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**Building a theoretical framework to understand  
the role of aid in achieving the education  
Millennium Development Goals in fragile states**

**Professional Doctorate of Education (EdD)  
University of Sussex  
Thesis submitted by Peter John Colenso, June 2011**

A boy, a President, and three economists:

*When I grow up, I want to have my own road block.<sup>1</sup>*

*We heard the terminology around 'fragile states'. We wish to underline the importance of being cautious in using this term.<sup>2</sup>*

*There is quantitative data; and there is anecdote.<sup>3</sup>*

*Data are vexatious; theory is quite straightforward.<sup>4</sup>*

*Empiricists and theorists seem further apart now than at any period in the last quarter century.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Somali boy, reported by UNICEF Education Officer in Somalia, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, Doha, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Economist, personal conversation, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> The Economist, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010, page 34.

<sup>5</sup> Deaton, 2008, page 154.

## **STATEMENT**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signed: .....

**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX****PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION****BUILDING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE  
OF AID IN ACHIEVING THE EDUCATION MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS IN FRAGILE STATES****SUMMARY**

This thesis aims to build a theory for understanding the role of aid in achieving the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in fragile states. In so doing, it responds to claims that both educational research (see e.g. Cohen et al., 2000), and the economic literature on aid and international development (see e.g. Deaton, 2008), are insufficiently grounded in theory.

In finding a methodological voice for this thesis, I distinguish between three research paradigms: positivist, interpretive and critical theory. I ask whether theory is essentially a positivist project, better suited to quantitative methods and to the natural sciences. I argue for a 'mixed-method' approach, proposing that when qualitative methods generate data that are subjected to a stronger process of generalisation – including comparison between data derived from qualitative and quantitative methods, and from macro and micro level analysis – then that evidence may be sufficiently strong to underpin theory.

I use a four step process to build theory: (i) categorising data into domains for analysis, (ii) hypothesising linkages between these domains, (iii) investigating these hypotheses through assessing the evidence supporting them, (iv) organising hypotheses into a theoretical framework. To assess the strength of evidence in support of each hypothesis, I use an instrument to 'grade the evidence', based on a threefold assessment of method, observer bias and corroboration. I include evidence from new research conducted for this thesis, including: a portfolio analysis of 145 DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007), and an analysis of primary data collected for the 2008 DFID 'Education Portfolio Review'.

The findings of this research confirm a potential relationship between aid inputs and education outcomes in fragile states. Positing that this relationship might work through intermediate financing and institutional effects, it finds weak evidence for the former, but stronger evidence for the latter. With both aid and non-aid inputs (e.g. diplomacy, military engagement), external inputs appear better at supporting existing incipient reform than generating that reform, suggesting that donors should adopt a more modest and opportunistic approach to aid, as opposed to deploying a 'transformational' blueprint (Easterly, 2009).

The inter-dependence between aid inputs and non-aid inputs points to the importance of deploying instruments within a single approach to strategy and

possibly delivery. There is relatively strong evidence for 'pre-conditions' for successful interventions – proposed here as political will, community ownership and security / stability – whereas evidence for conventional proxies of 'aid effectiveness' is weak relative to the importance generally ascribed to it.

The evidence linking education and social stability is mixed, and weakly researched in developing country contexts – potentially significant for critical theorists who question the wisdom and motives of donor governments investing in education to counter radicalisation.

I conclude by assessing whether the theory generated has validity or utility. I assess the theory against five key characteristics of theory: empirical grounding; explanatory power; predictive power; utility; verification / falsification. I conclude that my theory has explanatory power and utility, but that claims to generalisability are weak, given the importance of context.

The thesis and its product (the 'theory') provide a framework that advances our understanding of the relationships between aid and education outcomes in fragile states. It tests the evidence base for these proposed relationships and, notwithstanding limits of generalisability, offers a narrative and framework with practical utility for future research, policy development and programming.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Introduction, methodology and methods .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Purpose of the thesis and how it builds on the Critical Analytic Study ..	9
1.2 Finding a methodological voice: methodology and methods .....	11
1.2.1 Positivism, interpretive approaches and critical theory .....	11
1.2.2 A critical perspective on identity, professional and institutional context .....	16
1.2.3 Building theory .....	18
1.3 Grading the evidence.....	19
1.3.1 The legitimacy and admissibility of qualitative evidence for building theory.....	20
1.3.2 The special case of case studies .....	22
1.3.3. Grading the evidence – designing an instrument.....	23
1.4 New research conducted for this thesis .....	28
1.4.1 Portfolio Analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007).....	28
1.4.2 DFID Education Portfolio Review.....	30
<b>2. Building on the Critical Analytic Study .....</b>	<b>34</b>
2.1 What are the Education MDGs? .....	34
2.2 What are fragile states and why are they important?.....	37
2.3 Why is aid to fragile states problematic? .....	41
2.4 Is there a case for allocating more aid to education in fragile states? ....	43
<b>3. Building the theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1 Stage 1 – linking aid inputs and development outcomes.....	46
3.2 Stage 2 – establishing intermediate effects (financing; institutions / policy) .....	54
3.2.1 Exploring financing as an intermediate effect.....	56
3.2.2 Exploring institutional quality as an intermediate effect.....	60
3.3 Stage 3 – understanding inputs (types & sequencing; non-aid inputs) ....	67
3.3.1 Financial Aid .....	68
3.3.2 Technical Assistance .....	76
3.3.3 Non-Aid Inputs .....	82
3.3.4 Summary .....	85
3.4 Stage 4 – understanding delivery (aid effectiveness; with a particular focus on harmonisation and alignment).....	87
3.4.1 Harmonisation.....	88
3.4.2 Alignment.....	91
3.5 Stage 5 – establishing entry conditions (e.g. stability, political will) .....	92
3.5.1 Security / stability .....	93
3.5.2 Political will .....	94
3.5.3 Community ownership .....	97

3.6 Stage 5 – understanding the relationship between education and fragility .....	103
3.7 Linking evidence to policy and practice .....	114
3.7.1 Summarising the evidence .....	114
3.7.2 What are the lessons for policy and practice? .....	116
3.7.3 A short commentary on the availability of evidence.....	117
<b>4. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>120</b>
4.1 Methodology, methods and theory .....	120
4.2 The characteristics and tests of theory .....	122
4.2.1 Empirical grounding: is it based in observable reality? .....	124
4.2.2 Explanatory power: does it satisfactorily explain a phenomenon or phenomena, in simple, intelligible and plausible terms? .....	125
4.2.3 Predictive power: can it help predict that phenomenon or phenomena? .....	126
4.2.4 Utility: can it be acted upon? can it inform change? .....	128
4.2.5 Verification / falsification: can it be either proved or disproved? .....	129
4.3 Conclusion .....	130
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1. Key education indicators for fragile states (DFID proxy list)</b>	
149	
<b>APPENDIX 2. ‘Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States’ (Source: OECD DAC, 2005) .....</b>	<b>151</b>



## ABBREVIATIONS

ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CAS	Critical Analytic Study
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EdD	Professional Doctorate of Education
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
IBE	International Bureau for Education (UNESCO)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NICE	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Achievement
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
RE	Randomised Experiment
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TC	Technical Cooperation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WVS	World Values Survey

# **1. Introduction, methodology and methods**

## **1.1 Purpose of the thesis and how it builds on the Critical Analytic Study**

The purpose of this thesis is to build a theory for understanding the role of overseas development aid in achieving the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in fragile states. The thesis builds on a prior 'Critical Analytic Study' (CAS) submitted for the University of Sussex Professional Doctorate of Education (EdD) in September 2005, entitled: "Achieving the Education Millennium Development Goals in fragile states – what is the role of aid?" (Colenso, 2005a). The purpose of the CAS was to review and critique relevant literature, in order to inform the research conducted in this thesis.

In this thesis, I seek to address two claimed deficits in research, policy and practice in the field of education and international development. First, that much educational research is merely descriptive, because of a failure to develop sound theory based on empirical work (see, e.g. Cohen et al., 2000). Second, that within the economic literature on aid and international development, that research, policy and practice is insufficiently grounded in theory: "...empiricists and theorists seem further apart now than at any period in the last quarter century." (Deaton, 2008, page 154).

In attempting to build a theory for understanding the role of aid in achieving the MDGs in fragile states, this thesis has gone beyond the CAS in 3 principal ways:

- (i) it has updated the literature review conducted in the CAS, including:
  - a. reviewing and critiquing much of the published and grey literature available on this topic since 2005;
  - b. broadening the scope of the CAS literature (e.g. examining more literature on governance and state-building, as recommended in the CAS, and more of the economic literature);

- (ii) it has conducted additional new research, including:
  - a. conducting a portfolio analysis (quantitative and qualitative) of DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007), using DFID's 'PRISM' information management system;
  - b. analysing primary data collected for the 2008 DFID 'Education Portfolio Review' (of which I was the co-author);
- (iii) it has used the data derived from (i) and (ii) to attempt to build a theory, using a four step process:
  - a. categorising the data into domains for analysis;
  - b. hypothesising linkages between these domains, within an overall organising framework;
  - c. investigating these hypotheses through assessing the evidence supporting them;
  - d. organising the hypotheses into a theoretical framework.

To assess the strength of evidence in support of each hypothesis, I use an instrument to 'grade the evidence', based on a threefold assessment of method, observer bias and corroboration.

Before embarking on a discussion of methodology and methods, it is worth defining briefly the two key terms that form the subject of this thesis:

- 'Education Millennium Development Goals' are internationally agreed targets in two areas: (i) universal primary completion by 2015 (MDG 2), (ii) the elimination of gender disparity in both primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015 (MDG 3);
- 'Fragile States' is a contested term on which there is no international consensus. Fragile states are variously associated with state collapse, conflict, political instability, low administrative capacity and neo-patrimonial politics. DFID defines fragile states as "states that can not or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, particularly the poor" (DFID, 2005, page 1).

These terms and their application will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

## **1.2 Finding a methodological voice: methodology and methods**

'Methodology' is understood as the orientation of the researcher towards the issues under investigation, in so far as it influences the methods of inquiry and the process of analysis. Pryor and Gharthey Appiah (2004) present a view of methodology as a rubber sheet, with competing pulls exerted on the sheet from different points of view, thereby determining its shape and nature. This suggests fluidity and inter-connectedness, rather than rigidity and compartmentalisation. In this thesis, I endorse such a characterisation. However, in shaping the methodology and methods adopted in this study, it is useful to begin with a more simplistic and polar characterisation – the positivist or scientific paradigm versus the interpretive paradigm – before then introducing a third paradigm: critical theory. This brief interpretation of different methodological approaches is a necessary pre-cursor to the central project of this thesis: to build a theory.

### *1.2.1 Positivism, interpretive approaches and critical theory*

Positivism has its roots in natural science. It is a paradigm of knowledge based on seeking objective and verifiable facts that can be generalised into laws. It is strongly associated with quantitative methods, and with experimentation in the natural sciences and mathematical models. Positivism is underpinned by assumptions of empiricism, determinism and generality. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 23) suggest an eight-stage model of scientific method and its role in generating theory:

- hypotheses, hunches and guesses;
- experiment designed; samples taken; variables isolated;
- correlations observed; patterns identified;
- hypotheses formed to explain regularities;
- explanations and predictions tested; falsifiability;

- laws developed or disconfirmation (hypothesis rejected);
- generalisations made;
- new theories.

Critics of a positivist approach to social science focus on its mechanistic and reductionist nature, its inability to accommodate and explain human choice and action, and its irrelevance to practitioners. Anti-positivists reject the notion that generalisable laws underpin human behaviour and social phenomena. They claim that the 'social' world, as opposed to the (natural) 'scientific' world, is fluid, driven by shifting context and multiple ungraspable variables. As such it is to a large degree indeterminable. This leads to the contention that positivism lends itself better to natural science, and interpretive approaches to social science.

Cohen et al. (2000) capture the difference well:

Positivist and interpretive paradigms are essentially concerned with understanding phenomena through two different lenses. Positivism strives for objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterning, the construction of laws and rules of behaviour, and the ascription of causality; the interpretive paradigms strive to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors. In the former, observed phenomena are important; in the latter, meanings and interpretations are paramount. (Cohen et al., 2000, page 26)

It is important at this stage, and given the project of this thesis, to open up a third methodological front: critical theory. Critical theory contends that both positivist and interpretive paradigms present incomplete and partial perspectives on social phenomena. It proposes that politics and ideology should be the primary lens through which we examine and explain the world (see e.g. Fay, 1987; Eagleton, 1991; Morrison, 1996). Critical theory rejects the distinction between facts and values. Within this paradigm the value of theory is measured by its ability to reveal relations of domination which exist in society, and ideally to channel that analysis into practical action. Such an approach would view action research as critical praxis: emancipatory research with an explicit agenda which is as political / institutional as it is educational (see e.g. Grundy, 1987; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). This is similar to Argyris's (1990)

characterisation of moving from ‘single-loop learning’ (functional, technical, short-termist) to ‘double-loop learning’ (with a requirement to question and challenge context, systems, values). The lens of critical theory is particularly important in setting in context my own identity in writing this thesis; the possible tension between my identity as a professional (working for the UK government Department for International Development) and my identity as an EdD researcher. I expand on this issue in the next section.

Habermas (1972) differentiates between the three paradigms on the basis of their respective epistemologies: (i) positivist (prediction and control), (ii) interpretive (understanding and interpretation), (iii) critical theory (emancipation and praxis). It is tempting to align methodologies with methods: positivism with quantitative methods; interpretive approaches with qualitative methods; critical theory with ideology critique and possibly action research. But this would be a mistake. Bryman (1996) points to a “productive tension” between positivist quantitative methods and interactionist qualitative methods. He questions strict linkages between epistemological paradigms and fixed research methods (e.g. positivist / quantitative; interpretive / qualitative). As an example of this, and interestingly for this thesis, Bryman notes that “...participant observation can be deployed within a *theory testing framework* with which the epistemological basis of quantitative research is conventionally associated.” (Bryman, 1996, page 123, emphasis added).

Snizek (1976) analysed 1,434 articles in sociological journals over a twenty year period (1950-1970) and, in support of Bryman, “...was unable to discern a clear pattern which linked the general orientation of each paradigm with the methods of investigation employed.” (Snizek (1976) reported in Bryman (1996), page 124). Arguing for joint approaches, Bryman concludes as follows:

The tendency to associate particular methods with particular epistemological positions is little more than a convention (which took root in the 1960s), but which has little to recommend it, either as a description of the research process or as a prescriptive view of how research ought to be done. (Bryman, 1996, page 125)

There is a parallel lively debate – equally relevant for this thesis where a substantial amount of the material drawn on derives from evaluations or evaluation research – within the field of evaluation. Evaluation, as a discipline, has been built from positivist traditions. Since the 1970s and 1980s, however, there has been a shift to accommodate more qualitative and subjectivist approaches to evaluation, built on different paradigms and employing different methods. These approaches have sought to challenge the putative infallibility of the scientific (hypothetico-deductive) method, exposing its limitations in handling complex and interactive social and educational phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In distinguishing between 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' methodologies in evaluation, House (1983a, 1983b) sees the former as characterised by externalised, scientific, verifiable, reproducible procedures, and the latter by internalised, personalised, non-verifiable, non-reproducible procedures.

There is debate as to whether objectivist and subjectivist positions represent differences of methodology, or only differences of method. Guba & Lincoln (1981) argue that the two approaches are derived from fundamentally different ontological and epistemological positions, and are, as such, irreconcilable. However, similar to Bryman's (1996) point of view, Worthen & Saunders (1987) take a pragmatic stance, emphasising the compatible and complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative methods in evaluation. In so doing, they avoid a deeper methodological debate, noting that few evaluators who succeed in a wide range of evaluation settings can afford to consider philosophical ideologies as 'either-or' decisions.

Positioning the debate in the realm of public policy and current practice, Martin & Sanderson (1999) cite Van der Knapp's (1995) distinction between 'rational-objectivist' approaches to evaluation, which focus on measurement of impacts, and 'argumentative-subjectivist' approaches, which are likely to be the most effective in promoting policy learning. Examining public policy experiments in the context of the 'New Labour' administration in the UK, Martin & Sanderson observe two shifts in evaluation strategies post 1997: (i) performance measurement systems that go beyond inputs, throughputs and outputs, to focus

on impact ('results-oriented management')<sup>6</sup>, (ii) new demands being put on evaluators, who are increasingly asked to act as change agents, combining summative analysis of outputs and impacts with more formative approaches focused on detailed understandings of process<sup>7</sup>.

They note that the approach advocated by the UK central government requires combining these two strategies; a difficult task requiring different methods and evaluation skills, and different sorts of behaviour from policy-makers. Their explanation is worth quoting in full.

*Accurate impact assessment* is easiest where policies are informed by explicit theories of action, there is some measure of agreement about the criteria against which outcomes should be judged and evaluators have access to reliable performance data. It also requires pilot programmes to run for an extended period and to be designed in ways which deliberately hold most key variables constant - often through the use of controls. A *formative policy learning approach* needs to be less structured in order to accommodate unanticipated developments. It has to embrace a wider variety of experimental sites and pilot initiatives. Evaluative judgements are unashamedly 'subjective' and often based largely on qualitative information. The process is iterative and requires a high level of trust and interaction between pilots and evaluators with the latter adopting a 'hands-on' approach which enables them to engage in an ongoing dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders. (Martin & Sanderson, 1999, page 247)

What are the implications of this discussion for this thesis, and for the central project of building theory? The approach adopted by this thesis can be characterised in Martin & Sanderson's terms as a 'formative policy learning approach'. Within this approach, I have combined methods. I seek to generate and utilise quantitative data, and, where possible, to look for objective measurements of the different hypotheses under investigation (i.e. in a summative sense). I also seek to generate and utilise qualitative data. This

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<sup>6</sup> DFID's Education Portfolio Review and the broader work of the Investment Committee (see Section 1.4.3 below) with its heavy focus on results, can be cited as examples of this.

<sup>7</sup> Martin & Sanderson contrast this approach with the narrow definition of evaluation as 'checking afterwards whether objectives have been fulfilled', as advocated by the UK Treasury guide to evaluation produced in the mid-1980s (HM Treasury, 1988, cited in Martin & Sanderson, 1999).



'mixed-method' approach<sup>8</sup> is in part practically-driven (there are different data sources available), and in part methodologically driven (recognising the benefits of 'triangulating' different sources and types of data).

Recognising the benefits of broad stakeholder engagement (see e.g. Eraut, 1984), I have also sought to involve different stakeholders in data collection and, to the degree possible, analysis. This is also to accommodate the valid concerns expressed by, inter alia, Riddell (1999), who argues that evaluations of education aid projects consistently privilege the perspective of the donor at the expense of local stakeholders:

...notwithstanding the increased emphasis on participation and local ownership, the different valuing and validity of different types of knowledge colour the extent to which any evaluation or research design is going to meet different stakeholders' interests. (Riddell, 1999, page 387)

As this thesis tries to find its methodological voice, it is also worth reflecting at this stage on my dual role as both EdD researcher and professional working for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and on the broader institutional and political context of international development.

