events based on a risk assessment that balances likelihood of an emergency event with forecast severity of impact. This willingness to engage with the complexity of quantifying the value for money offered by different approaches to investing in school resilience demonstrates the country's consistent commitment to tackling the issue.

Other countries including Ethiopia, which is not affiliated to WISS, have also made progress on school safety. According to a recent assessment published by ODI, the "Education Sector Development Program...has been highlighted as one of the best examples of how to identify and incorporate measures to reduce risk and improve resilience to conflict and natural disasters...It...sets out a ...strategy for supporting education in the event of crises. It identifies eight regions as being particularly vulnerable...and clearly outlines the impacts these crises have on education...It then sets out a number of strategies for both preparation, such as teacher training, awareness raising and collection of detailed data; and response, including the creation of emergency preparedness response plans; the creation of task forces to implement and monitor these plans; and capacity building at the...local government...level in high-risk areas. The strategy also draws on the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies' (INEE) Minimum Standards as a guidance tool, explaining the focus on access, teaching, learning and coordination."<sup>19</sup>

#### **Focus for the Future**

While there has been good progress on the way the school resilience agenda is framed since Hyogo was established in 2004, the evidence is that current frameworks retain some weaknesses and are not currently well connected to one another. In summary:

 Education has emerged as a priority sector, and there is also growing acknowledgement of the multiple sources of school insecurity including conflict and complex emergencies, as well as natural disasters.

- There is an increasing focus on the *need for disaster risk reduction to insure education systems* against attack of any kind. However, there are few examples of governments committing resources to prevention systematically. Sector plans in particular are weak on this issue.
- The emphasis within disaster risk reduction in education continues to be on *investing in school infrastructure at the expense of other types of intervention*. In many developing world contexts, the scale of investment required in buildings is *sufficient to deter governments from pursuing the issue* of school safety.
- Existing frameworks are voluntary, and there is little evidence of urgent action. There also appears to be relatively little co-ordination between leading networks and development frameworks.

Section Two investigates each of these further, distilling them into three principal obstacles to progress on school resilience at present. That said, where countries do invest time and resources in improving school safety, for example in Indonesia and Ethiopia, this review demonstrates there is an abundance of support and tools available to draw on.

Sendai, Agenda 2030 and WISS are all in their infancy, which presents an opportunity for the Commission and others to influence the direction work on improving school safety takes over the next 15 years. Discussions should also include EFA, GPE and INEE, as well as new initiatives such as UNICEF's Education Cannot Wait Fund, launched in May 2016. This will seek to make \$1.5 billion available by 2020 to impact positively on an estimated 13.6 million children and young people through two instruments.<sup>20</sup> The first will use catalytic grants to fund global and regional groupings, INEE and others to provide "core funding for the existing mandate holders to expand the scope and improve the quality of their work."<sup>21</sup> The second will provide country investment grants for countries seeking rapid response funding (post crisis) and multiyear support.<sup>22</sup>

The Commission could play a critical role in bringing networks and frameworks together, and also in shaping the agenda on financing for strengthening school resilience, as well as approaches to comparing potential interventions and making optimal investment decisions. The emergence of the ECW Fund is one indication that substantive finance may be forthcoming, while other discussions could also lead to closer consideration of this issue in the way GPE funding is allocated. There is also an important case to be made to donors on providing substantive and predictable resources to tackle this critical issue, through long run funding for disaster risk reduction as well as humanitarian responses.

## Two | Three Barriers to Transforming School Resilience

#### The Fragility Spiral

School insecurity impacts millions of children worldwide, often on a long term basis. It affects disproportionately those who are already at most risk of missing out on their right to education, including girls and children living in fragile states. ODI estimated in 2015 that 65 million children of school age are directly affected by some kind of crisis every year. Approximately half are living in a conflict situation. 17% are affected by a natural disaster and a further 23% by a complex emergency. The other 9% are victims of a major public health crisis.<sup>23</sup> Many emergencies, whatever their cause, are protracted or have long run consequences which can include disrupting or halting the education of whole generations.

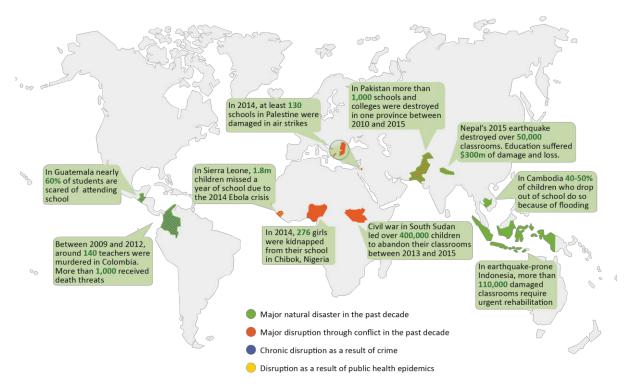


Figure 2: Scale, complexity and diversity of chronic school insecurity for 10 featured countries<sup>24</sup>

In many of the worst affected countries, such as Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Guatemala, students and teachers are placed in danger as a result of multiple hazards. For example, the Ebola crisis of 2014-15 compounded the scale of work already required to recover from Sierra Leone's civil war that ended in 2002. Meanwhile, many school children in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have faced complex barriers to education posed by conflict or occupation of their learning environments by militants, as well as the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake which saw many internally displaced communities sheltering in schools for protracted periods as well as large scale destruction of buildings. Meanwhile, factors preventing children from going to school range from protracted closures due to flooding in Cambodia, to fear of going to school in Guatemala given the dangers of being targeted by gangs on their journey.