### *1.2.2 A critical perspective on identity, professional and institutional context*

As I also stated in the CAS, "...the [methodological] direction of this study is influenced principally by two competing pulls, relating to my two identities: (i) my academic identity as an EdD student, (ii) my professional identity as an employee of DFID." (Colenso, 2005a, page 5). On the one hand, I am a researcher: quasi-objective enquirer, assessing fact and evidence with no further purpose than the advancement of knowledge. On the other, I am a professional: an employee of an organisation with clear policy and strategic direction, and conditioned to view the world through the clouded lens of my experiences, prejudices and institutional parameters. The critical theorist says

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<sup>8</sup> Rao & Woolcock (2003) extol the benefits of such an approach in their 2003 paper on evaluation.

that the former is a myth and the latter inescapable. The nature of my own organisation arguably amplifies this point. I work for a government department, headed by politicians. Viewed from one standpoint, I am, therefore, necessarily an agent of politics and an ideological actor<sup>9</sup>.

In the CAS therefore, I tried to adopt a 'reflexive' or 'auto-ethnographic' approach, being aware of my own positioning: the relation of my different identities to the process of data collection, analysis and application (see e.g. Ruch, 2000 & 2002; Darlington and Scott, 2002). It is equally important within this thesis to adopt a reflexive, and perhaps even critical theory, perspective on DFID and on the broader institutional and political context of international development. A critical theory perspective might contend that the work of western government aid programmes – and of the multilateral agencies such as the World Bank (WB), under the direction of those governments through their shareholding and board membership – is essentially a neo-colonial project to expand market access and political control over poor countries. The latter tendency being at its worst in fragile and post-conflict states, where donor governments and international financial institutions collude with global corporate interests to reconstruct post-conflict and post-disaster societies to suit their own ends, often focussed on the extraction of natural resources: “a predatory form of disaster capitalism...reshaping societies to its own design” (Klein, 2005).

In adopting this reflexive approach to examining my own identities and professional context, I need to highlight an additional area of reflexive focus: the tendency of institutions, in their research and evaluation functions, to protect themselves. There are clear incentives against highlighting 'bad practice', including reputational risk. It is also often the case that analysts and evaluators are also practitioners. In this respect, the CAS concluded:

I have not found any cases where the balance of evidence clearly contradicts a particular policy that I am professionally bound to uphold. However there does seem a strong tendency in the agency literature for selective use of evidence. There are strong risks of

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<sup>9</sup> The 'Civil Service Code' guides civil servants in how to establish their independence from party politics. However most civil servants would agree that this distinction is not clear cut.

‘policy-based evidence-making’, rather than ‘evidence-based policy-making’. Interestingly, there is little theory in the literature reviewed. (Colenso 2005a, page 54)

This provides two clear directions for this thesis. First, the need to assess the degree to which evidence is valid or robust, including being free of observer bias. To counter this, in assessing how evidence is constructed and utilised, I have used in this thesis an instrument to ‘grade’ evidence. The purpose, design and application of this instrument are described in Section 1.3 below. Second, the need to have a clear and robust approach to moving from evidence to theory. It is this that I consider next.

### *1.2.3 Building theory*

Cohen et al. (2000) note that much educational research is merely descriptive, because of a failure to develop sound theory based on empirical work. The CAS noted the following: “Perhaps the literature on fragile states will develop a stronger theoretical base as it matures and connects better with different disciplines” (Colenso 2005a, page 54). This thesis takes up the challenge posed by Cohen and by the CAS: in the areas of education, aid and fragile states, can we use empirical data, derived from both quantitative and qualitative methods, to generate reliable theory?

The principal interest of this thesis is to build a theory, and to assess the degree to which this theory can be said to be robust. There are two initial questions: (i) what is theory and what is it good for? (ii) how should we go about building theory?

Kerlinger (1970) described theory as follows: “...a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena” (Kerlinger, 1970, cited in Cohen et al., 2000, page 11). Theory is a metanarrative. It is an organising framework, grounded somehow in truth, and it is this truth that gives it its validity and, by extension, its predictive power. Kerlinger’s definition proposes a three-fold process of theory

building: break down the phenomenon under investigation into components; define the relations between these components; assemble these relations into a coherent conceptual framework with legitimate explanatory and predictive power.

There are several assumptions that underpin this description:

- ontological: the phenomenon under investigation and its constituent parts are real things that exist;
- epistemological: not only are these real things that exist, but they are also somehow knowable;
- deterministic: the relations between these real and knowable things are somehow deterministic – these relations are causal and therefore predictable;
- methodological: the means of identifying and assembling into theory these real, knowable and causally related things, are legitimate and replicable.

These assumptions will be revisited throughout this thesis, and particularly in the concluding chapter. For the time being, however, I need to say something about how we will assess the validity of the evidence presented in the literature (and in the new research conducted for this thesis) and relate this to my emerging methodological position.

### **1.3 Grading the evidence**

The earlier discussion on methodology and on methods – within research and evaluation – noted a distinction, at times blurred, between three key paradigms: positivist, interpretive and critical theory. It noted a tendency to associate particular paradigms with particular methods, but also drew attention to a school of thought that rejected a clear and distinct correspondence between methodology and method. In assessing the validity of different sources of evidence, and in trying to move from evidence to the generation of theory, I have said that this thesis will try to adopt a ‘formative policy learning approach’

that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. It will not privilege either method, but it will, in each case, assess the validity of the evidence presented, and seek to triangulate across evidence and methods.

However, before turning to the instrument itself, it is worth saying something about the use of qualitative methods in generating evidence for theory, and specifically the use of case studies. This is for two reasons. First, there is a general sense, particularly within certain, often dominant, professional communities – particularly economists and clinical health professionals – that evidence derived from quantitative methods is the only reliable and admissible sort of evidence for serious scholarship<sup>10</sup>. Second, the literature reviewed in this project and subsequent marshalled as evidence, shows that two research methods dominate: the literature review, and the case study (with the former often a summary of evidence generated from the latter). We should take a view therefore on the legitimacy and admissibility of qualitative evidence for theory generation, and particularly on the use of case studies.

### *1.3.1 The legitimacy and admissibility of qualitative evidence for building theory*

Building on the work of Becker and Geer (1960) and Lecompte and Preissle (1993), Cohen et al. (2000) suggest a seven-step process for how qualitative research can move from description to explanation to theory generation:

- (i) establishing units of analysis of the data;
- (ii) creating a 'domain analysis' (or 'categorisation' of unitised data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985));
- (iii) establishing relationships and linkages between the domains;
- (iv) making speculative inferences (hypothesis generation);
- (v) summarizing;
- (vi) seeking negative and discrepant cases;
- (vii) theory generation.

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<sup>10</sup> My first assignment for this EdD – submitted when I was working for the World Bank in 2003 – noted the words of a former economist colleague at the World Bank: "There is quantitative data; and there is anecdote."

There are many procedural tools for analysing qualitative data in this way. These include 'analytic induction' or 'analytical induction', defined over the years by Znaniecki (1934), Denzin (1970) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992), and 'constant comparison', which lies at the heart of 'grounded theory'. Znaniecki (1934) introduced analytic induction as an alternative to statistical methods of data analysis. Focussing on participant observation, Denzin (1970) set out a procedure that Cohen et al. (2000) describe as follows: "The procedure of examining cases, redefining the phenomenon, and reformulating the hypothesis is continued until a universal relationship is established, each negative case calling for a redefinition of a reformulation." (Cohen et al., (2000), page 151). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) advocated a more deliberate identification of discrepant cases.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced 'grounded theory' as theory developed directly from data during research. This was distinguished in part from 'grand theories' in sociological sciences – such as Marxism – which offer an overarching explanation of events, behaviours and institutions, but may however be only loosely grounded empirically. Grounded theory is built from the bottom up: incidents are categorised, their properties are identified, and models are constructed.

There are probably three key concepts behind grounded theory: (i) theory emerges from the data – theory generation is derivative; (ii) constant comparison; (iii) emergence, as opposed to hypothesis testing. Glaser (1992) felt that Strauss and Corbin (1990) had misrepresented grounded theory; specifically forcing theory into preconceived frameworks, rather than allowing it to emerge. Wary of this potential pitfall, and in the interests of choosing a research methodology and methods appropriate for the task in hand, I decided not to use 'grounded theory' as the primary method for this thesis. However I have taken from this brief analysis the belief that qualitative evidence is indeed admissible for theory generation as for other purposes; with the caveat, however, that there can be significant issues to address in terms of reliability and validity. Silverman (1993) suggests that these methods fail to address early implicit theorising that guides research (i.e. data are not theory neutral but

theory saturated), and that these methods may be stronger on categorisation than on explanation. In assessing and deploying evidence generated from qualitative research methods, I have tried to be aware of these risks, and to accommodate them within the design of the grading instrument.

### *1.3.2 The special case of case studies*

Yin (1984) identifies three kinds of case study: (i) exploratory (as a pilot to other studies or research questions), (ii) descriptive (providing narrative accounts), (iii) explanatory (testing theories). Merriam (1988) similarly identifies three types of case study (i) descriptive (narrative accounts), (ii) interpretive (developing conceptual categories inductively in order to examine initial assumptions), (iii) evaluative (explaining and judging). Stake (1994) also identifies three main types of case studies (i) intrinsic (undertaken to understand the particular case in question), (ii) instrumental (examining a particular case to gain insight into an issue or theory), (iii) collective (groups of studies undertaken to gain a fuller picture).

Case studies are typically aligned with the interpretive paradigm. This can open up the case study method to criticism, principally on the basis of treating peculiarities rather than regularities: “The case study method is the logically weakest method of knowing...Recurrent patterns are the main product of the enterprise of historic scholarship” (Smith, 1991, p. 375). However, most researchers believe that there is a role for case studies to generate evidence, including “...for wider theoretical purposes such as the verification and/or the generation of theory” (Cohen et al., 2000, page 181). Cohen et al. continue:

Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis. Case studies can establish cause and effect, indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. (Cohen et al., 2000, page 181)

Case studies in isolation may be a logically weak method of generating theory (the weakness derived from generalising from a specific instance). However,

when case studies generate data that are subjected to a logically stronger process of generalisation – such as analytical induction and constant comparison, including comparison against data derived through quantitative methods – then claims to theory may be stronger. In all cases, we should be aware of the risks of observer bias, including though over-interpretation and selective reporting (see e.g. Nisbet and Watt, 1984). Lincoln and Guba propose that the ‘trustworthiness’ of a case study is defined in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). For the purpose of this thesis, I have therefore treated case studies as ‘admissible’ evidence, while trying to control for the weaknesses of this method through the grading instrument, as described below.

### *1.3.3. Grading the evidence – designing an instrument*

As I wrote this thesis, DFID was designing an instrument to ‘grade the evidence’ across priority areas in the DFID Research Strategy (DFID, 2009). The starting point for the DFID work was a paper published by the Health Development Agency of the National Health Service (Weightman et al., 2005). The objective of this work was to develop a practical scale of grades of recommendation for public health interventions, adapted from the current National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) methodology. A literature review was carried out on the subject of incorporating research evidence into grades of recommendation for public health interventions. The literature search looked at publications from January 2000 to May 2004 retrieved from 16 databases. The views of a range of public health experts were also sought. The paper concluded as follows.

The literature review indicated general agreement that the randomised controlled trial (RCT) has the highest internal validity and, where feasible, is the research design of choice when evaluating effectiveness. However, many commentators felt the RCT may be too restrictive for some public health interventions, particularly community based programmes. In addition, supplementing data from quantitative studies with the results of qualitative research is regarded as key to the successful replication and ultimate effectiveness of interventions. (Weightman et al., 2005, page 1)



Given that this instrument was being designed within the medical community and with a focus principle of specific measurable (clinical) interventions<sup>11</sup>, it is not surprising that the authors expressed a preference for randomised controlled trials. There are two reasons not to adopt such a strict preference in this thesis: (i) the type of intervention under discussion is in many ways different, e.g. a specific public health intervention, the conduct of which can be controlled and the benefits measured and attributed, including through experimental design using intervention and control groups; many or most of these conditions do not pertain when assessing the effect of aid on education in fragile states (which is not to say, however, that there should not be more randomised trials conducted in this area – indeed I believe there should), (ii) as described in the last section, my emerging methodological stance is one that embraces the value and potential validity of qualitative evidence, particularly when used within a mixed-methods approach. From a purely practical point of view, if I was only to treat as admissible evidence derived from randomised controlled trials, this would be a very short thesis.

It is also important to note that while development agencies are increasingly using randomised controlled trials, views from academics and practitioners on their value and pre-eminence as a research tool have differed widely.

Creating a culture in which rigorous randomized evaluations are promoted, encouraged and financed has the potential to revolutionize social policy during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just as randomized trials revolutionized medicine during the 20<sup>th</sup>. (Duflo, 2004, page 731)

Randomised controlled trials cannot automatically trump other evidence, they do not occupy any special place in some hierarchy of evidence. (Deaton, 2008, page 125)

As noted in Easterly (2009), Deaton (2006, 2008) and Rodrik (2008) both point out that while the benefits of randomisation may hold for internal validity, it is not necessarily correct to extrapolate to other settings than the experimental situation. This is particularly important for the project of this thesis: to build a

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<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting however Weightman's proviso that "...some public health interventions, particularly community based programmes" pose challenges for this approach.

theory. Deaton particularly emphasises the sensitivity of randomised experiments to context, including in education:

The effectiveness of flip charts clearly depends on many things, of which the skill of the teacher and the age, background, and previous training of the children are only the most obvious. So a trial from a group of Kenyan schools gives us the average effectiveness of flip charts in the experimental schools relative to the control schools for an area in western Kenya, at a specific time, for specific teachers, and for specific pupils. It is far from clear that this evidence is useful outside of that situation. (Deaton, 2006, cited in Easterly, 2009, page 49)

Deaton implies the risks of extrapolating from experiment to policy. The same could equally be said of theory. As noted by Cartwright (2007), to have predictive power, we would need a method that tells us more about causality. I will return to this issue in the concluding section of this thesis.

While critiquing the current vogue for randomised experiments, it is also worth questioning the dominance of regression analysis and other econometric methods in international aid agencies. There is a clear preference by some agencies for quantitative research methods; notably the World Bank but also increasingly DFID. As an example, the influence of Paul Collier's research in the field of conflict and fragile states – both during his time with the World Bank and subsequently – has been significant. Indeed, Collier's work is much cited in this thesis. It is worth noting, however, that (i) econometric work done badly, is as limited and misleading as the most casual form of qualitative research, and that (ii) it is ill-advised to extrapolate from correlation to causality. In a report on the World Bank research that underpinned some of Collier's earlier work on fragile states, while praising the research for raising interesting issues, Acemoglu (2006) made the following observations:

The econometric framework is very deficient. It has a number of serious conceptual and methodological problems. First of all, at the end the regression is one of endogenous variables on endogenous variables. But all of the results are interpreted as causal effects... Contrary to the claims in the paper, the regression evidence does not test any well-specified hypothesis, and the correlations that are interpreted as causal effects are really no more than correlations.... It

is too early to jump to policy conclusions.<sup>12</sup> (Acemoglu, 2006, cited in Easterly, 2009, page 100)

In developing an instrument to grade the evidence, we might find good reason therefore to question the current preference for both randomised trials and for regression analysis.

To return to Weightman's paper, I believe we can make better use of it by moving beyond the narrow preference for method to the broader framework that they adopt (although they are not explicit in doing so). Stripped down to its essentials, there are three features or domains used in their grading instrument: (i) method, (ii) degree of bias, (iii) degree of corroboration. I propose to use these three categories in combination, but using a considerably simpler typology than that proposed in Weightman's three tables.

For this thesis, I propose therefore to grade evidence using a simple three-fold categorisation, whereby each piece of evidence is judged against these three criteria, as follows.

	<b>Method</b>	<b>Bias</b>	<b>Corroboration</b>
<b>Strong</b>	Systematic literature reviews	No evidence; low risk	Strong corroboration
<b>Medium</b>	Literature reviews (not systematic); good RCTs; good econometric methods; good case studies	Some evidence; medium risk	Some discrepant cases
<b>Weak</b>	Interviews; weak case studies; anecdote	Strong evidence; significant risk	Many discrepant cases

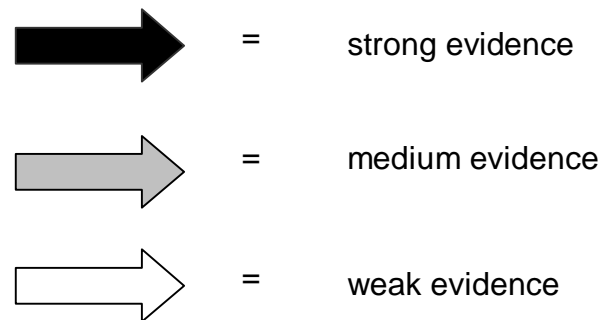
*Table 1.1*

An approximate overall judgement is given against any chosen hypothesis, according to whether the balance of the evidence is considered strong, medium or weak against the three criteria. It should be noted that the categorisation of

<sup>12</sup> Easterly notes that Acemoglu was commenting upon Collier et al. (2003).

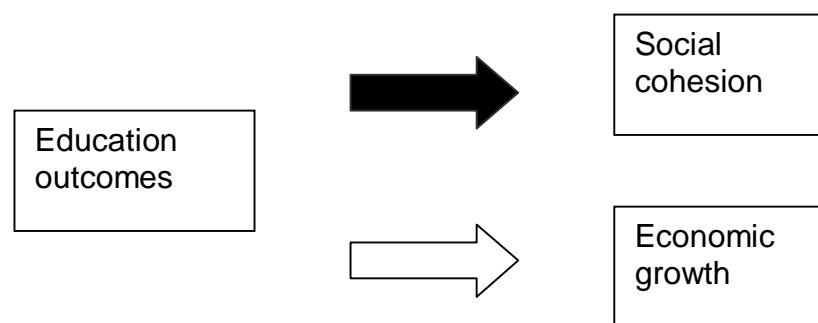
strong / medium / weak is neither exact nor robust. It is a judgement, but one that has an explicit and to some degree reasonable and defensible basis.

In the visual depiction of the theoretical framework, I will depict the strength of the evidence by the degree of shading of the arrow, as follows.



*Figure 1.1. Key for denoting strength of evidence linking variables within theoretical framework*

For example, if, through grading the evidence, we were to find strong evidence of the link between 'education outcomes' and measures of 'social cohesion' – reviewing the balance of the evidence against our three criteria – but only weak evidence of the link between 'education outcomes' and measures of 'economic growth', this would be depicted in the draft theoretical framework as follows:



*Figure 1.2. Example of graphic depiction of theoretical framework*

On this basis, I will attempt to build a theory linking aid and education in fragile states, depicting the strength of the proposed relationship between variables in each case, based on grading the evidence found in support of each relationship. The bulk of this work is done in Chapter 3, with conclusions drawn

on the success or not of this enterprise in the final chapter. As noted above, this is not an exact approach, but it should bring more rigour and a specific, and explicit, method to assessing the relative strength and weakness of evidence in support of any given proposition.