Risk and hazards faced by children are heterogeneous, and often context specific and chronic in nature. In addition, many countries with high and complex risk environments for education score

poorly in terms of existing educational opportunities and human development indicators more broadly.

#### South Sudan Sierra Leone **Pakistan** Fragility Education HDI School Age Fragility Education HDI School Age Fragility Education HDI Ranking Ranking Ranking Deprivation Population Deprivation Ranking Population Deprivation Ranking Population Ranking Ranking Ranking 3,710,600 1,927,087 48,533,145 - The President launched the Back to Learning - Sierra Leone's National Ebola Recovery - Pakistan's Prime Minister backed a Safe Initiative across the country's 10 states in Strategy references future plans to increase Schools Initiative in 2015 2015 the country's resilience to outbreaks The federal government committed to integrating DRR education into institutional - Initiated the Child Friendly Schools programme in 2004 Cambodia Nepal **Nigeria** Fragility Education Fragility Fragility School Age Education HDI School Age Education HDI School Age Ranking Ranking Deprivation Population Deprivation Ranking Population Deprivation Population Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking 3,715,272 53.545.086 7.929.883 – Combined DRR and CCA teaching integrated - Safe Schools Initiative launched in 2014 - Nepal's Safe School programme adopted the into school curricula Comprehensive School Safety Framework - WISS school leader - Developed a Strategic National Action Plan WISS school leader - A National Safe School Fund and multifor DRR which highlights the education donor trust fund jointly finance the - Disaster risk management related content is sector as a priority and provides a implementation of activities related to the being gradually incorporated into curricula framework for school safety efforts Safe Schools Initiative - WISS school leader - Launched the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative in 2014 Guatemala **Palestine** Indonesia Fragility Education HDI School Age Fragility Education HDI Fragility Education HDI School Age School Age Deprivation Ranking Ranking Population Deprivation Ranking **Population** Deprivation **Population** Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking Ranking 4.199.990 N/A 10 1,346,459 55.732.071 - The Ministry of Education implemented - One of only 10 countries with - A disaster management law and national comprehensive DRR strategy in its sector actions to build safe school settings for action plan for DRR cites education as a children and adolescents. priority sector - Formed a national education council for - UNWRA provides free education for around - Created a fund for safe school rehabilitation DRR, and developed tools, mechanisms and 25% of Palestinian children in Gaza and the - Launched the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative procedures for the sector West Bank in 2014 - Established a School Safety protection unit - Implemented the Child Friendly Schools - WISS school leader within the Ministry of Education, at central programme between 2003 and 2010 and regional levels. Colombia Fragility Education HDI School Age

Figure 3: Ranking on three dimensions of risk to school resilience, from most to least at risk<sup>25</sup>

Ranking

6

initiatives

Deprivation

Ranking

Ranking

10

 The government created a diploma teaching young people to understand peace and conflict processes and to create local peace

Population

N/A

Figure 3 ranks the same 10 countries on the basis of their fragility (risk of natural disaster and conflict), levels of educational deprivation (mean years of schooling, primary school drop-out rate and public expenditure in the sector), and their Human Development Indicator (HDI) ranking. It also summarises the main actions each government is currently taking on the school resilience agenda.

The results are striking. South Sudan and Sierra Leone rank poorly across the board. Both are recovering from recent and highly debilitating emergencies, and began from a low starting point in terms of HDI and educational opportunities before recent disasters. For example, more than half of school age children in pre-war South Sudan were not in education. <sup>26</sup> Government responses are weak: neither country has a clear strategy or earmarked resources for work to ensure schools are safe for students and teachers.

Another group, including Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria, Guatemala and Cambodia, is also characterised by generally weak government action on the school resilience agenda. Nigeria has shown signs since the Chibok kidnappings of establishing more robust responses, and it is possible that Pakistan will do the same in the wake of the Peshawar school massacre. Both have launched Safe Schools Initiatives in the last two years, recognising publicly the gravity of the problem faced by their education systems. It will now be critical for the Nigerian and Pakistani governments to make good on their commitment by delivering a range of well-chosen interventions to mitigate the multiple risks faced by children in schools.