The final section of this introductory chapter will describe briefly the new research conducted for this thesis.

## **1.4 New research conducted for this thesis**

### *1.4.1 Portfolio Analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007)*

I conducted a portfolio analysis for this thesis, using DFID's project database 'PRISM', of all DFID education projects in DFID's 'proxy list' of 42 fragile states covering the period 1991 to 2007<sup>13</sup>. Two pieces of analysis were carried out. The quantitative analysis of 'project risk' and 'project rating' considered 145 records. The qualitative analysis search of the 'lessons learnt' section of 'Project Completion Reports' considered 59 records (the balance records had no data under 'lessons learnt').

The analysis was conducted using the following steps: selecting within the PRISM database the 42 countries on DFID's proxy list of fragile states; selecting within these countries all projects primarily coded to education; transferring quantitative data (e.g. 'project ratings') into a separate Excel spreadsheet for manipulation<sup>14</sup>; transferring qualitative data (e.g. 'lessons learnt') into a separate spreadsheet for synthesis and analysis.

In interpreting the results of this analysis, a number of constraints should be noted. 'Lessons learnt' fields of 'Project Completion Reports' are not systematically completed. Nor do project ratings and 'lessons learnt' reports

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<sup>13</sup> PRISM has since been superseded by a new database that DFID has adopted, although records have been transferred between the two applications.

<sup>14</sup> See for example Figures 3.1 in Chapter 3 below.

necessarily represent objective assessments of the project, as suggested in Section 1.2.1 above. It is an internal process. Typically consultants are contracted by the DFID education adviser or programme manager; they cannot therefore be seen as completely independent, as there are clear incentives to score projects well. In assessing the validity of this evidence, therefore, we should beware observer bias. Easterly (2009) demonstrates how projects evaluations have historically been a weak source of evidence, not only for DFID but for all development agencies.

The calculation of project rates of return had a number of problems. The estimation of the benefits of the project were done in an ad-hoc way that left a lot of room for subjective judgments. This was particularly problematic because the aid agency (and sometimes the specific individual who had led the project effort) were the ones calculating rates of return, implying a possible conflict of interest that would bias rates of return upwards. Even if the evaluators were completely objective, there was no mechanism to regulate their subjective judgments so that hypothesized benefits corresponded to real improvements enjoyed by the beneficiaries. (Easterly, 2009, page 33)

Pawson and Tilley (1999) argued that thirty years of project evaluation in sociology, education and criminology was largely unsuccessful because it focussed on whether projects work instead of on why they work (reported in Deaton, 2008).

Nor are the DFID project ratings and 'lessons learnt' reports systematically subjected to quality assurance. DFID has used different systems of quality assurance over the 16 year period in question, and quality assurance has at best been done on a sample basis. The length, scope and quality of the 'lessons learnt' are also highly variable. This calls into the question both the independence (from bias) and the quality of the reports.

In spite of these constraints however, DFID's database of projects does present a rich source of data, and one, to my knowledge, that has not been systematically mined before in the field of education and fragile states.

#### *1.4.2 DFID Education Portfolio Review*

The Education Portfolio Review is an internal, as-yet unpublished, piece of analytical work conducted by DFID staff through 2008 and 2009, which I designed and co-led with a DFID colleague. It was commissioned by the Investment Committee of DFID's Management Board; a relatively new committee whose mandate is to strengthen DFID's focus on results and value-for-money. The purpose of the Education Portfolio Review was to assess what results DFID's education investments are achieving and the degree to which these results represent value-for-money, and so to make recommendations about the allocation and delivery of DFID's future education investments (in the context of annual DFID expenditure on education rising from £529 million in 2007/08 to £1 billion in 2010/11). The Education Portfolio Review also provided the basis for part of DFID's submission to Her Majesty's Treasury for the 'Public Value Programme' – a cross-Whitehall programme, under the previous government, to identify and drive efficiency savings in the UK public sector.

The Education Portfolio focussed its analysis on investment choices in three areas: allocation of education aid to multilateral agencies (e.g. World Bank; European Commission; UN agencies); allocation of education aid within the bilateral programme (which countries DFID should allocate aid to, based on need and likely effectiveness); delivery choices within the bilateral programme (choices of aid instrument and delivery channels). The Education Portfolio Review drew on a number of pieces of research, including the following:

- building a resource allocation model to indicate 'appropriate' levels of aid to education to countries, on the basis on need and predictors of performance (see Chapter 2 for detail on the model and its results);
- a literature review to determine what education policies and investments achieve results and value-for-money, and under what conditions (notwithstanding the risks of being too reductionist);
- a survey of DFID country offices, to investigate what results DFID is achieving; policies and investment choices and rationales underpinning these; models of delivery; opportunities and constraints;

- a review of a random sample of 61 annual reviews of DFID education projects;
- unit cost analyses, to determine, for example, costs of items such as textbooks and classroom construction; to explore comparability across countries, and possibilities of driving down unit costs, with estimated savings.

The thesis will report results and implications of some aspects of the Education Portfolio Review in detail, particularly where those results and implications are relevant to fragile states. However, the key findings, and those with particular significance for this thesis, can be summarised as follows.

- DFID aid to education is achieving significant results, and is making sound strategic choices:
  - there is good progress on MDG 2 (universal access to and completion of primary education); DFID is supporting around 5 million children in school, based on assessing support through government systems alone;
  - using DFID's 'portfolio quality index'<sup>15</sup> as a measure, the education portfolio performance is good and improving (improving from 67% in 2005/6 to 72% in 2007/8 – this means that DFID's projects and programmes largely achieve their objectives);
  - DFID is allocating money well, across countries and institutions, as assessed by comparing actual allocation against 'optimal' allocation;
  - DFID is delivering through the right instruments (e.g. budget support is providing influence & leverage beyond our direct financial contributions and is supporting expansions in service delivery);

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<sup>15</sup> Projects are scored annually and at completion. The logical framework score measures whether a programme has achieved its purpose. Scores range from 1 to 5; a score of 1 means that the programme achieved its purpose, 2 the purpose is largely achieved, 3 partially achieved, 4 to a limited extent, and 5 not achieved. The Portfolio Quality Index is calculated by converting each purpose level score into a percentage: a score of 1 - 100 %, 2 – 75%, 3 – 50%, 4 – 25%, 5 – 0. Each percentage is multiplied by the expenditure on the programme and the aggregate is divided by the total scored expenditure for each year.



- country offices are by and large making good strategic choices (e.g. investing in what works; playing to DFID's comparative advantage);
- DFID's influence greatly exceeds its spend, at both the country and international levels;
- but there is scope to improve value for money:
  - by focussing more on education quality (e.g. protecting cognitive functions in early childhood; measuring learning outcomes; prioritising teachers and teaching; investing more in knowledge products such as research and impact evaluations);
  - by further expanding DFID's investments below (early childhood) and beyond (secondary) primary education;
  - by supporting governments to drive down unit costs of key inputs;
- there are at least three good reasons to increase education investments in fragile states, in both absolute and proportionate terms:
  - one third to one half of out-of-school primary aged children are in fragile states;
  - fragile states are severely under-aided, on both need and performance bases;
  - education investments in post-conflict settings can have a high dividend, in terms of both state-building and social stability;
- DFID should continue to lobby for more resources to go to basic education in low income countries, and to fragile states, and continue to focus its own resources on basic education in low income countries, particularly fragile states.

However, it is not clear that all of the conclusions presented above would stand up to close scrutiny. For example, the estimate that DFID supports five million children in school uses an imprecise methodology, including, for those countries where DFID was providing budget support, pro-rating a share of national enrolments based on DFID's share of total education expenditure (domestic and external). While this provides a reasonable estimate, it does not give us a level of granularity or confidence to determine whether, for example, budget support is better than another instrument, nor that DFID's instruments or ways of

working are better than those of another agency. In this respect, some of the value for money claims in the Education Portfolio Review are on relatively weak methodological ground, particularly if they are applied in a comparative sense (for which they were not intended).

This opening Chapter has tried to describe the key methodological issues underpinning this thesis, and an emerging methodological voice for the thesis itself; it has introduced a basic approach to assessing the validity and reliability of evidence; and it has introduced new research conducted for this thesis. Chapter 2 will now summarise two outputs of the CAS, which are necessary to understanding the purpose and direction of the thesis:

- the nature of the issue under investigation i.e. the role of aid in achieving the Education MDGs in fragile states;
- preliminary findings and conclusions of the CAS.

## 2. Building on the Critical Analytic Study

It is necessary to define at least in brief the key terms and concepts that will form the constituent parts of the proposed theory, given that each is complex and indeed contested. The CAS sought to define and understand the terms that are implicated in this research by answering three preliminary questions:

- (i) what are the Education MDGs?
- (ii) what are fragile states and why are they important?
- (iii) why is aid to fragile states problematic?

The answers to these questions are briefly summarised below; however the summaries go beyond the CAS in incorporating new texts and analysis and thus bringing the analysis up to date.

### 2.1 What are the Education MDGs?

The MDGs were agreed by nearly 190 countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, as part of a global compact to focus developing countries and development agencies on specific development outcomes. The Education MDGs are understood as:

- universal primary completion by 2015 (MDG 2);
- and, as part of the Gender MDG (MDG 3), the elimination of gender disparity in both primary and secondary education by 2005, and all levels by 2015.

Broader international education targets had previously been agreed as part of the Education for All (EFA) conferences in Jomtien in 1990 and in Dakar in 2000. Critics have noted two connected problems with the process of consolidating broader education goals into two MDG targets:

- a narrowing of the development agenda: according to King and Rose (2005), the Jomtien Declaration of 1990 had already weakened a

more holistic vision of education, by paying no attention to secondary education, skills development or higher education, although the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 reinstated early childhood education and adult literacy within the six Dakar goals. Critics argue that the MDG targets further exclude key areas of education, including early childhood development, adult literacy (Robinson, 2005) secondary education (Lewin, 2005), skills development (King, 2005) and higher education.

- excessive influence of donors in setting this agenda: according to King: “The global development agenda essentially gets fashioned in Paris.”<sup>16</sup> (King, 2004, page 7). King and Rose (2005) point out that in countries which are highly aid-dependent; there may well be distortions in the national planning of education and training if the donors effectively make their financing conditional upon the prioritisation of the MDGs.

In response to the critics, proponents of the MDGs emphasise that broader education goals have not been abandoned, and that countries are free to pursue the policies and investments that meet their national priorities. DFID maintains that the MDG targets should be understood within a holistic vision of education, and that national education sector plans and expenditure frameworks should be determined by sovereign governments in consultation with national stakeholders, according to their own needs and priorities<sup>17</sup>. The OECD DAC report that defined the MDGs stressed the need for context-specific interpretation of the MDGs<sup>18</sup>.

In global terms, some significant progress has been made against the MDG targets, particularly MDG 2. Numbers of out-of-school primary school aged children dropped from 96 million in 1999 to 72 million in 2005. To illustrate where this progress has been made, Table 2.1 shows the 20 countries where

<sup>16</sup> The Millennium Development Goals were agreed through the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD DAC), which is headquartered in Paris.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with former DFID Head of Profession (Education), 05/07/05.

<sup>18</sup> “these goals must be pursued country-by-country through individual approaches that reflect local conditions and locally owned strategies” (OECD, 1996, p. 2)

the numbers of primary aged out of school children reduced most in absolute terms. In total, these countries account for over 90% of 'progress' against MDG 2. India alone accounts for one third. Fragile states, shaded below, account for 20%.

Year	Primary Age Population (2005)	Primary Aged Children Out of School 1999 (or 2000)	Primary Aged Children Out of School 2005 (or 2004)	Change
1. India	117,415,666	14,461,154	6,394,577	-8,066,577
2. Tanzania	7,113,061	3,405,002	604,378	-2,800,624
3. Ethiopia	8,588,612	4,961,657	3,180,923	-1,780,734
4. Iran	6,599,640	1,666,073	306,852	-1,359,221
5. Mozambique	3,833,913	1,601,811	872,311	-729,500
6. Bangladesh	16,526,136	1,120,659	398,556	-722,103
7. Kenya	5,416,772	1,833,662	1,122,986	-710,676
8. Nigeria	21,644,599	7,189,213	6,583,599	-605,614
9. Madagascar	2,598,249	785,130	188,401	-596,729
10. Morocco	3,827,702	1,114,332	524,848	-589,484
11. Myanmar	4,966,002	1,051,077	487,384	-563,693
12. Brazil	13,612,718	1,031,981	481,790	-550,191
13. Zambia	2,308,246	760,379	227,759	-532,620
14. Yemen	3,633,725	1,333,804	861,005	-472,799
15. Nepal	3,556,958	1,046,432	701,581	-344,851
16. Algeria	3,902,293	361,955	39,461	-322,494
17. Cambodia	2,009,842	320,688	22,962	-297,726
18. Senegal	1,841,652	807,980	517,682	-290,298
19. Guinea	1,483,379	709,067	500,746	-208,321
20. Philippines	11,633,692	853,813	647,639	-206,174

Table 2.1 (Source: using data derived from UNESCO, 2007)

The Education Portfolio Review notes how central fragile states are to the challenge of achieving the MDGs:

The Education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of ensuring that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and achieving gender parity in primary and secondary school, will not be met with current patterns of education investment and provision, particularly in fragile states. (DFID, 2009, page 3)

Approximately 40% of countries did not meet the 2005 gender equity target<sup>19</sup>. There is also some evidence to suggest that education access has been pursued at the expense of education quality (see e.g. Smith and Vaux, 2003), and that the emphasis on primary education has been accompanied by under-investment at secondary, with potentially damaging educational and broader social impacts (Lewin, 2004). It is also questionable whether increasing primary enrolment / completion and achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education will result in poverty reduction, although this is the implicit logic of the MDGs.

## **2.2 What are fragile states and why are they important?**

In recent years, development agencies have become increasingly concerned over the impact of weak and ineffective states. Definitions of and approaches to fragile states have variously emphasised 'state fragility' (USAID, DFID<sup>20</sup>), 'poor performance' (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, AusAID), and 'difficult partnerships' (OECD DAC, European Commission) (Moreno Torres and Anderson, 2004). Branchflower et al. (2004) associate fragile states with the following characteristics: state collapse, loss of territorial control, low administrative capacity, political instability, neo-patrimonial politics, conflict, and regressive polities. DFID defines fragile states as "states that cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, particularly the poor" (DFID, 2005, page 1).

It is important to recognise the emergence, and indeed survival, of the concept of fragility through a political economy lens as much as a 'technical' one. The US in particular, and increasingly now the UK, have argued that intervention in 'fragile states' – through a range of development, diplomatic and security instruments – is essential to safeguard the security of their own citizens. This narrative has been particularly prominent in the post 9/11 era, and in the Afghanistan / Pakistan region. This has prompted concern from others over policies combining development assistance with diplomacy and defence

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/mdg/gender.asp>, accessed 15/08/05

<sup>20</sup> DFID initially used the terminology "difficult environments".

Pureza (2006) argues for the need to deconstruct definitions of fragility and fragile states, and to clarify the ideological political and economic dimensions that lie behind the concept. Some of the policy and operational implications of what has been referred to as the ‘militarization of aid’ (see e.g. Novelli, 2010) are further explored in Section 3.3.3 below, which looks at the interplay in external assistance between ‘non-aid inputs’ – such as diplomacy and peace-keeping – with aid inputs.

<p><b>WILL</b></p> <p>+</p> <p>-</p>	<p><b>‘high will, low capacity’</b> fragile states with political will but low capacity (e.g. Afghanistan, Timor Leste)</p>	<p><b>‘good performers’</b> non fragile states <i>relatively</i> unconstrained by will and capacity (e.g. Uganda, Ghana, India)</p>
	<p><b>‘low will, low capacity’</b> fragile states where both political will and institutional capacity pose challenges to development (e.g. Somalia, Sudan, DRC)</p>	<p><b>‘low will, high capacity’</b> fragile states that may be repressive (e.g. Angola, Myanmar)</p>
	<p>-</p> <p><b>CAPACITY</b></p> <p>+</p>	

Figure 2.1. DFID Fragile States typology (Sources: adapted from Moreno Torres and Anderson, 2004; DFID, 2005)

Core functions include security, economic management, and the provision of basic services such as education and healthcare. The “cannot or will not” distinction is built on a policy-relevant typology of fragile states emphasising ‘capacity’ and ‘will’. The DAC provides another typology of fragile states, for which there has been some uptake in the international community.

<b>Deterioration</b>	<b>Arrested Development</b>	<b>Post-conflict transition</b>	<b>Early recovery</b>
Conflict/risk of conflict; declining capacity or will	Lack of will; moderate or high capacity	Risk of conflict; low capacity; high or low will	May be post-conflict or not; high will but low capacity
e.g. Somalia, Sudan	e.g. Angola, Myanmar, Uzbekistan	e.g. DRC	e.g. Afghanistan, Timor Leste, Burundi

*Table 2.2 . OECD DAC typology of ‘fragile states’, with examples*

There is no internationally agreed list of fragile states. The lowest performers in the World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) are sometimes used as a proxy for fragile states<sup>21</sup>. 46 countries appear in the bottom two-fifths of the CPIA ratings at least once between 1998 and 2003. It is these that constitute DFID’s proxy list of fragile states (DFID, 2005). Fragile states are important for the achievement of the MDGs. 14% of the world’s population live in fragile states, but they represent 35% of the world’s poor (MDG 1), 44% of maternal deaths (MDG 5), and 51% of children dying before the age of five (MDG 4) (Colenso, 2005a).

Fragile States also have spillover effects. They depress growth in neighbouring countries, they can destabilise neighbouring countries, create refugee flows and spread disease. Collier (2007) claims that the annual cost of one new conflict to the country and its neighbours is over \$64 billion and that civil war reduces the affected country’s growth by 2.3% per year. Miguel (2004) reinforces the cyclical nature of this problem; he claims that a negative growth shock of 5% increases the likelihood of conflict by 50% the following year, with concomitant spillover

<sup>21</sup> The CPIA scores are unpublished World Bank assessments of the quality of policies and institutions of a given country, based on subjective judgements against over twenty indicators.



effects for neighbouring countries. Mack (2009) claims that the converse is equally true: rising GDP per capita reduces the risk of conflict. If countries can move from a \$250 per capita annual income to \$500, they reduce the five-year risk of conflict by half on average.

Appendix 1 gives a breakdown – updated from the CAS – of key education indicators in fragile states (DFID proxy list). The table is notable for its data gaps, including in countries with large numbers of out of school children (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan).