These two countries are especially critical to global aspirations on education and the achievement of SDG4. Together they account for a significant proportion of the world's out of school children, partly as a function of their large populations. Yet levers to co-ordinate a response on a federal basis are limited in both countries, where education is substantively devolved to sub-national level. Meanwhile others in this group, including Nepal and Cambodia, have signed up to initiatives like WISS and regional variations, but appear to have made relatively little concrete progress to date. This group of countries demonstrates the risk of weak frameworks that do not hold governments to account, or guide and support them closely to deliver improvements.

At the other end of the scale, Indonesia and Palestine stand out for the robustness of their responses compared with others in the sample, along with Colombia which has much higher human development indicators than the rest of the sample. Discussed in detail in Section One, Indonesia has benefitted strongly from decisive action to tackle school safety over the last decade.

Palestine is an interesting case study. UNESCO estimates it has approximately 1.3 million children of school going age. Just less than 300,000 (25% of the population) attend UNRWA schools in Gaza and the West Bank. While provision is temporary and funded principally by donors, schools have now been in place for a number of years, reflecting the protracted nature of the conflict, which in turn illustrates the elastic definition of an emergency, and how, if education is not managed effectively, entire generations of children can be left behind. In spite of challenging circumstances, UNRWA reports that in the West Bank "[their] schools outperform[ed] Palestinian Authority (PA) schools in nationally and internationally administered scholastic achievement tests [in 2011/12]."<sup>27</sup>

There are also signs of some relevant longer range planning being put in place. Palestine is one of only 10 countries whose education sector plan includes a strategy for managing conflict or natural disasters (see Issue 3 below). This may be driven partly or largely by the international community at

present, but the indicators in Figure 3 for Palestine's education deprivation ranking compared with the rest of the sample are strong.

These ten sample countries demonstrate clearly a direct relationship between the quality of governance and the ability of governments to break the spiral of fragility in education, however vulnerable schools may be to hazards including natural disasters and conflict. In Palestine, the international community has substituted in many respects for government, with promising results, while the Indonesian government has demonstrated sustained and focused investment in school resilience.

The risk at the other end of the spectrum is that policymakers sign up to international agreements or launch national campaigns, but fail to follow this commitment up with well-designed and chosen interventions. This is a critical consideration for WISS and others working globally on school resilience, including the Commission and the new ECW Fund. It illustrates further the importance of bringing together relevant frameworks and networks, and working to ensure governments can access not only the tools they need to tackle school safety, but also financial investment that will enable them to execute their plans.

Breaking the spiral of fragility in more countries will require well-co-ordinated work on the part of governments, donors and multilaterals alike. While case studies demonstrate this is possible, the evidence is that doing so requires a long run and focused commitment from all involved, a willingness to commit resources and to listen to technical, as well as political arguments for taking particular courses of action.

#### The Politicisation of Resources

Much has been written about the inadequacy of financing for education in emergencies. A recent paper found that: "the availability of humanitarian aid for education is often uneven: in 2006-2013, five countries received 49% of the humanitarian assistance to education... At the same time funds for education in half of all conflict-affected countries that held appeals received less than 1% of humanitarian assistance in 2013."<sup>28</sup> Many commentators believe this is linked to donor views of education as a "long-term development process, rather than a short-term humanitarian solution to acute needs," arguing that "in making such assumptions, [they] fail to understand the significant life and hope sustaining value of education during conflict."<sup>29</sup>

There are signs that understanding the importance of financing the sector and taking steps to ensure the provision of education to children living in a crisis situation is improving. Critical to this has been the introduction in 2010 of the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, now considered the "normative framework for work in education in emergencies throughout the world."<sup>30</sup>

Yet, while there have been improvements, the primary focus of work and investment on school safety and resilience continues to be on fixing problems post-emergency, rather than in risk reduction and the prevention of disasters. This reflects a wider tendency beyond the sector:

- In 2012, 0.84% of humanitarian aid to South Sudan was spent on disaster preparedness, with 94% going towards emergency distress relief and food aid.<sup>31</sup>
- In Colombia, humanitarian aid has strongly focused on relief, with annual spend ranging between \$49m and \$65m in the period 2009 to 2013. By contrast, a maximum of \$4 million was spent on disaster prevention and preparedness.<sup>32</sup>

There are three reasons for this, all of which are linked to the politicisation of resources for disaster risk reduction, in the education sector as elsewhere.

First, there is a dominant tendency to separate humanitarian and 'relief' work from development which is fundamentally unhelpful when arguing the case for work on building school resilience. As evidence for the fragility spiral demonstrates above, many situations where schools are particularly unsafe are characterised by chronic insecurity deriving from multiple causes. The drawing of a visible line between an emergency situation and one that requires development does not recognise this.