The distinction between good performers and fragile states is in many ways an artificial distinction, which many commentators have found inaccurate or even unhelpful. Reasons cited for this include the following: measures of fragility are subjective (e.g. the World Bank's CPIA ratings); fragility is dynamic – states move into fragility (e.g. Zimbabwe) and out of fragility (e.g. Rwanda); 'good performers' may have pockets of fragility and even conflict (e.g. northern Uganda, north-east Sri Lanka); a state-centric definition gives undue emphasis to the role of the state; fragility might be better analysed on a regional, rather than state basis (e.g. West Africa, the Great Lakes region, the Caucasus); defining 'fragility' as a lack of will to address poverty reduction risks defining fragility on donors' terms.

'Fragile states' is also a term that some have found stigmatizing and unhelpful:

We heard the terminology around 'fragile states'. We wish to underline the importance of being cautious in using this term. It is labelling countries in a negative way, where we are trying to develop and become stronger and prouder nations. (His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, Doha, 30 November 2009)

However, the concept of fragile states does potentially have a high degree of analytical, policy and operational utility. It can highlight a common set of conditions or constraints (e.g. instability, weak institutions, very low capacity) that the conventional 'aid effectiveness' paradigm is less able to handle, and it can help organise a policy and operational response based on addressing these

constraints.<sup>22</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of fragile states is grounded in a particular challenge: the challenge of forming successful aid partnerships for poverty reduction.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.3 Why is aid to fragile states problematic?

The dominant paradigm of aid effectiveness is premised on the existence of a strong state, with both the *capacity* and the *will* to generate sustainable economic growth, and to implement pro-poor policies in support of achieving the MDGs. However, it is precisely the absence of capacity and will that frames our understanding of fragile states (Leader and Colenso, 2005). This aid effectiveness paradigm, underpinned by a set of principles and targets, has evolved through agreements reached at the High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome (February 2003), the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (February 2004), and the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness (Paris in March 2005; Accra in September 2008). The Paris Declaration has gone furthest in negotiating a series of aid effectiveness targets and indicators, binding both donor countries and developing countries.

Leader and Colenso (2005) outline the challenges in applying the emerging consensus on 'aid effectiveness' to fragile states. At heart, the Paris consensus is a simple idea: donors should trust the plans of governments and other national stakeholders and programme their aid together (harmonisation) in support of national plans and priorities (alignment), with clear results (results), for which states are accountable to citizens (accountability). But this is the compact that is so hard to achieve in fragile states. It is what Sperling (2006) has subsequently described as 'the trust gap'. Colenso and Leader (2005) cite the limited thinking of Radelet (2004) and others who say that the nature of fragile states means that aid should necessarily be less, more projectised, over

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<sup>22</sup> It can also help raise the political profile of these countries in OECD governments and in development agencies. This is particularly significant given the relatively low levels of aid flows to fragile states (see section 2.4 below).

<sup>23</sup> Blanchflower (2004) notes that this is a perspective that emphasises the observer's policy agenda.

a shorter time period, restricted in scope, and much of it distributed through NGOs.

Much of the work done on aid and fragile states has sought to demonstrate that the Paris aid effectiveness principles still largely pertain in fragile states. This includes the OECD DAC 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States' (OECD DAC, 2005), their subsequent piloting and extensive analysis. These principles are reproduced in full in Appendix 2, but can be summarised as follows.

1. Take context as the starting point;
2. move from reaction to prevention;
3. focus on state-building as the central objective;
4. align with local priorities and/or systems;
5. recognise the political-security-development nexus;
6. promote coherence between donor government agencies;
7. agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors;
8. do no harm;
9. mix and sequence aid instruments to fit the context;
10. act fast...
11. ...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance;
12. avoid pockets of exclusion.

Table 2.3. Summary of OECD DAC 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States' (OECD DAC, 2005)

These principles have been recently tested in the IIEP monograph on donors' support to education in fragile and conflict-affected states (Brannelly et al., 2009). This monograph and its implications will be examined in Chapter 3. DFID has recently published revised guidance for 'working effectively in conflict-affected and fragile situations', which builds strongly from the DAC principles but with some deviation (DFID, 2010b)<sup>24</sup>. It is worth noting that DFID's policy and programmatic work on fragile states has shifted since I wrote the CAS in 2005, to give greater focus to the twin objectives of state-building and peace-building. This is further explored in Chapter 3 below.

<sup>24</sup> This guidance includes 'Briefing Papers' across nine areas closely linked to the DAC Principles: (i) analysing conflict and fragility, (ii) do no harm, (iii) links between politics, security and state development, (iv) promoting non-discrimination, (v) aligning with local priorities, (vi) practically coordination mechanisms, (vii) act fast...but stay engaged, (viii) risk management, (ix) monitoring and evaluation. (DFID, 2010b)

## **2.4 Is there a case for allocating more aid to education in fragile states?**

There appears to be a strong case for allocating more aid to fragile states, on grounds of both need and performance.

Aid to fragile states is: (i) less than half that to better performing countries, on a per capita basis (Mackinnon, 2003), (ii) more volatile than better performing countries (Dollar and Levin, 2005; DFID, 2005), and (iii) in the context of post-conflict fragile states, well below absorptive capacity (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Fragile states are 'under-aided', even against a performance-based aid allocation model (Dollar and Levin, 2005, cited in the CAS, page 14)

Based on a literature review and some statistical modelling, Jones and Kotoglo (2005) compare actual aid allocations (1998-2003) with optimal approaches implied by the literature. The authors use two bases for estimating optimal allocations: a need element, based on poverty and population measures, and empirical analysis of a country's capacity and effective use of aid (using CPIA scores). They find that there is a general bias against large countries, but that the influence of the policy and institutions variable is dwarfed by population and poverty/income measures. For fragile states, 'donor orphans' include a belt of countries in west and central Africa, plus Uzbekistan, and 'donor darlings' include Guinea, Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone.

For Africa, Nigeria is by a large margin the most under-aided country. The core problem for fragile states is not inappropriate models but the lack of a coordinated framework for cross-country allocations, particularly for bilateral donors. Fragile states require a different approach from non fragile states; the key issue is the form of engagement and type of aid that will increase the effectiveness with which aid is used (Jones and Kotoglo, 2005). It seems therefore that there is a strong case for allocating more aid to fragile states, although the literature cited above does not say anything about allocations to education specifically.

DFID's Education Portfolio Review constructed a resource allocation model to test whether DFID country programme allocations were being allocated

appropriately to meet education goals. A composite indicator (see Figure 2.2 below) based on indicators of need and likely effectiveness of resources for the education sector was used to identify an 'ideal' expenditure pattern – both across all countries where DFID has a bilateral programme, and across DFID priority countries listed in DFID's then Public Service Agreement with the Treasury.

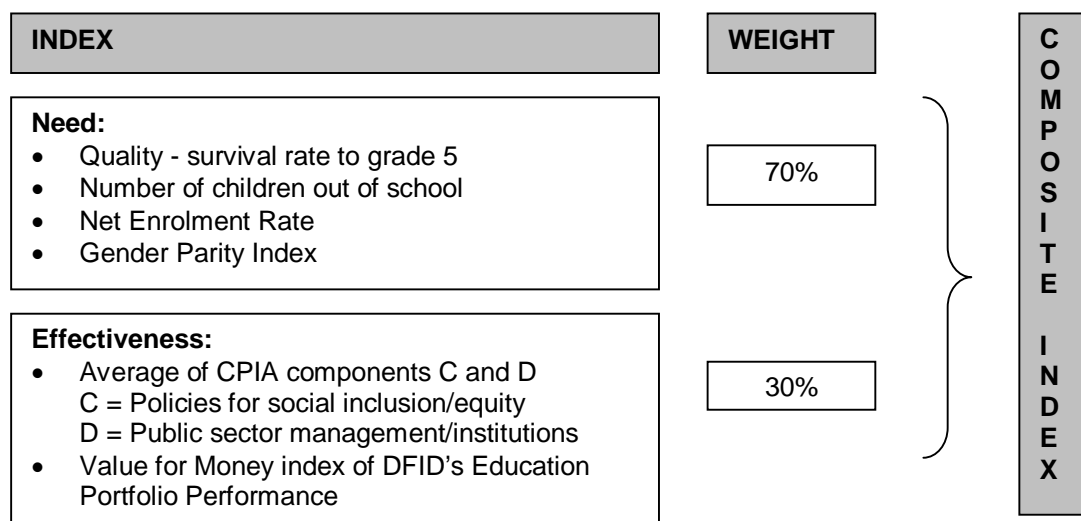


Figure 2.2. Education resource allocation model designed by James Bianco for DFID's Education Portfolio Review (DFID, 2009)

Comparing DFID's current plans for 2010/11 with these two alternative expenditure patterns shows that DFID's planned spend across countries is about right, principally because of planned large increases in high population countries such as Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan (and existing high levels of spend in India and Ethiopia). It is clear however that DFID is a relatively 'progressive' donor in allocating a high proportion of its bilateral programme resources to low-income countries (a commitment to spend 90% in low income countries) and to fragile states (a commitment to spend half of all new bilateral programme resources in fragile states). In its recent Education Strategy launched in March 2010, DFID commits to spending around half of its bilateral education aid in fragile states (DFID, 2010a).

There seems to be a strong case, which, among donors, the UK at least has found compelling, to invest more education resources in fragile states. For the UK in particular this puts a high premium on developing a sound analytical and

programming base for these investments. The project of this thesis is to attempt to construct a theoretical base for these investments: an organising framework or meta-narrative with strong explanatory and predictive power. This is the task of Chapter 3.

### **3. Building the theoretical framework**

Chapter 1 sought to establish the purpose of the thesis, how it builds on the CAS, and the methodology and methods it will use. Chapter 2 rehearsed and updated some of the ground covered in the CAS, defining key concepts and providing the context for the project of this thesis: to build a theory for understanding the role of overseas development aid in achieving the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in fragile states. This Chapter will attempt to build that theory, defining key variables, establishing the strength of relationships between these variables through grading the evidence underpinning those relationships, and organising these variables and their relationships into an explanatory framework.

This process will follow six stages:

- Stage 1 – linking aid inputs and development outcomes;
- Stage 2 – establishing intermediate effects (financing; institutions / policy);
- Stage 3 – understanding inputs (types & sequencing; non-aid inputs);
- Stage 4 – understanding delivery (aid effectiveness; with a particular focus on harmonisation and alignment);
- Stage 5 – establishing entry conditions (e.g. stability, political will);
- Stage 6 – understanding the relationship between education and fragility.

#### **3.1 Stage 1 – linking aid inputs and development outcomes**

Stage 1 of building a theoretical framework is to assess whether there is an empirically validated link between inputs and outcomes. In short, is there evidence to suggest that aid can contribute in any way to development outcomes, including to education outcomes in fragile states? This would seem to be the initial proposition that needs to be established, before defining and investigating this relationship and its sub-plots in more detail. This section will briefly review the evidence, including evidence at the macro level, and evidence

at the project level. I will draw on a range of data, including from new empirical and desk based research conducted for this thesis.

A review by Foster (2003) – reasonably thorough though not a systematic review – states that:

...the balance of evidence strongly suggests that Aid has been a good investment. Econometric studies, project evaluations, and country case studies find typical rates of return above 20%. Aid has also contributed to a doubling of school enrolments and halving of infant mortality since 1970... (Foster, 2003, page 6).

Evidence from the econometric literature is mixed. Burnside and Dollar (2000) find that aid is more effective in good policy environments than in fragile states – a finding confirmed by Collier and Dollar (2002). However, subsequent research has found that the Burnside and Dollar results are not robust, after changing the definitions of ‘good policies’, ‘aid’ and ‘growth’ (Easterly, 2003), or after expanding the original dataset to cover more observations and additional years (Easterly et al, 2003). Using similar methods, studies have also found that aid is effective in increasing growth regardless of the quality of policies and institutions (Durbarry et al, 1998; Hansen and Tarp, 2001; Lensink and White, 2000). Hansen and Tarp (2000) survey three generations of aid-growth literature, concluding that “there is a robust aid-growth link even in countries hampered by an unfavourable policy environment.”<sup>25</sup> Chauvet and Collier find that: “The investment of an incremental aid program to a typical failing state of \$240.8 millions...results in a payoff of around \$3.3bn...this suggests that expanded aid would be well worthwhile.” (Chauvet and Collier, 2005, page 18).

The positive conclusions of these authors about the effectiveness of aid are not however universally shared within the empirical literature. Easterly in particular provides a strong critique of the effectiveness of aid (see, for example Easterly 2001, 2003, 2009). In particular Easterly’s recent (2009) paper makes an

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<sup>25</sup> The studies cited here focus on links between aid and economic growth. Economic growth does not necessarily equate to progress against the MDG targets or improved livelihoods for poor people. I will not consider this debate here, but I assume that economic growth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainable poverty reduction.



empirical case for the weakness of ‘transformational’ approaches to aid, advocating a more modest ‘marginal’ approach. Easterly notes two themes emerging from the literature he surveys. First, ‘escalation’: a tendency for aid agencies to follow each disappointing transformational effort with a more ambitious one. Second, ‘the cycle of ideas’: rather than a progressive testing and discarding of failed ideas, a cycle in aid ideas going out of fashion only to come back again later. He sees both of these phenomena as symptomatic of a lack of learning in the international aid community (Easterly, 2009).

To understand the evidence better, we need to follow Easterly’s lead and further break down the complex variable that is aid. In their 2005 survey on aid-growth linkages, Harms and Lutz (2005) note that “...it is not surprising that a variable as aggregate as official development assistance does not have a robust effect on growth” (Harms and Lutz, 2005, page 12). Dreher (2006a) also notes that the heterogeneous nature of aid has received relatively limited attention in the empirical literature, although studies do exist:

Most studies accounting for different types of aid focus on the distinction between project and program aid (or general budget support) or the distinction between grants and loans. Mavrotas (2005) as well as Cordella and Dell’Ariccia (2003) represent examples of the first group. Gupta et al. (2003), Cordella and Ulku (2004) as well as Cohen, Jacquet and Reisen (2006) represent examples of the second group. Dreher, Nunnenkamp and Thiele (2006b) account for both project aid versus budget support and grants versus loans in their analysis of US aid. (Dreher et al. 2006a, pages 3-4)

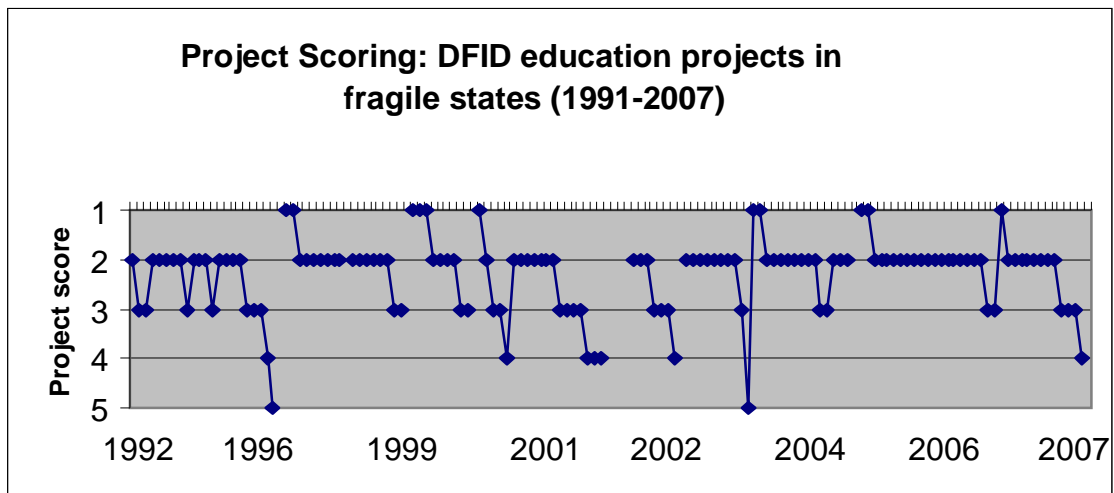
The sectoral dimension of aid heterogeneity has also received surprisingly little attention. Dreher notes that “...an empirical literature on the effectiveness of aid to specific sectors, in particular education and health, is just emerging.” Dreher et al., 2006a, page 4). Dreher analyses the impact of education-specific aid to education outcomes for about 100 countries over the period 1970-2005. They conclude that aid significantly increases primary enrolment. Dreher’s analysis is further explored in Stage 2 below, including their investigation of the intermediate effects – particularly educational expenditure and the quality of institutions – linking aid inputs and education outcomes.

It would seem therefore, that there is an empirical case – albeit disputed – with the respect to this measure of effectiveness, based on evidence derived from econometric methods, that aid to fragile states can indeed be effective, including in the education sector, although, as McGillivray (2006) notes, major disputes remain in the wider empirical literature about the impact of different forms of aid and the interaction with policy and institutional quality.

The hypothesis that aid can be effective in fragile states seems to be confirmed at the project level by the portfolio analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007), conducted for this thesis. It is important to note however that the meaning of the term effectiveness may be somewhat different. ‘Effectiveness’ in the project scoring is based on whether projects achieve their objectives. Each project will have a different objective, according to how it is constructed and the measures of performance identified in its ‘logical framework’. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of project scores for DFID education projects in fragile states over this 16 year period.

It is worthy of note that almost three quarters of projects (72%) either ‘achieved’ (8%) or ‘largely achieved’ (64%) their purpose, with a further 21% that ‘partially achieved’ their purpose. However, as noted in the previous chapter, it should be noted that there is at least a medium risk of observer bias, in that project completion reports are commissioned by the education advisers and programme managers whose responsibility is to implement the programmes. There are also corporate incentives to score projects highly, as the performance of business units (country offices, regional divisions etc.) is in part assessed on the basis of project portfolio performance.

Figure 3.1 shows the profile of project ratings over time, with each point on the graph representing a project.



*Figure 3.1. Project Scoring: DFID education projects in fragile states (1991-2007)  
(from 1 as highest score to 5 as lowest score; blank indicates project score not recorded)*

It is hard to draw additional conclusions from looking at these data as a time series. There appears to be no improvement over time, although there does appear to be a clustering of '2' scores from late 2003 onwards, possibly driven by a period of closer internal scrutiny in DFID, supporting incentives to score projects more highly.

The Education Portfolio Review provides further evidence on whether aid can support education outcomes in fragile states, using portfolio performance as a proxy. It compares education portfolio performance with overall portfolio performance. This is summarised in Figure 3.2 below, with fragile states shaded.

		Latest score in the last 24 months	Score in 07/08 or if no score then 06/07	
		All	Education portfolio	Variance
<b>Africa</b>	DFID Burundi	75%	75%	0%
	DFID Ethiopia	87%	98%	11%
	DFID Kenya & Somalia	68%	75%	7%
	DFID Malawi	60%	77%	17%
	DFID Mozambique	61%	75%	14%
	DFID Nigeria	63%	54%	-9%
	DFID Rwanda	70%	75%	5%
	DFID Sierra Leone	66%	57%	-8%
	DFID Southern Africa	64%	75%	11%
	DFID Sudan	68%	50%	-18%
	<b>Africa Total</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>South Asia</b>	DFID Bangladesh	67%	61%	-6%
	DFID India	76%	73%	-3%
	DFID Nepal	72%	25%	-47%
	DFID Pakistan	75%	75%	0%
	<b>South Asia Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>MECAB</b>	DFID Burma	70%	75%	5%
	DFID China	80%	77%	-3%
	DFID Vietnam	71%	75%	4%
	<b>MECAB Total</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>All DfID</b>		<b>72%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>-2%</b>

Figure 3.2. DFID education portfolio performance compared to DFID overall portfolio performance; fragile states shaded (Source: DFID Education Portfolio Review)

In overall terms, the difference in project performance between education projects and all projects is more marked in fragile states i.e. education projects performing worse. It is particularly Sudan that brings down overall performance. However, one should be cautious about accepting these conclusions at face value given the very small sample size. It is notable that Ethiopia has scored particularly well. This is the Protection of Basic Services Project which is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Thornton and Cox (2006) analyse a larger number of DFID projects in fragile states (3,211), but over a shorter time period (2002/3 to 2006/7), and assess overall project performance. Employing the DFID sliding scale Portfolio Quality Index, used by DFID for reporting under its Public Service Agreement, the analysis showed that overall performance in fragile states was almost the same

as the rest of the portfolio, at around 70%. This finding supports some of the cross-country analysis at the macro level, cited above – e.g. Durbarry et al, 1998; Hansen and Tarp, 2001; Lensink and White, 2000 – that aid can support development outcomes in countries regardless of the quality of their policies and institutions.

In support of the emerging conclusion that aid inputs can support education outcomes in fragile states, can we find examples of specific outputs or outcomes that education projects have supported? In conducting the Education Portfolio Review, we asked DFID country offices to record some of the results that education projects – and broader aid inputs impacting on education outcomes, such as budget support – have achieved. Figure 3.3 below shows data from selected fragile states derived from the country survey instrument used in the DFID Education Portfolio Review.

**Number of primary and secondary classrooms constructed (unless otherwise stated)**

	2005	2006	2007	
Yemen	-	4	99	<i>Basic Education Development Project</i>
Nigeria	1,500 (estimate over 3 years)			<i>Girls Education Project</i>

**Number of teachers trained and recruited**

	No of teachers trained	No of teachers recruited	
Yemen	7,735 (2006) 11,050 (2007)		<i>Basic Education Development Project</i>
Ethiopia	5,644 (secondary 2006)	171,079 (primary 2005) 203,309 (2006) 225,319 (2007)	<i>Teacher development programme</i>
Nigeria	7,500 (over 2 years)		<i>Girls Education Project</i>

*Figure 3.3. Selected outputs achieved by DFID education programmes in selected fragile states (Source: DFID 2009)*

It is noticeable that these data are incomplete. This reflects at least two problems: (i) the lack of data, and poor data quality, in many fragile states, (ii) the difficulty of attributing outputs to aid inputs, particularly when the instrument uses government systems or other pooled funding mechanisms. It should also

be noted that the numbers of classrooms constructed and teachers trained are only proxies for development effectiveness and impact. They do not show progress towards the Education MDGs (the subject of this thesis), nor do the data above say anything about unit costs and value for money. Nonetheless, these data provide some support to the proposition – at project level – that aid can be effective in supporting some education outputs in fragile states. We can not, however, be fully confident that this translates into education outcomes such as better learning in the classroom.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Education Portfolio Review goes further than Figure 3.2 in estimating that DFID support through country offices alone is supporting around 5 million children in primary school worldwide. The Education Portfolio Review notes that “...the data underpinning this estimate is patchy and it therefore can only provide an indication of the scale of DFID’s support rather than an absolute number.” (DFID, 2009, page 21)

It is notable, however, that of this 5 million, only one quarter come from countries that are listed as fragile states: 1.2 million of the 5 million total, of which only 200,000 come from budget support countries (Cambodia, Sierra Leone) from a DFID-wide total of 2.8 million, and 1 million come from non-budget support countries (with almost 740,000 coming from Ethiopia alone). There are three likely explanations for this: (i) data are not available in many fragile states, (ii) UK-supported shares of national enrolments are easier to estimate in budget support countries where the Education Portfolio Review has calculated the number of UK-supported children by calculating the UK share of total sub-sector financing and attributing a UK share of enrolments pro rata, (iii) DFID is actually supporting fewer children in school in fragile states given the potential complexities in doing so.

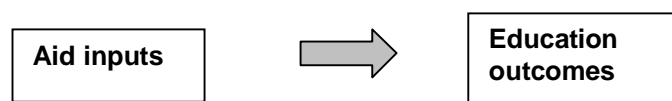
However, on the basis of the analysis in this section, the first building block of our theory can be assembled: there seems to be sufficient evidence that aid inputs can contribute to development outcomes, including education outcomes, in fragile states. Although disputed, there is evidence both at the macro level in

terms of economic growth (e.g. Durberry et al, 1998; Hansen and Tarp, 2000 & 2001; Lensink and White, 2000; Chauvet and Collier, 2005), and in terms of education outcomes (e.g. Dreher et al., 2006a; Foster, 2003). There is also evidence at the project level, in terms of overall development outcomes in fragile states (e.g. DFID's Portfolio Quality Index), and education outcomes including in fragile states (e.g. DFID portfolio analysis).

However, applying the grading instrument, this relationship can be described as medium only, and not strong:

- methods used are mostly in the medium to weak category; for example, I found only one example of what might be described as a systematic literature review (Hansen and Tarp, 2000);
- there is medium to strong risk of observer bias, particularly in the DFID self-reported data on performance of projects;
- whilst corroboration is mostly medium to strong, it is argued that weaknesses in methods and observer bias bring the overall assessment down to medium.

This relationship is described in diagrammatic terms in Figure 3.4 below, in which a grey-shaded arrow denotes the strength of the relationship for which the evidence is described as 'medium'.



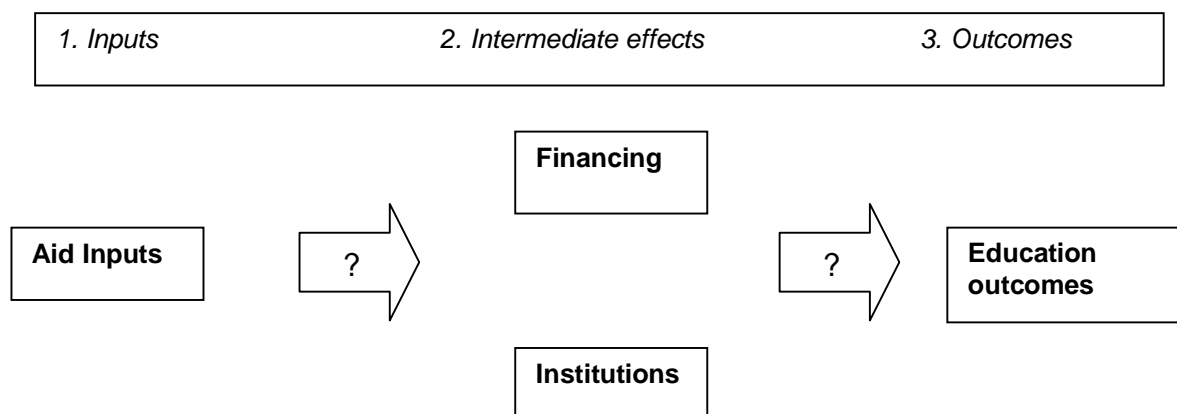
*Figure 3.4. Theoretical Framework (Stage 1)*

### **3.2 Stage 2 – establishing intermediate effects (financing; institutions / policy)**

However, it is clear that accepting this proposed relationship between aid inputs and education outcomes requires a considerable leap of faith in terms of attribution. To increase our confidence that aid inputs can be causally related to education outcomes – and to strengthen further the explanatory power of the

proposed theory – it may be necessary to introduce and test some ‘intermediate effects’ i.e. observable stages or effects that might establish a causal pathway between inputs and outputs/outcomes.

The empirical literature has focussed on two observable areas that aid can impact, which might in turn have a reasonably identifiable impact on education outcomes: (i) financing, and (ii) the quality of institutions and policies. The hypotheses we will test is that aid affects education outcomes through one or both of the following effects: (i) increasing the volume and efficiency of financing available to support education inputs, outputs and outcomes, and (ii) improving the quality of institutions (and so efficiency) involved in managing and delivering education and broader developmental outcomes. This approach – hypothesising and testing intermediate effects to try to establish clearer explanatory and causal links between variables – draws in part from the OECD DAC Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support (IDD et al. 2006). The proposition I am testing is represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.5 below.



*Figure 3.5. Testing the proposition*

It should be noted that ‘institutions’ is broadly interpreted to encompass not only formally constituted institutions and organisations, but also broader measures of democracy, transparency and public participation. Critical theory would argue, with some justification, that including democracy leads to an ideologically loaded definition, i.e. the assumption that ‘democracy’ is both measurable and



good. Where ‘institutions’ and ‘democracy’ are defined and measured in the studies reviewed here, I will explain and briefly analyse the measures used: e.g. the World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Analysis (CPIA; also used by DFID and others), and Freedom House data used by, inter alia, Dreher et al. (2006b).

### *3.2.1 Exploring financing as an intermediate effect*

Intuitively, and following the logic and policies of many donor organisations, there should be a link between increased aid and increased total expenditure (domestic and external), and then, one would hope, between increased expenditure and improved development outcomes; the latter of course dependent on the efficiency of that expenditure.

However the empirical literature is divided on the subject. In support of this hypothesis, Gupta et al. (1999) report a robust and significantly positive impact of combined primary and secondary education spending on combined primary and secondary enrolment rates, as well as on grade four completion (a traditional but weak proxy for education quality). Baldacci et al. (2004) find that spending is indeed the only determinant of combined primary and secondary enrolment which remains significant across a number of different econometric specifications. Gomanee et al. (2003) claim that aid affects poverty only through its effect on pro-poor public expenditures.

However, Gomanee and colleagues come to exactly the opposite conclusion for a larger sample of aid-recipient countries considered in a later version of their paper (Gomanee et al., 2005). This is supported by other studies. In a paper commissioned by DFID, Roberts (2003) surveys the literature linking aid, public expenditure and social sector outcomes and concludes that per capita income tends to be the most powerful driving force of school attendance, whereas supply-side factors, and in particular education expenditure, are statistically insignificant in most instances. Roberts cites Filmer and Pritchett (1999) who examine the determinants of grade 5 completion rates among 15-19 year olds

in a sample of 35 countries and find that, once per capita income is controlled for, public expenditure on education loses explanatory power.

Although Dreher et al. (2006a) find that aid significantly increases primary school enrolment, in contrast to what donors might expect, their empirical analysis rejects the hypothesis that this is at least in part caused by aid increasing overall expenditures on education. They find that aid for education is unlikely to result in more overall spending on education in the recipient country. Turning to the health sector, Easterly (2009) notes that there are a number of widely-cited regressions that find no impact of health spending on health outcomes (e.g. Filmer, Hammer, and Pritchett 2000; Pritchett and Woolcock, 2004).

These findings are supported by Pettersson's (2006) finding that sector-specific aid is highly fungible<sup>2627</sup>. However, Dreher neither tests nor rules out the possibility that aid can be used to influence the allocation – sector-specific; pro-poor – of domestic resources through the use of conditionality, performance indicators, policy dialogue or other means. It is this that might give the donors some comfort: a recognition that while unconditional and unchecked resource transfers may be highly fungible and may not therefore lead to increased public expenditure, that 'additionality' can be achieved through attaching conditions to aid, through the design of performance indicators, or through policy dialogue around the use of that aid. There is some empirical evidence on the use of 'conditionality', but again the results are mixed.

Collier's (1997) seminal study provided an empirical basis – largely undisputed until recently – to say that conditionality has not worked. Mosley, Hudson and

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<sup>26</sup> There is a burgeoning literature on the fungibility of aid – whether aid increases total resources to a sector or simply displaces domestic expenditure – but there is not sufficient space to review it in depth in this thesis.

<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that fungibility is neither the only, nor indeed probably principle, explanation for the disconnect between financing and outcomes. A simpler explanation is the various problems of implementation, including dysfunctional systems e.g. leakage of resources, absenteeism and poor performance of public servants, resource gaps (clinics but no drugs; schools but no books).

Verschoor (2004) have argued that a ‘new form’ of conditionality<sup>28</sup> may indeed have achieved the desired effects, including affecting pro-poor expenditure. That aid can influence domestic policy and resource allocation – through the type of means that Dreher posits but does not test – is a key tenet of donors, particularly when using budget support.

The Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support commissioned by OECD DAC and carried out by the International Development Department of Birmingham University and associates (IDD et al. 2006) found that on balance the use of general budget support has increased pro-poor expenditures, but with a mixed impact on education outcomes, i.e. increased enrolments, but no observable impact on equity or on learning outcomes. Investigating whether general budget support had affected the performance of public expenditure, the evaluation case studies found strong positive evidence in Uganda, Vietnam, Rwanda and Mozambique, moderate evidence in Burkina Faso, and weak evidence in Malawi and Nicaragua. This relates not only to the volume of resources but also to efficiency. The evaluation noted that in Rwanda, Uganda and Mozambique, general budget support had, significantly, allowed for a more efficient balance between recurrent and capital expenditures.<sup>29</sup>

On the effect of aid on levels of public expenditure, particularly social sector expenditure, it is also worth noting that it is methodologically extremely difficult to obtain accurate data, particularly in making cross-country comparisons. Such data do not simply fall out of national budgets and accounts. The 2006 Global

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<sup>28</sup> i.e. moving from ‘structural conditionality’ (withholding aid if specific policy reforms are not adopted) to the softer form of conditionality, suggested by Mosley, Hudson and Verschoor, based around the use of performance indicators and policy dialogue. In the words of the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support: “The PRSP philosophy is that support for government-owned PRSPs replaces the attempt to impose external solutions through conditionality.” Clearly this is not a clear divide, particularly if viewed from a critical theory perspective. The Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support notes that government respondents in Rwanda and Vietnam clearly perceived less of a difference between new ‘performance indicators’ and old ‘conditionality’ than did donors.

<sup>29</sup> The balance between recurrent and capital expenditure is one of the key levers available for public policy makers, as indeed is the composition of each. A high proportion – up to 90% in some countries – of recurrent expenditure in education is spent on salaries. Development agencies have sometimes argued for a higher share of recurrent education expenditure to go to non-salary inputs, such as textbooks and other ‘quality inputs’, to improve education quality.

Monitoring Report of the International Monetary Fund / World Bank notes the following difficulties:

The incompleteness of the data makes all observations tentative. It also poses a real issue for efforts to link resources to results in monitoring MDG progress, at least in the human development sectors. The current data platform is wholly inadequate...no systematic cross country database unites these data. The only available series is produced by the [International Monetary] Fund, and it has significant country gaps and no data on subsectoral or subnational social spending. It is impossible to say today, for example, whether increased ODA for primary education in Sub Saharan Africa has been reflected in any increase in government spending on primary education across that region. (IMF/WB, 2006, page 62)

Dreher et al. conclude as follows:

Positive aid effects on educational outcomes in recipient countries notwithstanding, our analysis points to some caveats that donors should keep in mind when giving aid. First of all, *in contrast to what donors might expect, aid for education is unlikely to result in more overall spending on education in the recipient country*...Moreover, the finding that aid does not affect educational outcomes through budgetary channels, i.e., its effect on government expenditure for education, casts into doubt the proposal by Mosley, Hudson and Verschoor (2004: F221) to use aid as a means to influence “the orientation of public expenditures towards poverty reduction.” At least as concerns education, this “new form of conditionality” does not appear to have worked in the past. Whether the chances for donors to induce recipient governments to adopt a more pro-poor public expenditure mix by conditioning aid have improved recently, with the advent of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, is left open to debate. (Dreher et al., 2006a, page 21, emphasis added)

Nevertheless, the analysis of the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support (IDD et al. 2006) – the largest and arguably most rigorous examination of the impact of programmatic aid over the last ten years – suggests that the “new form of conditionality” may indeed have had some successes.

We might conclude therefore – based on this brief review of selected quantitative and qualitative evidence – that there is weak evidence in support of

the hypothesis that aid supports education outcomes through increasing the total resources available to the sector. Applying the grading instrument, we see medium methods, probably a medium to low risk of observer bias, but a low degree of corroboration. We also see, as noted by the IMF/WB report cited above, that there are significant gaps in data, which makes it difficult to gather evidence in support of this proposition. In addition to this, most of the evidence examined in this section has not been specific to fragile states, although research focussed on aid recipient countries and particularly on sub-Saharan Africa will usually include fragile states, subject to the availability of data. This reflects significant gaps and weakness in the available research.

That the evidence in support of financing as an intermediate effect is weak, will be reflected in the next iteration of the theoretical framework (see Figure 3.6 below). This relationship will be explored in further detail in the next section (Stage 3), which breaks down aid instruments to look at the evidence linking financial aid and technical assistance on financing and on education outcomes. This will include examining evidence from the DFID portfolio analysis conducted for this thesis.

### *3.2.2 Exploring institutional quality as an intermediate effect*

In section 3.1 above, a review of the literature on the effect of institutional quality in the aid-growth relationship noted that some empirical studies have found that aid is effective in increasing growth regardless of the quality of policies and institutions (Durberry et al, 1998; Hansen and Tarp, 2001; Lensink and White, 2000). Furthermore, Hansen and Tarp (2000) surveyed three generations of aid-growth literature and concluded that “there is a robust aid-growth link even in countries hampered by an unfavourable policy environment.” Is there empirical evidence on the role of institutional quality in the relationship between education sector-specific aid and education outcomes?

Burnside and Dollar (2004) make the following observation.

...researchers coming from the left, the right, and the center have all concluded that aid as traditionally practiced has not had systematic, beneficial effects on institutions and policies. (Burnside and Dollar, 2004, page 4)

However Dreher et al. (2006a) find that aid does improve democracy and institutional quality, corroborating the finding of Kalyvitis and Vlachaki (2006). However, they also find that the impact of aid on education outcomes does not depend on democracy and institutional quality, in contrast to Svensson's (1999) hypothesis that the impact of aid is dependent on 'democracy'. Indeed they claim that "aid for education may help achieve universal education even in recipient countries characterized by less advanced democratic institutions." (Dreher et al., 2006a, page 21).

IDD et al. (2006) found evidence that general budget support had in some cases strengthened public financial management (fiscal space, efficiency, planning/budgeting), but that there was little observable evidence that general budget support had led to improvements in domestic accountability, empowerment of the poor, or reducing corruption.