Commentators have recognised this problem: "Just as there is a spectrum of different humanitarian crises and development contexts, so there is a broad continuum of transitional progress between the two. This progress may not always be linear and requires a coordinated approach to help address basic needs while also equipping individuals, organizations and the state to meet these needs themselves." <sup>33</sup>

They also rightly suggest that the way donors organise their humanitarian and development funding streams in silos can establish perverse incentives for recipient governments and the multilateral system: "Donor[s]...have tended to separate...humanitarian programming from long-term development efforts, with different staff and funding sources...partly due to a fundamentally misguided conception of a dichotomy between development and relief. Many governments...perpetuate this artificial division of responsibility for internal political and financial reasons. The United Nations agencies and many international NGOs have followed the donors' lead."<sup>34</sup>

The risk is that this separation of resources in the context of school resilience leads to decision making driven by political and optical priorities, rather than an assessment of what would produce the best outcomes for children and their teachers. At best, this may result in situations where policymakers sign up to, but do not pursue, the goals of frameworks like Sendai. At worst, it may lead to governments discounting the idea of investing in safer schools on the basis that more resources are available in a post-disaster situation.

The second reason is related. According to one paper "donors' engagement with fragile contexts starts from what they are able to do and provide rather than from what is needed on the ground. This is described by UNESCO's GMR [Global Education Monitoring Report] as a supply-driven approach to funding education."<sup>35</sup> The evidence on the fragility spiral indicates those countries most in need of financial support to build school resilience are also those where donors find it difficult to fund recurrent costs, ranging from teacher salaries to regular investments in disaster risk reduction. For example, while the UK government's biggest bilateral investment in the sector is currently in Pakistan, agreements with provincial government feature high levels of conditionality and a focus on the development rather than the recurrent budget.

Humanitarian funding is easier for donors to programme, with its openness to short-run commitments, and close earmarking of resources. This makes privileging funds for post-disaster work over long range planning almost inevitable. As INEE points out, there is a tendency for: "humanitarian assistance to bypass government structures, while development aid is usually predicated on working with and through governments [as well as for] donors to fund identical activities using both types of funding for political reasons, for example, supplying "neutral"

humanitarian relief instead of development assistance to avoid endorsing an "unacceptable" regime." <sup>36</sup>

Finally, there is a strong political argument for committing resources to highly visible post-disaster relief over investment in mitigating a risk that may never materialise, for governments and donors alike. Francis Vorhies's 2012 paper *The Economics of Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction* includes a strong analysis of this phenomenon, focusing on the fact that the "public benefits of reducing disaster risks are not easily seen by citizens, and thus politicians may have little incentive to provide them. Rather...[they] will prefer to provide more visible post-disaster restoration."<sup>37</sup>

This is a difficult issue. Political time horizons are inevitably short in democratic systems especially, while "the potential benefits of disaster risk reduction...tend to be distant and less apparent" than other considerations. Equally, allocating resources to disaster risk reduction with its focus on insuring against a potentially disastrous possibility, rather than providing tangible services in the short term, has opportunity cost implications in what are often highly resource constrained circumstances.

These three reasons together demonstrate the extent to which resourcing for school resilience is vulnerable to politicisation, and why tackling the aftermath of disasters is often preferred by policymakers and donors. The primacy of politics in turn makes it difficult to break the spiral of fragility that can result in millions of the most vulnerable children being deprived of a secure school environment and therefore often of education itself.

#### A Mono Focused Approach

The importance of optics in decision making about how to invest resources for school resilience leads to a focus on post-disaster relief, as outlined above. The same politically motivated drive to deliver something visible affects investments made to help insure education systems against potential future threats.

Inevitably it is more attractive for politicians to agree to investing scarce public resources in retrofitting schools, and constructing new ones than to commit time and other resources to less visible interventions that might be equally, or even more effective. Buildings are a visible sign that action is being taken, and provide politicians with opportunities to interact with voters. The same argument applies to technology based solutions, which appear attractive and 'smart', particularly in developing world contexts and offer strong narratives for public communications.

This kind of work is often prohibitively expensive, but is not, as discussed in Section One, a panacea to the school resilience issue. High costs can also deter governments and donors from taking on the issue of disaster risk reduction at all, and encourage reliance on post-disaster humanitarian funding. For example, one study from 2013 considered the cost of retrofitting all schools in seismically active countries in the developing world to resist earthquakes.<sup>39</sup> It found that "It would cost approximately \$300 billion to retrofit all the schools in the 35 most exposed countries...saving the lives of 250,000 individuals."<sup>40</sup> Sensitivity analysis produced mixed results. Even at a 3% discount rate and with value of life set at \$1.5 million per person, only 13 countries displayed benefit cost ratios of above 1, saving a total of just over 150,000 lives at a total cost of almost \$90 billion.