Again the empirical literature is divided. Kalyvitis and Vlachaki (2006) show that aid flows specifically directed to support democracy are positively associated with the likelihood of democratic transition in recipient countries. Tavares (2003) maintains that aid has reduced corruption while Knack's (2001) analysis claims that aid has increased corruption. These findings are not necessarily contradictory, as they consider different data, and indeed different measures (e.g. democracy, corruption) of what our proposed theoretical framework is calling 'institutional / policy effects'. It is plausible, and indeed likely, that evidence both for and against the propositions that aid can strengthen institutional quality is robust and will depend on contextual and institutional issues.

Vallings and Moreno Torres (2005) state that "weak institutions are the central driver of fragility". Colenso (2005a) examines successful examples from the health sector in Uganda (Carlson, 2004) and the education sector in Timor

Leste (Nicolai, 2004) of donors supporting capacity development in government counterparts, also citing evidence to the effect that institutional quality – while key – can be protected and developed through a range of means. World Bank (2005) analysis of post-conflict reconstruction of education sectors shows how in El Salvador and Sri Lanka, the state essentially survived the conflict and so led policy development and reform implementation. In Cambodia, Kosovo and Timor Leste, however, reconstruction of education systems took place in parallel with re-establishment of civil authority and civil administration, requiring a different pace and pattern of reform. By contrast, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was no shared political vision for system reform and the fragmentation of institutions presented major challenges for successful decentralization (World Bank, 2005).

The DFID Portfolio Analysis pointed to mixed success in aid aimed at building government capacity. However there were projects and programmes that were successful in even the most constrained environments, particularly when working with local education authorities (Sudan; UNICEF Peace Education; 2004)<sup>30</sup>. Experience from a secondary education project in Nepal pointed to the importance of reinforcing existing capacity and institutions, rather than creating parallel structures.

If a project uses the existing line agencies rather than setting up parallel structures, capacity building is reinforced; opportunities should be taken to develop already established teacher training institutions rather than developing parallel institutions. (Nepal; Secondary Education Development Project; 2001)

Mid-term reviews from two DFID education projects noted that links with UK institutions were key to building capacity in the public sector (Gambia; Technical Training Institute; 1997) (Nigeria; Technical Education; 1997).

In examining the links between aid and the quality of institutions, there is a broader issue of whether and how aid can contribute to what has been called in

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<sup>30</sup> The following format is used in this thesis to refer to individual projects analysed as part of the DFID Portfolio Analysis described in Section 1.4.1: (*country; name of project; year of project inception*)

the literature 'state-building'. This notion is at the heart of the collective donor understanding of why and how to engage in fragile states. Principle 3 of the OECD DAC (2005) 'Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States' states that development assistance should "...focus on state-building as the central objective". Many commentators – not least of all those adopting a critical theory perspective – question both the limits and motives of donor agencies in 'state-building': is it possible, is it right, to try to effect change on the national political economy of the state? It is worth considering briefly the evidence on this issue, and how some development agencies, taking DFID as an example, are approaching it.

Can external assistance support state-building? The literature on state-building has increasingly been driven by the disciplines of political science and international relations. This is particularly the case in the aftermath of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, where US-led and British-supported interventions have been closely scrutinised and widely criticised. While the development community has not written widely on 'state-building' (Hopp and Kloke-Lesche, 2004), the rise of the 'governance' agenda has strong overlaps. Scott (2007) claims that there is little empirical evidence: "Very little research has been done that attempts to identify successful state-building and then analyse factors that facilitated transitions from weak to effective statehood." Samuels and Von Esidiel (2004) note that there is little debate in the literature over what type of state the international community should try to build in fragile contexts (Samuels and Von Esidiel, 2004). The normative assumption is that the state is a liberal market democracy spread over a geographic territory. According to this interpretation, state-building potentially seeks to transfer Western values, institutions and norms, which is what exposes it to accusations of neo-imperialism, in fitting with a critical theory perspective. Proponents of state-building argue that this sort of neo-colonialism is unlike previous incarnations of colonialism in that it is more altruistic, it is multi-lateral, it involves the non-government sector and interventions advocate early exits (see Paris, 2002).

Commentators have also noted that it is misguided to assume that state weakness causes a power vacuum or equates to lack of direction or



organisation in fragile states (Reno, 2000; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Where the state apparatus seems weak, power may be invested in extremely strong and organised informal networks.

Reviewing the literature on state-building, Etzioni (2004) notes that, historically, state-building has been most successful as states have sought to break away from external powers. The process has not been facilitated by them. Scott (2007) also takes up this theme.

There is a particularly strong emphasis in the literature on the extremely limited role that external actors can play in state-building processes. Virtually unanimously, writers on state-building assert that the international community is not a major player in the reconstruction of the state. To be successful, they argue, state-building efforts must originate from *within* the state. Where external actors do play a leading role in state-building, they undermine the ability of the emerging state to learn to govern independently and they disrupt patterns of local ownership, often building resentment and creating spoilers (Chesterman, 2004; Narten, 2006; Carothers, 2007). Authors repeatedly call for external actors to have very modest expectations of their role and what they can achieve in other states (Samuels and Von Esdiel, 2004). (Scott, 2007, original emphasis)

Scott qualifies this statement by saying that the international community should not just ignore failing states and refuse to help, rather that their help should be designed through the lens of 'facilitating', not 'guiding' the process. Carothers (2007) notes that the international community needs to learn patience, and to be willing to let grassroots responses to state failures emerge rather than pushing for a particular outcome from outside. Scott concludes that there are two things that the international community can do: (i) provide both financial and human resources; military resources in conflict zones – Sierra Leone and Kosovo seem to present examples of successful military interventions; Iraq and

Afghanistan less so – and manpower in non-conflict areas, (ii) facilitate participation and create space for dialogue amongst local actors.

DFID's recently published (2010c) emerging approach to 'Building the State and Securing the Peace' brings together four objectives:

- (i) support inclusive political settlements;
- (ii) address causes of conflict and build resolution mechanisms;
- (iii) develop state survival functions (a basic level of functionality including security, revenue, rule of law);
- (iv) respond to public expectations (including provisions of basic services).

The interplay of these four objectives is suggested in Figure 3.6 below.

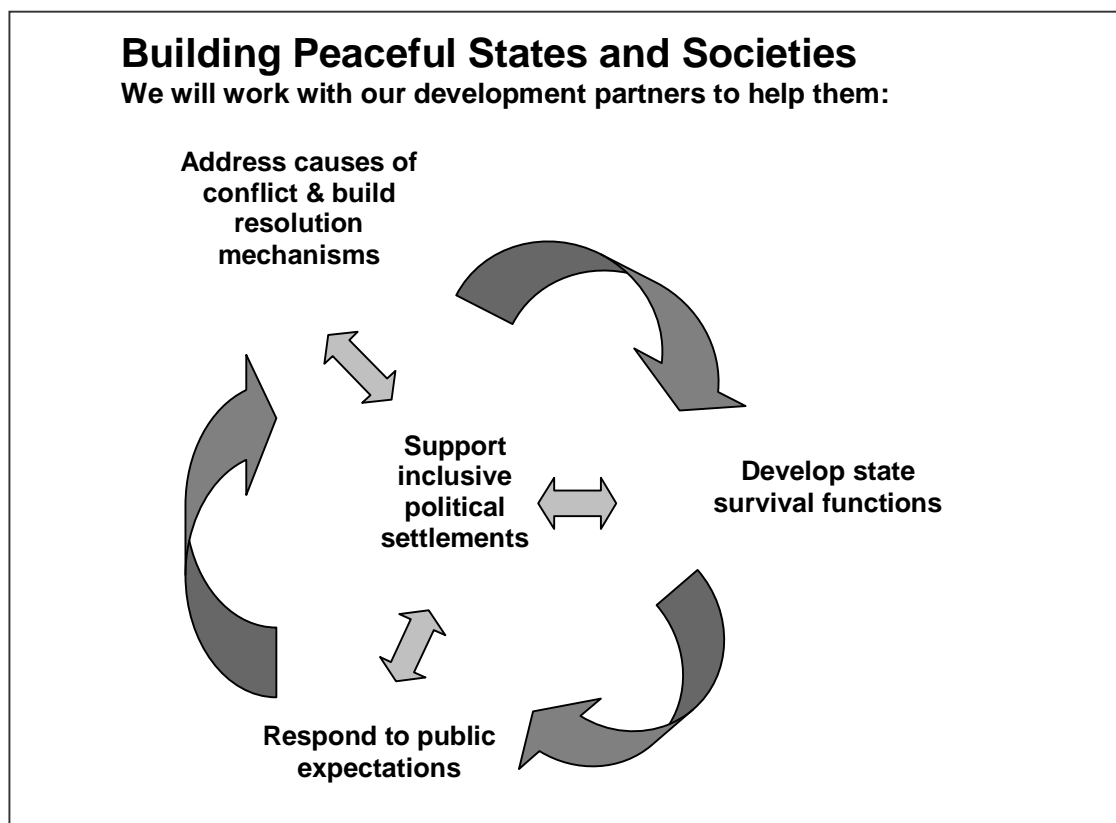


Figure 3.6. DFID's proposed 'integrated approach' to state-building and peace-building (DFID, 2010c)

The DFID paper concludes with six main operational implications of this ‘integrated approach’: (i) prioritise and sequence, (ii) design interventions to support the four objectives, (iii) stay engaged for the long-term, (iv) think politically, (v) take a regional approach, (vi) adapt aid instruments.

We might therefore conclude from this brief discussion of aid and state-building that this is both difficult (in terms of operating within the national political economy of institutional and state dynamics), and potentially questionable (in terms of the function of aid in national sovereign space), and also that the evidence base is weak. The implications of this for operations in the education sector – including whether and how education interventions can increase stability and social cohesion – are discussed in more detail in Section 3.6 below.

To conclude this section, when considering the proposition that aid is linked to education and broader development outcomes at least in part through strengthening the quality of institutions, the evidence can probably be described as mixed (although weak on whether collective institutional reform can sum to ‘state-building’). Methods are best assessed medium; observer bias as medium and corroboration as low, although this may be due to different measures of the broad set of variables that I have called institutional / policy effects.

Based on the analysis of Stage 2 therefore, in reviewing the evidence of what we have called ‘intermediate effects’, we might update our theoretical framework as follows, showing: (i) medium evidence for the overall relationship between aid inputs and education outcomes (Stage 1), (ii) weak evidence supporting the relationship between aid inputs, financing (as the proposed intermediate effect) and education outcomes, and (iii) medium evidence supporting the relationship between aid inputs, institutional effects and education outcomes.

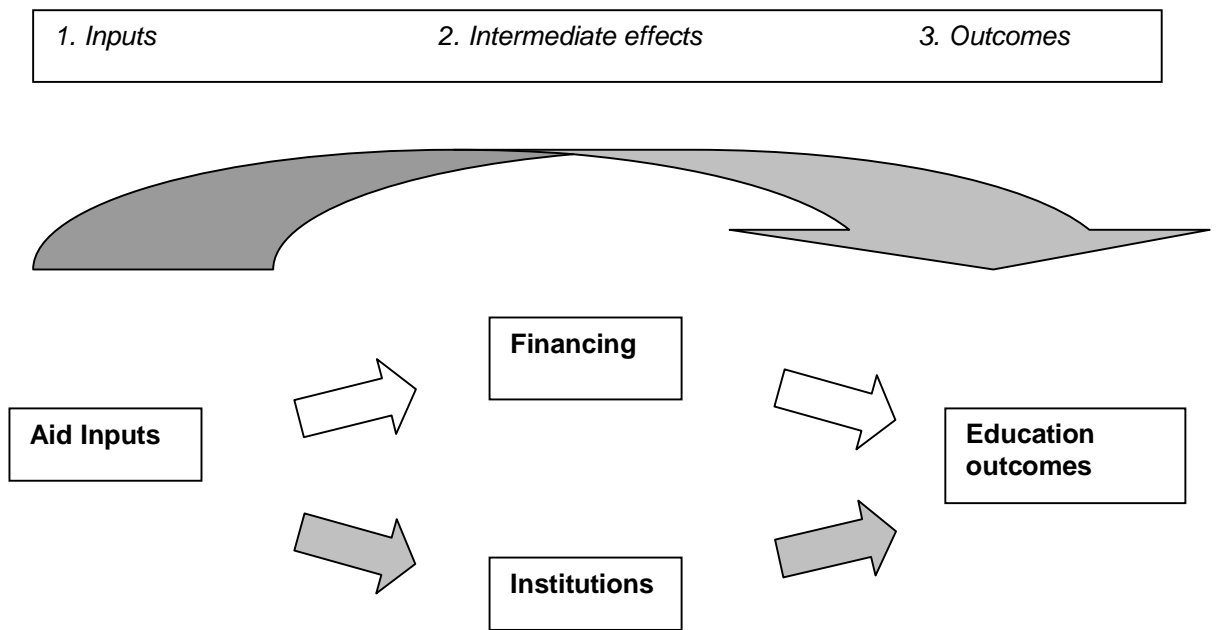


Figure 3.7. Theoretical Framework (Stage 2)

### 3.3 Stage 3 – understanding inputs (types & sequencing; non-aid inputs)

It is clear from analysis in the first two chapters of this thesis that the category ‘aid inputs’ is too broad to allow for meaningful interpretation of the role of aid in supporting education outcomes in fragile states. This section therefore proposes breaking down ‘aid inputs’ into two categories: (i) financial aid, (ii) technical assistance. I will also add to these a third category: (iii) non-aid inputs.

There are three reasons for first breaking down aid inputs into two categories: financial aid and technical cooperation. First, it is a categorisation commonly used by aid agencies, including reporting to the OECD DAC, and so disaggregated data exist according to these categories. Second, there is existing econometric and other analysis that uses this breakdown, which will provide a useful starting point for an examination of the evidence of the effectiveness of these two different types of aid, including the conditions under which they have been effective. Third, if one of the functions of theory is to have

predictive power with specific policy and operational implications, the breakdown of financial aid and technical cooperation is easily transferable to policy and operational decision-making.

The additional, third, category of 'non-aid inputs' is proposed to reflect the significance given in the literature to the interaction between aid inputs and non-aid inputs such as diplomacy, peacekeeping and other military interventions (explored briefly in Section 3.3.3 below).

### *3.3.1 Financial Aid*

In examining the evidence linking financial aid with education objectives in fragile states, it is useful again to start at the macro level and using quantitative evidence:

Financial assistance strengthens the preconditions for reform, but then becomes counterproductive in the first years of incipient reform... However, later in the reform period financial assistance probably becomes useful again... Simulation shows financial aid delivered in second four year period of reform is highly cost-effective. (Chauvet and Collier, 2005, page 35)

Chauvet and Collier's key conclusion – using projections based on empirical data – is that financial aid in fragile states can contribute to building resilience and a path out of fragility linked to strong institutions and economic growth, but that this is contingent upon the timing of that financial aid. However, as noted in Section 3.1, this finding is not universally supported in the empirical literature.

We further need to distinguish between different types of financial aid and different types of fragile state. In this respect, the conclusion that dominates the literature – principally based on qualitative case study evidence – on aid and fragile states can be summarised by two recent studies on donor engagement in education in fragile states:

Using a range of aid modalities depending on the context is more effective than following a one-size-fits-all approach. (Brannelly et al., 2009, page 54).

...there is a wide range of fragile states, and consequently it is difficult to generalise across these diverse development settings. A one size fits all approach will not work...(Berry, 2009, page 4)

In order to move beyond this generalisation, conduct analysis and reach conclusions that are of greater policy and operational relevance, most studies have adopted differentiated analytical frameworks, describing different types of fragile states and examining the effectiveness of different instruments and approaches in these different contexts. These frameworks are briefly described in Chapter 2 above, and in more detail in the Critical Analytic Study. However, it is worth analysing in brief how these different analytical frameworks have been used to assess the effectiveness of financial aid in fragile states, including to support education outcomes, where such analysis exists.

Chapter 2 describes the DFID fragile states typology developed in 2005. Based on the DFID definition of fragile states as “states that cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, particularly the poor” (DFID 2005), the DFID typology uses a four-fold framework based on ‘capacity’ and ‘will’. Unpublished work I did for DFID applies this framework to financial aid, recommending – on the basis of principally case study evidence and a non-systematic literature review – the following instruments in the following types of state:

- High will / low capacity: budget support with coordinated public financial management programmes to mitigate fiduciary risks resulting from weak capacity; common basket programmes for governance reforms; Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs); complementary support to non-state actors;
- Low will / high capacity: project support to non-state actors for service delivery, advocacy and supporting communities; common basket programmes for governance reforms; SWAs or sector budget support; Global Funds;

- Low will / low capacity: project support to non-state actors for service delivery, advocacy, and supporting communities.

Later published work by DFID (DFID, 2006), uses a different framework for differentiating fragile states – ‘conflict’; ‘post-conflict’; ‘limited pro-poor policies / high state capture’ – and explores the roles of different financial aid instruments (Figure 3.8 below).

	FRAGILE STATES		
	Conflict	post-conflict	limited pro-poor policies / high state capture
Rationale for Support	Support political transition, peacebuilding, delivery/management of humanitarian aid and non-state service provision. Likely to be opportunistic and subject to diplomatic/political and international intermediary channels.	Build consensus on development, security and political priorities, rebuild institutions (legal system, property rights, police, budgetary and audit processes), and support service delivery.	Strengthen forces for reform and support non-state delivery of services
General Budget Support	Highly unlikely in face of governance and fiduciary risks	To provide incentives for pro poor reform with provision of adequate safeguards (possibly external management of funds through Trust Funds)	To provide incentives for pro poor reform with provision of adequate safeguards (earmarking)
Sector Budget Support	↓	To support progressive sectors as a possible transition to GBS	To support progressive sectors as a possible transition to GBS
Projects	Humanitarian relief Importance of diplomatic, peacekeeping	Govt: rebuilding institutions and supporting service delivery (often externally managed) Support to civil society, parliament, audit offices, and private sector development	Focus on development of pooled support and at least shadow alignment Bypassing of state as necessary Moving towards state management Support to civil society, parliament, audit offices), and private sector development Developing innovative pro poor pilots
Global Funds and Partnerships	Tightly earmarked support for priority services. Associated TA to support proposals. Focus on rebuilding systems. External management	→	→

Figure 3.8. (Source: DFID, 2006)

In the case of both the unpublished DFID work and of DFID's (2006) 'Guidance on Aid Instruments' cited above, the principle methods deployed are general (not systematic) literature review and case studies. It is interesting to note that, for example, experimental designs to test different policy measures and financial aid instruments are almost non-existent within the literature. There is one notable and oft-cited exception: a World Bank financed evaluation in Cambodia (Loevinsohn, 2001), which found that districts where basic health services were 'contracted out' to NGOs outperformed control districts under existing state management and state-NGO 'contracting in' hybrids<sup>31</sup>, although the results of this evaluation has been subsequently challenged (see e.g. Soeters and Griffiths, 2003). Within DFID's Guidance on Aid Instruments (DFID, 2006), the risk of observer bias should be assessed as at least medium, and the research methods as best medium.