There are some examples of sustained and well-resourced commitments to tackling the retrofitting of schools. In addition to Indonesia these include Uzbekistan, where "Almost 10,000 schools have

been physically assessed, followed by retrofitting, reconstruction or, in some cases, demolition of dangerous school buildings"<sup>41</sup> and have made good progress. However, the experience of countries like Kenya is more typical: "Investing in...key basic services and infrastructure that build resilience, such as...education...is eye-wateringly expensive in the short term. The Kenyan government, in common with others...simply does not have these budgets to spare. Even if the money could be found, it is doubtful whether the political will exists to allocate it... Although there is an inherent understanding that such investments bring positive development gains, very little economic evidence exists to quantify the financial benefits and returns."<sup>42</sup>

In spite of the costs involved in retrofitting schools, construction work currently remains the focus for the resilience and disaster risk reduction debate in education. As outlined in Section One, international frameworks have tended to promote the equation of the school resilience agenda with construction work. This remains a live issue, as evidenced by the focus of school safety indicators for SDG4, the wording of Sendai, and the focus of initiatives such as WISS. Yet many countries have not implemented low cost, simple initiatives such as emergency drills. For example, a recent assessment of the education sector in Syria found that: "Only 22% of head teachers [could confirm they had an emergency plan]...Of these, only one reported the plan was rehearsed on a monthly basis, nine that it was practised once a semester, and eight once a year."<sup>43</sup>

Making the fabric of schools safe for children and teachers is very important, if expensive. This is one reason to find ways of securing more and more predictable resources for the school resilience agenda in the future, tackling the obstacles to substantive and regular funding for recurrent as well as development budgets in education. Yet it is important to recognise that building work is not the only kind of intervention that can help deliver safe schools. Finding methods to assess the relative benefits of different approaches robustly and based on value for money considerations will not only improve the educational prospects of many of the world's most marginalised children, but also increase confidence levels among donors and others to invest in the school resilience agenda.

### Three | Towards a Balanced Portfolio

The evidence of Sections One and Two, and the broader literature on the scale of the issue, makes a compelling case for more substantive financial investment in making schools safer, placing resilience at the heart of development in the education sector. If the world is to come close to achieving the ambitious aims of SDG4 by 2030, governments, donors and the multilateral community must work together to ensure children can attend school safely, knowing every step possible has been taken to minimise risk, whether from a natural disaster, conflict, or criminal activity.

It is not sufficient simply to advocate for more investment in safer schools however. The experience of the last 15 years has been that while more financial resources are being made available for the sector, the emphasis remains on relief efforts post-disaster, and on the physical infrastructure of schools over other interventions. This focus means lives are lost and educations disrupted, often permanently, because investment in preventing emergencies has not been made. Meanwhile, the scale of construction costs often deters governments from tackling school resilience as a broader topic. Many systems do not put in place inexpensive and sometimes cost neutral safeguards as a result.

There is an opportunity now to transform the approach on school resilience, taking advantage of the new status of Sendai and Agenda 2030, as well as WISS and other new approaches such as the ECW Fund. Better cross-organisational working will be essential to develop a coherent set of guidelines and package of support, including access to financial resources, for governments wishing to strengthen school resilience by considering actively how to achieve the best possible results for available resources, tackling the issue holistically and with strategic thinking.

#### **Dismantling Barriers to Investment**

The barriers to more, and better targeted, investment in school resilience described in Section Two are non-trivial and will require concerted and joined up efforts if they are to be overcome.

#### **For Donors**

More work is required to break down the historical barrier between humanitarian and development funding, particularly given the protracted nature of many complex emergencies and the fragility spiral observed in Section Two. This has an impact not only on how donors provide resources, but also on the behaviour of recipient governments. The tendency to emphasise humanitarian funding can actively discourage sustained investment in disaster risk reduction.

Donors also need to consider how they can make investing in risk reduction in education more palatable in terms of their priorities politically, optically and in financial management terms. Politically and optically it will be important to build arguments that support the case for investing in disaster risk reduction, particularly over tackling the aftermath of emergencies. Priorities will include:

• Acknowledging that an external argument built on econometric modelling of future benefit (for example in terms of productivity and earnings as a result of more education) is unlikely to gain traction with either the public or politicians. Instead, it will be important to focus recommendations for more resources on arguments such as a comparison of the cost of pre and post disaster construction work, or on using conditionality to ensure recipient governments

- invest in cost effective approaches, such as drills and safeguarding, already familiar in donor country contexts, as well as major capital projects.
- Investing in high quality technical assistance to support bilateral financial investments in education. This facility should focus on expertise in the areas of disaster risk reduction and the use of cost benefit and value for money analysis in developing scenarios and prioritising interventions. In addition, donors should mainstream technical support on improving standards of public financial management in education departments, with the aim of growing their ability to invest more predictably, especially in fragile states. While this may not appear to deliver 'education outcomes' in the short term, donor concern about value for money and corruption risk is currently retarding governments' ability to invest in issues such as disaster risk reduction in schools.

#### For Multilaterals

Work is needed to bring the range of networks and frameworks together, and to support governments more effectively and coherently on the disaster risk reduction agenda. As Vorhies notes: "systems are too complex, with too many actors, financing channels and discourses (e.g. adaptation, DRR, peace building, emergency preparedness, conflict prevention and all as part of poverty reduction and human and economic development). This creates high transaction costs, duplication, lack of coherence, different entry points and saps limited capacity, particularly in terms of country level co-ordination." This is critical given the fragility spiral observed in Section Two, and the weak capacity of governments in many of the worst affected countries.

Disaster risk reduction should also be linked more explicitly to the sector planning work spearheaded by EFA and GPE. Mixed success for this approach to date indicates more work is required to ensure governments have the support they need to plan effectively, particularly in the area of strategic prioritisation of interventions. It is unlikely, for example, that a plan that seeks to retrofit all schools in a five year period will be successful in a country where weak capacity to deliver and poor standards of financial management limit donor willingness to fund development in the education sector.

Areas where a more joined up set of multilateral frameworks and groupings might focus their efforts include:

- Pooling resources and experience to produce a single, joined up set of guidelines and tools to help governments plan, prioritise and budget for disaster risk reduction interventions in the education sector. Ensure this is explicitly linked to the GPE sector planning guidance, and also to opportunities to access targeted finance under EFA, the ECW Fund and other relevant initiatives.
- Ensuring a stronger focus on building technical expertise in areas such as cost benefit and value for money analysis, and the importance of making strategic choices, prioritising interventions to make the most of limited resources. This should include demonstrating what more could be achieved were donors to help close funding gaps.
- Working with countries that have already prioritised disaster risk reduction, such as Indonesia, to disseminate information on approaches and provide support to other governments wishing to tackle the issue. Additionally, if WISS could source funding to support a group of pathfinder countries seeking to fast track action on safe schools, this could help build the body of evidence

on what works. A similar pathfinder approach is currently being developed by the new Global Partnership on Ending Violence Against Children, collaborating with countries including Indonesia, as well as Tanzania, Sweden and others.<sup>45</sup>

#### **For Governments**

Governments are strongly influenced by the incentives established by donors and multilaterals, particularly with relation to accessing resources. In addition, decision making is often driven by political imperatives, leading to an emphasis on humanitarian response over disaster risk reduction, and visible interventions in construction and technology over other, less tangible, approaches. In many developing world contexts this is compounded by a lack of technical capacity in education departments, particularly in areas like modelling and scenario planning.

Implementation of the recommendations made above for donors and multilaterals would do much to shift the incentives of governments towards mainstreaming work on disaster risk reduction. Meanwhile, strengthened provision of specialist technical assistance has the potential to build officials' ability to tackle the complexity of conducting cost benefit and value for money analysis on the case for mitigating emergencies that may never come to pass.

#### **Approaches to Portfolio Assessment**

Increasingly, accessing donor funds requires the technical capacity to make a convincing economic case for an intervention, usually based on some form of standard cost benefit analysis. This is especially important for an area like disaster risk reduction, where investment in humanitarian relief far outweighs that made in preventative action. However, compared with the wealth of literature that exists on other aspects of the school resilience agenda, little has been produced to date on how governments and others should attempt to conduct this kind of analysis, and therefore strengthen the strategic quality of their plans.

Vorhies's 2012 paper makes the point that developing a cost benefit analysis in this area is fraught with problems. He identifies four major challenges to the process:

- Estimating costs and benefits: choosing and then monetising these is a complex undertaking. For example, estimates exist for the value of each additional year of education a child receives in terms of future wages and economic contribution. Applying these in practice however also requires decisions to be made on a range of other variables, such as labour force participation, and average wages. The quality of education received and its impact on future earnings is also a factor.
- Selecting interest rates: this is also a difficult task, since the benefits of disaster risk reduction will principally occur in the future, while costs will be incurred closer to the present. This is one of the reasons why investing in disaster risk reduction often seems an unattractive option politically. Vorhies recommends selecting several, including a zero rate as well as one that reflects the cost of borrowing money.
- Addressing risk and uncertainty: along with interest rates, this is a major contributor to political decisions to avoid investing in disaster risk resilience. Not only is the timing of future emergencies difficult to predict, so is the likelihood of them occurring at all. Vorhies recommends applying a range of risk premiums to interest rates to discount the future value of benefits.

Identifying distributional impacts: finally, Vorhies points out that a classic cost benefit analysis will produce a single net present value for a potential investment. This does not allow decision makers to see whether the projected disaster, or the intervention, has an impact on groups of interest, such as the most marginalised children in an education system. This is of particular relevance when considering the interests of donors in reaching the poorest of the poor with their investments.<sup>46</sup>

There is no simple answer to managing the complexity of conducting cost benefit analysis in the area of school resilience. The evidence is that more work of this kind will be required to make the case for investment in disaster risk reduction, particularly as donors increase their focus on demonstrating value for money in their investments. It is also clear that in many of the worst affected countries, capacity to carry out complex modelling and scenario planning is absent from line departments like education.

All these factors suggest this is an area where the international community, including the range of multilateral frameworks and networks, should work together to produce an agreed set of standards, methodologies and tools for governments to use. This is an area where the Commission and the ECW Fund could provide useful leadership, convening discussions and commissioning technical work to develop approaches that combine sufficient rigour, with accessible methods that will support and enable governments to conduct analysis.