Although DFID's own policy position on education and fragile states is less clearly articulated than some other organisations, it is instructive that when former Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn was asked in Parliament to explain what his Department's policy is on education in fragile states, he replied in terms that described a range of aid instruments according to country context, including government "commitment" and capacity":

In the 2006 White Paper, DFID committed to providing greater support to those fragile states furthest behind on the Millennium Development Goals. The UK will provide £8.5 billion over the next ten years to support education and this will include support for fragile states. In some fragile states, we will work through United Nations agencies and civil society where they can make better progress than governments in improving education. But we will also work to strengthen government systems to deliver services, where they are demonstrating a clear commitment to improve education but lack the resources and capacity to deliver.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The Cambodia experience influenced the design of the health sector contracting model used in Afghanistan; this sharing of experience was made easier by the fact that the World Bank Health Task Manager for Afghanistan had been heavily involved in the Cambodia programme (personal conversation with Ben Loevinsohn, formerly Senior Health Specialist, World Bank South Asia Region).

<sup>32</sup> Reply to Oral Question # 123724 from Mr David Evennet MP (Bexleyheath & Crayford), 28 February 2007.



As noted in Chapter 2, the OECD DAC adopted a different framework using four categories: ‘deterioration’, ‘arrested development’, ‘post-conflict transition’ and ‘early recovery’. In their work for the DAC on education service delivery in fragile states, Rose and Greeley (2006) reach the following conclusions about the effectiveness of different instruments and approaches to education in fragile states (textbox below).

**Summary of evidence of effectiveness of different approaches to supporting education in different fragile state contexts (Rose and Greeley, 2006, adapted)**

*Arrested development* – The limited available evidence indicates that engagement with civil society through the UN system in this phase can be planned in such a way to enable transition to a state system when this becomes possible (e.g. UNICEF’s support in Sudan, Afghanistan and Timor Leste).

*Deterioration* - 1) stay engaged with government as long as possible and use government systems but look at how the system is interacting with the conflict (e.g. Nepal’s SWAp) 2) where it is no longer possible to work with government (either because it has collapsed or it becomes politically impossible), education can be supported locally, with support of appropriate institutions (e.g. SC-Norway’s experience in Nepal; and SC-UK’s experience in Somalia and Somaliland).

*Post-conflict transition/early recovery* - this is the area that has been most researched in education and where there is the most evidence from case studies. Where there is some political willingness, there may be an opportunity to re-engage through government systems. Opportunities may exist to build on community level activity (e.g. Afghanistan home-based schools’ integration into system-wide planning), and support decentralised planning (e.g. Mozambique’s Decentralised Support to Schools’ programme). Non-state actors are likely to play an important role in facilitating this process, especially in the area of community and local government capacity building, with simultaneous efforts needed at central level, which might be facilitated through contracting out (e.g. Pakistan Private-Public Partnerships).

In his policy brief, Berry (2009) adopts a slightly different approach in his analysis of effective approaches to delivering financial aid for education in fragile states. This approach focuses on how different approaches relate in varying degrees to ‘government-led frameworks’: working ‘within...’, ‘towards...’, ‘alongside...’ and ‘outside...’ government frameworks, and, as a fifth category, working ‘within a global framework’ (textbox below).

**Summary of 5 successful approaches to delivering financial aid to education in fragile states (Berry, 2007, page 1)**

- **SWAp** (working within a government-led framework) – The Nepal Education for All programme (a partial SWAp) was an effective way to coordinate, deliver and monitor education support, even in the midst of armed conflict. The Nepal example indicates the importance of finding ways to channel financing through government systems that can reach the local level, supporting ministry efforts to take a lead in the sector, and investing in regular monitoring of progress with a wide range of stakeholders.
- **Trust Fund** (working towards a government-led framework) – the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was able to effectively stabilise the education sector by paying recurrent costs of teachers in a post crisis situation. The Afghanistan example indicates the importance of investing in early efforts to build ministry capacity to enable them to take a leadership role in planning, managing and monitoring the sector, and of channelling financing as far as possible through the sector budget.
- **Social Fund** (working alongside a government-led framework) – the Yemen Social Fund was effective at building on community demand for education and has also made an important contribution to an improved gender balance in primary education. However, the Yemen example shows that unless the demand side inputs are complemented by a prioritised supply-side plan for the sector, they will not result in education systems development. A close working relationship with the line ministry is therefore crucial.
- **UN-led joint approach** (working outside a government-led framework) - In Somalia, UNICEF was able to work across all three regions in Somalia and was reasonably effective at building partnerships for the development of education programmes even in the complete absence of government structures. The effectiveness of the UNICEF programme was undermined by a weak coordination mechanism, divorced from local stakeholders, and short term funding cycles which made it difficult to support partners in institution building.
- **Global funds and partnerships** (working within a global framework) – efforts to use the Fast Track Initiative to support the effective delivery of education in fragile states have to date focused on using it to build local planning capacity. The FTI can be no substitute for a country-led process, but a newly proposed ‘progressive’ framework could be helpful in getting stakeholders to focus on state building and education objectives. More work is needed to mobilise increased financing for fragile states through the FTI, and this will require significant political will.

The key features of the frameworks and typologies described above are three-fold:

- (i) a classification of states that ranges from most fragile (e.g. low capacity / low will; arrested development) to least fragile (e.g. high capacity / high will / early recovery);

- (ii) a matching menu of financial and other aid types that moves from least aligned (e.g. ring-fenced projects) to most aligned (e.g. general budget support);
- (iii) an approach to delivery – consistent across types of state and aid but differently applied – that attempts to meet both service delivery objectives and capacity- / state-building objectives.

As already indicated above, studies reveal a range of cases where financial aid instruments have contributed both to education and to state-building outcomes in fragile states. There is, almost in equal measure, evidence of lack of success or impact. This is confirmed by the portfolio analysis conducted for this thesis.

The portfolio analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states shows cases where the same instrument has been used successfully and unsuccessfully in different cases. For example, reviewing lessons learned from two DFID education projects in fragile states, channelling financial aid through governments in fragile states has proved both effective and ineffective. Budget support programmes in Kenya over-estimated the commitment needed from (central) government for this instrument to achieve its policy objectives, and the instrument itself – specifically the disbursement triggers – was too blunt to deal with this problem<sup>33</sup> (Kenya; Budget Support; 2003).

However, the more recent ‘Protection of Basic Services’ instrument in Ethiopia successfully maintained levels of external financing in support of basic service delivery – with positive education outcomes – by channelling funds to the woreda (local government) level and overlaying additional fiduciary controls and measures to promote local accountability (Ethiopia; Protection of Basic Services; 2007). Research conducted for the 2008 DFID Education Portfolio Review shows measures of impact (although attribution of these results to the programme itself is not clearly established).

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<sup>33</sup> The importance of prior political commitment is reinforced by the OECD DAC Evaluation of General Budget Support (IDD et al., 2006), which reinforced the importance of government commitment, in particular citing the example of Malawi.

<b>Ethiopia: Protection of Basic Services Grant £94 million (40% Education)</b>			
<p>Primary education enrolment has increased from 11.5 million children in 2004/05 to 14.0 million in 2006/07. There have been corresponding increases in net enrolment rates – particularly at grades 1-4. Girls' NER in grades 1-4 reached 77.2% and Boys' NER in grades 1-4 reached 81.7% up from 65.1% and 69.9% respectively in 2004/05.</p> <p>At the same time the pupil teacher ratio has improved in primary education. The average number of pupils per teacher has fallen from 71 to 65 in lower primary grades, and from 55 to 54 in upper primary, between 2004/05 and 2006/07.</p> <p>Overall, more children are completing primary education. The completion rate for primary grade 8 increased to 42.9% in 2006/07 from 34.3% in 2004/05.</p>			
<u>Indicators and progress</u>	<u>Expected output (2006/07)</u>	<u>Actual output</u>	<u>Comments</u>
NER Grades 1-4 Girls	64.7%	77.2%	Target met
NER Grades 1-4 Boys	68.5%	81.7%	Target met
NER Grades 5-8 Girls	47.5%		
NER Grades 5-8 Boys	54.2%		
Pupil: teacher ratio Grades 1-4	63	65	Below target
Pupil: teacher ratio Grades 5-8	52	54	Below target

*Figure 3.9. Impact of DFID Ethiopia Protection of Basic Services Grant  
(Source: DFID 2008 Education Portfolio Review)*

These conclusions are broadly consistent with key findings from the literature. However, what can we conclude from the analysis of this section that will be of use to building a theory? The central question we must answer is: can financial aid contribute to education objectives in fragile states. From the analysis presented in this section, I would suggest that the answer is yes, but it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient input to do so. This would imply a conclusion of 'medium' in terms of the evidence to support this proposition.

There is clearly evidence both for and against the proposition, with a great deal dependent on the context, timing and delivery of financial aid. In terms of the quality of the evidence, methods can be assessed as medium, dominated by case studies and non-systematic literature reviews and with some econometric analysis (that has been critiqued); with a strong risk of observer bias, given that much of the analysis is conducted either by development agencies themselves or by academics / consultants frequently under the employ of development agencies; and a medium to high degree of corroboration, dampened somewhat by agency incentives and the strong risk of observer bias.

While arriving at an overall judgement of medium, our draft theoretical framework invites us to assess the relationship between financial aid and two distinct intermediate effects: financing and institutional / policy effects. The previous section noted the lack of evidence linking increased aid to increased financing, explained by the issue of fungibility. This section has shed no further light on this issue, but it has provided some evidence for financial aid supporting institutional / policy improvements and overall education outcomes. Therefore I propose to assess: the overall relationship between financial aid and education outcomes as medium; the relationship between financial aid and financing effects as weak; and the relationship between financial aid and institutional / policy effects as medium. Put simply, there is some (medium) evidence that financial aid has increased outcomes, in part through effects on the institutional and policy environment, but there is little evidence that financial aid has increased education outcomes through increasing financial resources (these conclusions are shown graphically in Figure 3.9).

### *3.3.2 Technical Assistance*

A review of the evidence suggests that technical assistance can be effective in supporting education outcomes, subject to at least 2 connected parameters: (i) government will to use it, (ii) supporting incipient reform, rather than directly influencing changes in policies and institutions. This is supported by macro-level quantitative evidence, and by project level quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Econometric analysis conducted by Chauvet and Collier suggests that technical assistance<sup>34</sup> can be highly effective in fragile states under certain conditions:

TC [technical cooperation] is only useful when it is provided to governments that want and need to use it. Donors should not expect TC to influence changes in policies and institutions. However, when governments do want and need it, technical cooperation can be very productive. (Chauvet and Collier, 2004, page 15)

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<sup>34</sup> Chauvet and Collier use the term 'technical cooperation', abbreviated to TC, for technical assistance. For the purposes of this thesis, the terms 'technical assistance' and 'technical cooperation' are used inter-changeably.

In a later paper, Chauvet and Collier propose further evidence on the conditions under which technical assistance is effective:

...aid is cost-effective both in inducing and assisting policy turnarounds in failing states. However, aid effectiveness depends upon the composition and the timing of the assistance...Technical assistance has no discernable effect prior to reform, but then becomes highly cost-effective in accelerating an incipient reform in its early years. (Chauvet and Collier, 2005, page 35)

On methodological grounds, we should perhaps be wary of the use of econometric methods to establish correlations or causal links between specific aid instruments and outcomes, given issues of attribution, causality, the different design of instruments and the very different conditions under which they might be deployed (Colenso 2005a). This a point emphasised by Easterly in his analysis of Collier's later (2007) research:

Unfortunately, even though the list of endogenous variables is even longer and more ambitious than in other cross-country literatures, there is either no attempt or a seriously inadequate attempt to find instruments or establish causal effects. (Easterly, 2009, page 98)

However, Collier and Chauvet's analysis is supported by other research that demonstrates the potential effectiveness of technical assistance in fragile states, particularly in the early years of incipient reform:

DFID TC helped increase customs revenue by 38% in 2 years in post-conflict Mozambique, and overall revenue collection from 9.5% to 13% of GDP over 6 years in post-conflict Rwanda. TC in Afghanistan has complemented financial aid provided through the ARTF, and supported successful elections. (DFID, 2006, page 25)

The CAS also reviews additional quantitative and qualitative evidence in support of the effectiveness of technical assistance in post conflict fragile states, including to the health sector in Uganda (Carlson, 2004), and the education sector in Timor Leste (Nicolai, 2004) and in Rwanda (Obura, 2003). In the case of Rwanda, technical assistance – supported by strong government leadership – seems to have been instrumental in setting up a functioning post-genocide

education system from the mid 1990s<sup>35</sup>. Technical cooperation in this case helped Rwanda move from an emergency phase, in which the Ministry of Education was overwhelmed, to a development phase where the appropriate structures are in place to achieve Education for All by 2015. Net enrolment became the highest in the region at 91% and parity in enrolment for girls and boys at primary and secondary was achieved relatively quickly (Obura, 2003).

These examples at a project level confirm the findings at a macro level of Chauvet and Collier (2004, 2005) that government will to use technical assistance can be a critical condition for success.

However, there is some evidence at the aggregate level that technical assistance projects have less success, and perform less well than other forms of aid.

Thornton and Cox (2006) conducted quantitative analysis of DFID's projects in fragile states using project and financial data. Looking at aid modality, only Grant Aid, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Cooperation had enough scored projects to support statistical analysis. Humanitarian Assistance appeared to be the best performing, yielding a Value For Money (VFM) rating of 86%. Technical Cooperation was, however, the worst performer, with VFM of 44% (compared to 62% in non-fragile states).

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<sup>35</sup> Specific outputs from donor-funded technical assistance included: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper; Education Sector Policy and Strategic Plan; the Provision and Management of External Financing and associated technical papers which coordinated and harmonised aid and, allegedly, increased resources available to the Government of Rwanda. (Personal conversation with Jo Bourne, DFID Education Adviser, Rwanda, 2006)

	Projects scored	Success Rate	Average Score	VFM	PWE
<b>Fragile states</b>					
Grants and Other Aid in Kind	242	60.4%	0.65	65.2%	68.1%
Humanitarian Assistance	103	81.2%	0.75	86.2%	75.5%
Technical Cooperation	228	54.5%	0.64	44.3%	61.7%
<b>Other states</b>					
Grants and Other Aid in Kind	664	66.7%	0.68	74.1%	69.2%
Humanitarian Assistance	104	81.6%	0.77	88.0%	79.9%
Technical Cooperation	911	64.7%	0.67	61.9%	65.7%

Table 3.1. Performance<sup>36</sup> of DFID projects, by aid type (Thornton and Cox, 2006)

Thornton and Cox also find that technical cooperation proves to be less effective in fragile states than in non-fragile states (62% compared to 69%). General and sector budget support are both rated higher than project aid, while SWAPs are rated less effective than projects – a finding that is consistent across both fragile and other states.

The Portfolio Analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states finds that there is mixed evidence on the benefits of both short- and long-term technical assistance, but that the quality of technical assistance personnel is a key determinant of project success. High quality technical assistance in counterpart leadership posts was key to project success in some instances (e.g. Kiribati; Strengthening of Tarawa Technical Institute; 2001). Two projects noted that links with UK counterpart institutions were key to project success (Gambia; Technical Training Institute; 1997) (Nigeria; Technical Education; 1997). In terms of long-term expatriate technical assistance, key attributes included flexibility in adapting to changes in local hierarchies (Côte d'Ivoire; Professional Development for Secondary Schools Project; 1997) and a willingness to learn the language of the host country (Cambodia; Sec. English Teaching Project; 2001).

<sup>36</sup> In Table 3.1, VFM stands for Value for Money (the percentage of expenditure scoring 1 and 2; this was the performance measure used by the Treasury at the time), and PWE stands for Performance Weighted Expenditure (a combination of project scores with expenditure data to provide a measure of the effectiveness of a given expenditure category).



In some cases continuity was key to project success (e.g. Eritrea; English Language Teaching, Seter; 1999), although in another case it was found that the benefits from continuity of staffing in-country needed to be balanced against potential declines in productivity: “successive short-term inputs maintained innovation and motivation” (Angola; Institute of Languages Project, Luanda, Phase 2; 1998). A familiar shortcoming of international technical assistance was that its impact was found to fade after departure of technical assistance personnel (e.g. Kenya; Moi University; 1997).

The country survey of the Education Portfolio Review gave specific examples of the effective use of technical assistance for education in fragile states. In Yemen, technical assistance personnel to the World Bank and then the Ministry of Education had a significant impact in terms of setting up effective planning structures in the Ministry of Education. In Ethiopia, programme design was shown as having benefited significantly from technical assistance personnel, and the flexibility of DFID’s technical assistance is reported to have been considered particularly valuable by the government. In Nigeria, DFID’s entire programme is described as technical assistance; it is reported to have helped bring key issues to public attention, generate momentum for change, develop reform plans and processes, and pilot innovations in service delivery. As previously, however, a strong risk of observer bias should be noted with qualitative data derived from the Education Portfolio Review surveys, given that they are essentially self-reporting.

In addition to the two types of technical assistance discussed above – technical assistance projects and technical assistance personnel – there is a third type of technical assistance that merits some brief analysis: the technical assistance provided as policy dialogue by development agency staff. Citing the example of Cambodia, Cox and Thornton note that budget support in fragile states, while inherently risky, “...offers an opportunity to establish a joint platform for dialogue on reform processes, and a set of mechanisms (performance reviews; benchmarking of progress) that increase the leverage available to donors to push forward reforms in difficult environments.” (Cox and Thornton, 2008, page 50).

In response to the country survey instrument used for the Education Portfolio Review, DFID Education Advisers reported that they spent on average just over 25% of their time on policy dialogue<sup>37</sup>. In the time advisers spent on policy dialogue, there is little difference between fragile states and those not categorised as fragile states: Sierra Leone, Yemen, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sudan recorded an average of 27%, against 26% for Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The outliers were Ethiopia and India – each over 40%. DFID Education Advisers reported feeling that this is one of the most important and potentially effective instruments at their disposal.

The Education Portfolio Review describes how in Rwanda DFID uses a combination of different financial aid instruments and technical assistance, which, in addition to their own merits, leverage additional finances for the education sector and provide a platform for policy dialogue.