#### **Identifying Quick Wins**

While conducting cost benefit analysis to determine the best mix of interventions to support school resilience is technically challenging, and will require further work, it is clear there are some quick wins on school safety that governments could pursue even without access to additional funds:

- Disaster risk reduction education: identified as early as Hyogo, including this in the school curriculum gives students a broad understanding of what they can do to protect themselves, their friends and family, and their broader community, against a range of threats. While historically the emphasis has been on protection against natural disasters, this type of education could be extended to cover conflict and crime related risks, as required. It is important that education systems should develop DRR curricula that are relevant to the local context. That said, this is an area where multilateral networks could provide guidance, and manage sharing of practice across national borders.
- both conflict and natural disasters, do not yet develop standard emergency drills and implement them in all schools. Even where drills exist, they are often not practised regularly, even in extremely high risk contexts such as Syria. This work is cost neutral, relying simply on ensuring development, dissemination, practice, and monitoring of the first three steps. Here donors can be of help, actively seeking evidence of the intention to plan and implement as part of bilateral agreements with governments. Equally, frameworks like WISS should provide guidance, templates and tools to support delivery of this simple, potentially transformative intervention.
- Policies on public access to schools: similarly, schools in many of the most high risk countries are
  easy for members of the public to access, in contrast with the strict rules and checks in place in
  other parts of the world. At the same time, many of the same school systems routinely employ

watchmen or other school custodians who could, if empowered to do so, control access to school buildings. While this intervention is also cost neutral, cultural and social norms may make implementation difficult in many places. This is an area where guidance, templates and tools will be important, but where governments will need to include approaches that do attract costs, such as public awareness campaigns on the importance of controlling who can enter a school building.

Empowering communities to take action: this approach has been used in some locations to tackle context specific threats to education, such as risks faced by children as they travel to and from school. Providing small amounts of funding to civil society organisations and communities themselves to enable them to take action could offer extremely cost effective solutions to some threats that often prevent children from attending school.

Each of these inexpensive approaches to disaster risk reduction should also be considered by governments as part of their broader cost benefit analysis when deciding the optimal mix of interventions to include in a programme on school safety. While none would substitute for retrofitting a school building for resistance to earthquake or flooding, or prevent an attack in a conflict situation, they could mitigate the impact of a major disaster, saving lives and equipping students and teachers to protect themselves in many situations. A mixed portfolio of responses is most likely to present best value for investment in school safety, building donor confidence in governments' commitment to the agenda and therefore the likelihood of attracting significant funding.

#### **Striking the Balance**

Figure 4 shows a range of some approaches countries have taken since 2000 on implementing DRR measures across the spectrum, from cost neutral to significant capital investment in infrastructure and technology. Examples are inevitably location specific, but are illustrative of the breadth of options available.

High cost interventions focus inevitably on construction, while those at the other end of the scale feature approaches such as emergency drills and community based solutions on safe school journeys. Much of the available literature cites examples that are at very small scale. System level interventions are comparatively rare, and tend, as in the case of Iran's national emergency drill approach, to be part of a broader focus on school resilience that also includes construction work. Where work has been scaled up over time – as in the case of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's community led conditional grants approach – this has been because donors (in this case the UK and EU) have been willing to commit predictable long term financial support on the basis of early results. It is also striking that arguably the most innovative approach in the sample, from Côte d'Ivoire, was developed outside government altogether.

#### **Few or No Cost Implications Some Cost Implications Significant Cost Implications** Indonesia Guatemala Iran Systemic Level After the 2004 tsunami, Indonesia chose With support from UNICEF, the Ministry Iran has implemented an annual National to prioritise the resilience of its schools of Education has created a Protection Earthquake and Safety Drill every year buildings. The majority of government Unit at national and regional levels and since 2000, following a 15,000 school schools had been constructed 30 years is pursuing an integrated approach to pilot in 1999. This work complements previously, when the risk of natural safe schools. Work has included teacher considerable investment in building the disasters was not factored into building training, parent education and new resilience of school buildings against seismic risks. In 2015 Iran hosted works. The government has invested violence prevention protocols. The next heavily and consistently in the fabric of step is to launch a radio campaign and observers from neighbouring countries school buildings over the last 12 years. information resource. and the UN to share best practice. Côte d'Ivoire Colombia **Pakistan** Sample Level In 2012 the government of Khyber Students and parents in urban areas of Colombia has been addressing the Pakhtunkhwa launched a conditional Côte d'Ivoire made use of text messages problem of death threats made against grants programme in selected districts. during the conflict to send warnings teachers since 2009. A specially convened working group identified options to The approach, funded by the UK and EU, and monitor the wellbeing of students. asks communities to submit costed plans Although this was an informal approach, safeguard affected staff, including for repairs to damaged school buildings. with costs borne by users themselves, in bodyguards and bullet proof vehicles, Work is commissioned and managed by some cases network operators provided as well as mobile phone solutions and communities. The approach has been free credit when fighting made it difficult relocation. Approaches include temporary scaled up several times. for people to go out and buy it. relocation to other schools for those at **Syria** India Iraq Pilot Level Czech NGO People in Need works with The Child's Right to Safer Schools In 2003 Save the Children worked individual schools in Syria on a complete campaign works with around 400 schools with three schools in Baghdad where resilience package. Work includes in six states. It helps individual schools attendance was below 50% because implementing low cost initiatives, such build their capacity to reduce the risk of of fear of kidnap. Less than a month as emergency drills, but also includes a disasters. Included among the activities is after parents were encouraged to bespoke survey of buildings by experts, provision of fire extinguishers and first aid support group travel to and from school, kits, as well as access to micro insurance attendance had increased to 75%. followed by a programme of school rehabilitation. for students and teachers.

Figure 4: The spectrum of school resilience approaches<sup>47</sup>

Ideally, a government aiming to transform school safety at systemic level would incorporate into their planning all the elements included in Figure 4 that apply, preferably also seeking new solutions specific to their context. Governments seeking finance to help them build sector resilience at system level should therefore be strongly encouraged, supported and incentivised to develop plans that demonstrate a rounded approach to the issue. Emphasising the important contribution of low or neutral cost interventions and linking them explicitly to funding sources would contribute much towards realigning the political incentives discussed in Section Two.

#### Four ! Recommendations for the Commission

The evidence and arguments advanced in this paper together suggest seven potential topics for discussion and action by the Commission. Work on these could significantly advance the international approach to supporting governments with more, and more predictable, financing of their efforts of transform the safety of their schools.

How can the international community best support governments to transform the safety of their schools?

#### Step 1

Identify and communicate a set of simple, low cost, global standards that any government could implement immediately to improve the safety of schools. These would include safety drills and safeguarding norms.

#### Step 2

Update international sector planning guidelines to reflect these standards, linking easy to use risk assessment tools (for example adapted from INEE) to them.

#### Step 3

Ask governments seeking finance for school resilience (e.g. through the new ECW Fund) to demonstrate their commitment to, and progress on programming and implementing the global standards.

#### Step 4

Work across international initiatives and organisations to create a standard approach to cost benefit analysis for insuring school systems against future disasters. It will be important to ensure this is feasible to apply in low capacity environments.

Coherent support for governments: work is needed to bring together the plethora of frameworks and initiatives on school resilience to create a coherent, single package of advice, support and resources for governments. Ideally this would include a clear financing mechanism that donors could recognise and support and governments could seek to access, attached to some simple principles on planning and prioritisation for developing safer schools.

A complete view of the school safety issue: future approaches should continue to reverse the historical tendency to separate emergencies by their cause, focusing instead on the impact or potential impact on children, teachers and schools. This is an important principle not only for helping governments to prioritise interventions, using lives saved or children's future educational attainment as a unit of measurement, but also for acknowledging that many crises have multiple causes, and many countries are vulnerable to more than one type of emergency.

A stronger focus on prevention and risk reduction: more work is required to mainstream the idea that school resilience should focus increasingly on preventative and risk reduction measures, rather than simply tackling the aftermath of disasters. This will require work to realign political incentives in favour of the former, including with donors to reduce the separation between humanitarian and development portfolios, and to find creative ways of supporting governments on recurrent aspects of their budgets, on more predictable timelines.

Technical support for strategic planning: there is scope to strengthen the advice given on including emergency planning and disaster preparedness in education sector planning frameworks. This will require better coordination between the range of actors, including EFA and GPE, and also resilience

specialists such as WISS. Consideration should also be given to how to link GPE funding and the new ECW Fund. In addition, governments should be encouraged to move beyond risk assessments and strategies to include resource allocation and delivery plans on school resilience.

A global framework for cost benefit analysis: work is required to develop methodologies governments and others can reliably use to compare the costs and benefits of school resilience interventions to inform prioritisation and decision making. This is a critical counterbalance to the politically motivated decision making currently dominating the debate. The literature tends to focus on the difficulties of choosing variables such as discount rates and the value of lives saved, or education outcomes attained. While these are not straightforward questions, it is important to create approaches that are not too complicated for governments to apply, while capturing sufficiently the trade-offs that should be considered.

A stronger focus on implementing quick wins: while work on reconstruction of damaged schools, and retrofitting of existing ones to increase resilience is and will remain important, future approaches must consider more seriously other options, particularly cost effective or cost neutral ones like emergency planning, practice drills, and implementation of simple rules on protection issues, such as restricting access to school buildings by members of the public. This will require a clearer focus on good planning and prioritisation, one of WISS's main areas for development.

Specific action to tackle the fragility spiral: particular attention is required on how to implement the six recommendations above in the most vulnerable states in particular. These countries are more likely than others to be affected by emergencies, while at the same time least likely to be equipped to plan, prioritise and resource effectively for disaster risk reduction. This work should include consideration of simple approaches to prioritisation and cost benefit analysis (Point 5), as well as the availability of dedicated support to build planning and strategic capacity (Point 4).

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