DFID Rwanda uses a mixture of general budget support, sector budget support and technical assistance to deliver their education aid. DFID's leadership in developing a new sector budget support (SBS) modality, alongside a modest financial contribution (£13 mn over 5 years) has helped leverage upwards of \$176 million for the sector (including through delegated co-operation arrangements). Associated policy dialogue with government and donors has helped to harmonise and strengthen donor interventions, establish strong budgeting, reporting and monitoring processes, and strengthen collaboration between Ministries of Finance and Education. (DFID, 2009, page 24)

In overall terms, therefore, in reviewing different sources of evidence at different levels, it can be concluded that under the right conditions, technical assistance can be effective in contributing to education outcomes, both in terms of financing effects and institutional / policy effects. The evidence in support of this seems to be medium. There is a significant body of evidence both for and against. In terms of the quality of the evidence, methods can again be assessed as medium, dominated by case studies and non-systematic literature reviews

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<sup>37</sup> As distinct from the five other categories: donor coordination; oversight of programme resources; other sector / other office responsibilities; HIV/AIDS and education issues; gender equality and inclusion.

and with some critiqued econometric analysis, with a strong risk of observer bias, and probably a medium degree of corroboration.

It is worth noting that this finding differs slightly from the findings for financial aid. It may seem counter-intuitive that financial aid is a weak instrument to increase financial resources, but technical assistance potentially much stronger. It is argued that it is principally technical assistance outside of the education field that is able to achieve financing effects. While sector-specific aid is in principle – and it seems in practice, if the empirical studies are to be believed – highly fungible, technical assistance to support revenue collection seems to be highly effective in increasing overall resources, including for social sectors. The examples were given above of DFID-funded technical assistance helping to increase customs revenue by 38% in 2 years in post-conflict Mozambique, and overall revenue collection from 9.5% to 13% of GDP over 6 years in post-conflict Rwanda. In Rwanda this enabled poverty-related spending to increase from 4% of GDP to 6.5% of GDP between 2000 and 2003 (DFID, 2006). The same DFID paper also notes that technical support to both the Zambia Revenue Authority and the Uganda Revenue Authority had a clear positive impact on revenue collection and on pro-poor expenditure (DFID, 2006)<sup>38</sup>.

### 3.3.3 Non-Aid Inputs

Collier and Hoeffler (2000b) find that aid is by not necessarily the most effective of external inputs: “In a ranking exercise of different instruments for conflict prevention, external peacekeeping is far more cost-effective than aid”. The potential significance of peacekeeping and other military and diplomatic external inputs that complement aid is underlined by Piciotto:

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<sup>38</sup> “...the support of DFID to the Uganda Revenue Authority since 1992 has been a critical factor behind its success in creating a viable institution that managed to double the revenue/GDP ratio from about 6 per cent at the start of the 1990s to around 12 per cent in the late 1990s”. (DFID Evaluation Report EV636, cited in DFID TC Practice Paper).

...development cooperation in difficult environments requires a “whole of government” approach in donor countries. A host of political, security and development obstacles intervene to hinder the development effectiveness of donor countries’ engagement with fragile states. Therefore, along with well-conceived aid, non-aid interventions must connect to responsive segments of fragile countries to pursue realistic security and development objectives over time. Experience suggests that without sustained political and diplomatic action by all major partners...aid is wasted. (Piciotto, 2005, page 12)

The significance of this analysis is that external inputs must be understood more broadly than aid inputs. To contribute to education outcomes, and particularly perhaps to processes of state-building that will help cement those outcomes in a sustainable way in the medium- to long-term, the theory must also include the non-aid inputs that contribute to these processes, including diplomacy and peacekeeping.

There is also a body of evidence that points to the cost-effectiveness of peacekeeping and other military interventions. Chalmers (2004) claims that it is more cost effective to prevent states falling into conflict or major collapse than to respond once they have failed. He estimates that investing £1 in early / pre-conflict prevention saves the international community £4 in post-conflict response. Brown and Rosencrance (1999) claim that conflict prevention in Macedonia cost the international community £0.3 billion, saving an estimated £14.7 billion if a conflict contained within Macedonia’s borders had broken out, and saving an estimated £143.9 billion if it had escalated to regional conflagration. This is the equivalent of between £50 and £500 saved for every £1 spent.

There is also some empirical evidence in support of the claim that the international community is getting better at supporting peace-building and state-building in fragile states. In the period 2000 to 2005, only 10% of negotiated peace agreements broke down, compared to over 40% in the 1990s. The UN estimates that this equates to a saving of around \$256 billion per annum (the cost of approximately 4 conflicts restarting at \$64 billion a year). Commentators have pointed out that UN Peacekeeping is not cheap – (\$7.87 billion was spent on UN peacekeeping in 2009/10) – but that it can be both effective and cost-

effective, reducing the risk of wars reoccurring by as much as 85% (Fortna, 2008). Collier (2006) claims that given the cost of a typical civil war, successful peacekeeping missions (in the form of international military intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) can yield a cost-benefit ratio of around 1:7.

However, the convergence of development, diplomatic and security interests has also attracted considerable criticism. This applies not only to development in broad terms – as outlined in Section 2.2 above (see e.g. Beall et al., 2006; Pureza, 2006; Sen and Morris, 2008) – but also within the education sector. Novelli (2010) points to an increasing militarisation of aid to education, whereby aid (including for education) is increasingly bound up in military / diplomatic / development strategies and delivery mechanisms.

Focussing on the US and the UK, Novelli critiques the notion of ‘education as counterinsurgency’, pointing to: USAID’s June 2008 ‘3-D approach’ of defence / diplomacy / development; Colin Powell’s reference to NGO staff “...a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team”<sup>39</sup>; Gordon Brown’s September 2009 speech on Afghanistan linking education to a ‘hearts and mind’ strategy. Novelli contends that the increasing militarisation of aid has detrimental effects not only for long-term development progress but also for the personal security of development workers.

The Education Portfolio Review makes a different point about the use of diplomacy and other political instruments, noting how development agencies have a role in driving political and institutional commitment to education, which in turn has the potential to translate into increased resources and better education outcomes.

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<sup>39</sup> former US Secretary of State Colin Powell, ‘Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations’, at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2001/5762.htm>

In addition to DFID's £529m, rising to £1bn per annum, programmatic spend, the UK has significant political and diplomatic instruments at its disposal to secure progress on the Education MDGs. Principal among these instruments are the following: (i) a Prime Minister and Ministers prepared to commit the UK to ambitious targets (£8.5bn) and to leveraging major international change, (ii) UK membership of the major political blocks: G8, G20, EU, UN Security Council, Commonwealth, (iii) UK membership / shareholding in the major multilateral development institutions (WB, EC, UN), including the largest contributor to IDA. (DFID, 2009, page 2)

The study claims that these instruments are arguably more important in securing progress on the Education MDGs than DFID's direct programme spend, including to secure the following objectives: securing commitments from the G8, EU and other bilateral partners on aid volumes and on education financing and policy; shaping and reforming the multilateral system; forming a broader global coalition in support of the Education MDGs, involving faith groups, the private sector, schools, communities and individuals. As evidence of impact, the portfolio review cites the following: aid commitments secured at the G8 summit at Gleneagles in 2005; creation of the Education Fast Track Initiative; UN High Level Event raising \$4.3 billion in commitments for education<sup>40</sup>.

Therefore, although the evidence is not clear, there is a case to say that both military and diplomatic / political interventions may be important instruments to support aid instruments in delivering education outcomes for fragile states. There is also some evidence that the conflation of development, diplomatic and security interests may equally have detrimental effects.

### 3.3.4 Summary

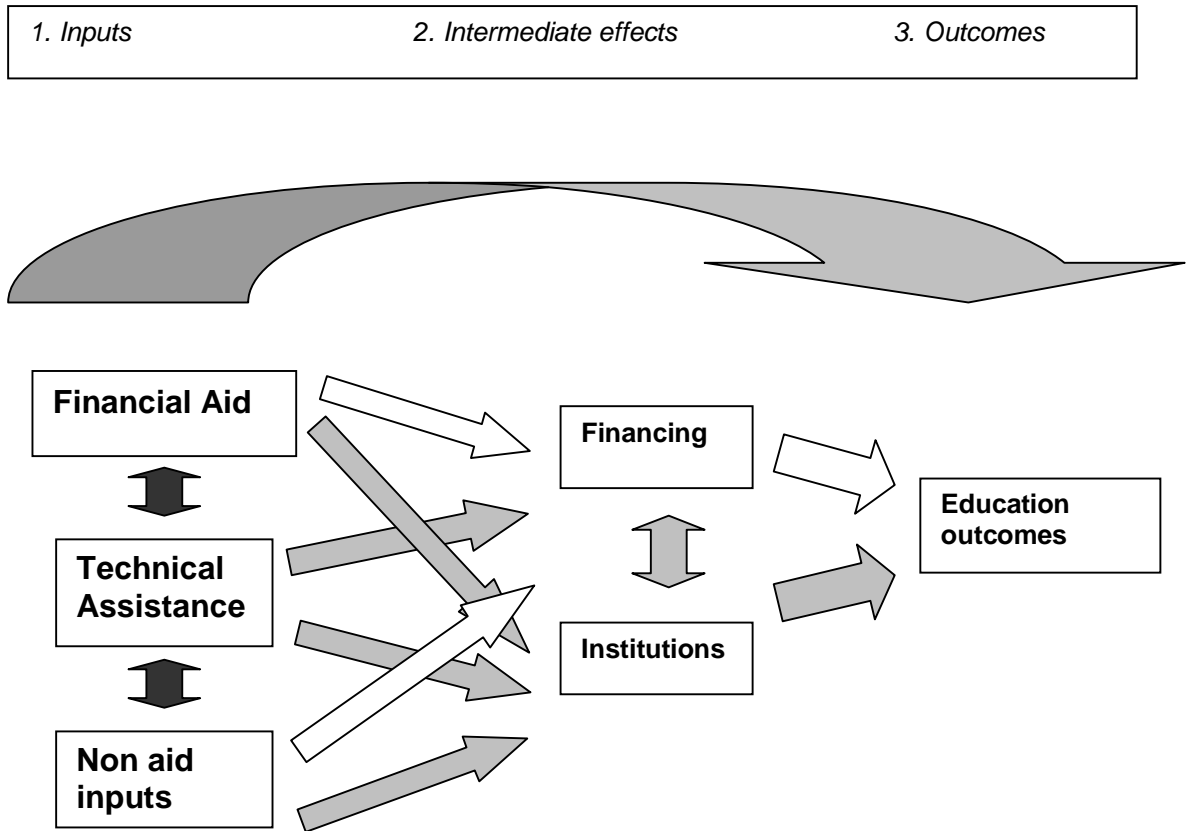
Taken together, the analysis of this section on aid and non-aid inputs allows us to reach the following conclusions:

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<sup>40</sup> To suggest that the \$4.3 billion directly supports better education outcomes is to assume that it is both additional to existing resources, and that these additional resources support increased education expenditure and better education outcomes. It is not altogether clear that we can be confident of these claims.

- there is medium evidence to suggest that financial aid and technical assistance can contribute to education outcomes; supporting evidence comes from a wide range of sources and methods, including econometric analysis at the cross-national and national level and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, at the project level; as in other areas, there is a risk of bias in some of this analysis as much is written, commissioned or published by international development agencies themselves; none of the literature reviews can be said to be systematic; therefore, we might conclude that the evidence in this area is medium;
- evidence linking financial aid with financing effects is weak, but there is evidence, assessed as medium, linking technical assistance with financing effects;
- there is evidence, assessed as medium, linking both financial aid and technical assistance with institutional / policy effects;
- there is some evidence linking non-aid inputs with institutional / policy reform, but not financing effects;
- there is evidence of the interaction between financing effects and institutional effects (e.g. resource availability and implementation capacity).

We might therefore expand our theoretical framework as follows.



*Figure 3.10. Theoretical Framework (Stage 3)*

### **3.4 Stage 4 – understanding delivery (aid effectiveness; with a particular focus on harmonisation and alignment)**

Chapter 2 outlined a tension, explored in more detail in the CAS, between the Paris model of aid effectiveness and the constraints of operating in fragile states. It outlined the OECD DAC ‘Principles of Good International Engagement in Fragile States’. In a recent IIEP monograph, Brannelly et al. (2009) use the Principles as a framework for drawing lessons on the role of donors in supporting education in fragile states. Lessons are primarily drawn from case studies of three funding agencies (European Commission, Netherlands, Swedish International Development Agency), two international NGOs (International Rescue Committee, Save the Children (UK)), and one country (Liberia). The argument put forward in this monograph – supported by much of the literature, and particularly case study literature – is that the way that aid is delivered is a key determinant of its effectiveness. For this reason, it merits brief examination here. However, given the breadth of this topic, I will focus on just



two aspects of aid effectiveness – and arguably the most important – namely harmonisation and alignment. This section relies heavily on the analysis of Brannelly et al. (2009), given that it is the most recent, expansive and, probably, thorough.

#### *3.4.1 Harmonisation*

The DAC Principle most closely describing harmonisation is Principle 8 ('Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors'). Brannelly et al. record four lessons relating to Principle 8.

First, that coordinating the humanitarian and development responses ensures the long-term sustainability of interventions. The authors cite examples of good practice, although offer less by way of evidence of effectiveness. This lesson is however supported by other evidence sources. For example, Laurence and Poole (2005) give the example of Haiti as a country "...in which rapid fall-off of funding effectively collapsed systems." Carlson et al. (2005) note from interview data that "...many NGOs in particular complain of breaks in continuity of projects due to separations in funding." Second, that coordinating with international bodies creates more strategic interventions (again, the IIEP monograph is stronger on good practice than on evidence). Third, that effective coordination at the country level with government and other stakeholders ensures the effective use of resources. The monograph cites case study evidence in support of this proposition, including an EC-funded programme in Myanmar, and donor coordination in the education sector in Afghanistan and in Liberia. Fourth, that while intentions to coordinate may exist among different stakeholders, implementation remains a challenge. This fourth lesson is a statement more about challenges in implementation, than a statement about what works.

In his analysis for SPIRU, Berry (2007) cites 'weak coordination mechanisms' of one of three specific obstacles to effective delivery of education aid in fragile states. Again, using principally case study data, Berry cites five examples of successful approaches to delivering aid to education in fragile states, all of

which are good examples of good harmonisation, and indeed alignment (direct alignment where possible; 'shadow alignment' where not possible). Berry acknowledges however that evidence is thin.

Getting stakeholders behind a joint planning process is probably the area over which donors have the most control, but even so there are only partial examples of success. The most effective approaches are in situations where the international community develops and supports national government capacity to lead a sector or sub-sector process which allows broad stakeholder involvement (including national and local level, and state and non state actors). Where donors cannot or will not work within government leadership, they can still coordinate their efforts in order, at a minimum, to share information and programming intentions. (Berry, 2007, page 8)

Rose and Greeley note examples from fragile states of incipient attempts to promote transitional coordination in the education sector. These include the Nepal SWAp, and donors in the DRC, Southern Sudan and Somalia exploring common ways of pooling resources and using Joint Assessment Missions (e.g. the Joint Donor office that has been set up in Juba in Sudan, involving the UK, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden). There are also joint Government/Donor groups for education engaged in policy dialogue and sharing of information and resources in Kinshasa and Nairobi (for Somalia) whose initial concern is to achieve a more coordinated intervention than was possible at the height of the conflict.

These are examples where external partners have responded to the importance of holistic planning and coordination as a central part of the in-country process of whatever sequence of contributions and activities are undertaken. However, the education sector has not been in general been able to demonstrate good practice in managing the post-conflict transition. Donors are of course sensitive to the needs in managing transition, which are much discussed, and have reviewed opportunities for more effective engagement through greater flexibility in aid instruments.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, these poorly coordinated decision taking processes are also due to lack of *intra*-agency coordination between humanitarian and mainstream development parts of agencies and their sub-contractors, as well as those amongst those working within the education sector and those

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<sup>41</sup> See Berry et al (2004) and Sommers (2004) on coordination.

supporting the governance agenda more generally. (Rose & Greeley, 2006, page 26)

Evidence from the Portfolio Analysis was mixed. While one project noted that direct cooperation between projects and partners had increased effectiveness and efficiency (Cambodia; Secondary English Teaching Project; 2001), another outlined potential inefficiencies, specifically that co-funding with the World Bank had proved ineffective due to slow dispersal of World Bank funds (Solomon Islands; Primary Education Project; 1999).

As reported in the previous section, DFID Education Advisers reported in response to the survey conducted for the Education Portfolio Review that they spent on average 23% of their time on 'donor coordination'. Many also noted that getting donors to work together was one of their principle achievements. However there was significant variance within this 23% average, including between advisers in fragile states (spending an average of 29% of their time on donor coordination), and advisers in other countries (only 17%). The outliers were: Sudan (50%; possibly given the high transaction costs of the joint donor office<sup>42</sup>, the use of joint instruments and the very difficult operating environment); Sierra Leone (40%; a relatively 'immature' operating environment for international development agencies where SWAs and other ways joint working are at an early stage); and India (8%; reflecting a very efficient donor operating environment where there are only three major donors – the World Bank, DFID, and the EC – who have all been using the same financial aid instrument for several years).

Within the state-building literature, the international community has been heavily criticised for its lack of harmonisation in state-building activities (see for example: Ghani et al. 2005; Samuels, 2006; Paris 2006, Rubin, 2006), implying that it may be possible to achieve efficiency gains through greater collaboration.

As in other areas, this section has not reviewed the literature systematically, nor can the original research conducted for this thesis claim to provide definitive nor

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<sup>42</sup> This in itself might cast into the doubt the supposed efficiencies of a joint donor office.

particularly robust conclusions. However, there seems to exist evidence, principally from case studies, in support of the proposition that effective coordination and harmonisation can support more effective delivery of aid to education in fragile states.

### *3.4.2 Alignment*

Similar to harmonisation, alignment and shadow alignment now form part of the donor lexicon and toolkit of working in fragile states. There is varied evidence on the benefits of alignment, including the idea of shadow alignment (e.g. ODI, 2005) and decentralisation to avoid sponsoring central government.

Returning to the 2009 IIEP monograph, the DAC Principle most closely describing alignment is Principle 7 ('Align with local priorities'). Brannelly et al. (2009) record three lessons relating to Principle 8. First, that alignment is important. The authors cite examples from Myanmar, Yemen and Afghanistan, although it is not clear that these are examples of 'evidence' or of 'emerging best practice'. Second, that having a country programme or education project that broadly supports the government's education sector policy and plan, where available, leads to a more coherent and strategic intervention. Examples of best practice are cited from Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. Third, that where governments "have issues of illegitimacy and governance or public perception concerns" it is still possible to plan a strategic response through 'shadow aligned' systems. Examples of Yemen and Somalia are given; once again it seems more as good practice than evidence.

There is some evidence on the importance of alignment from the DFID Portfolio Analysis, such as the following insight from a project completion report from an education project in Nepal: "If a project uses the existing line agencies rather than setting up parallel structures, capacity building is reinforced; opportunities should be taken to develop already established teacher training institutions rather than developing parallel institutions." (Nepal; Secondary Education Development Project; 2001).

In overall terms, the evidence in support of ‘aid effectiveness’ principles can be said to be medium. Method – reliant principally on case studies – might be assessed as medium, with a medium to high risk of observer bias, but a medium to high degree of corroboration. This brief analysis of aid effectiveness justifies the following expansion of the theoretical framework.

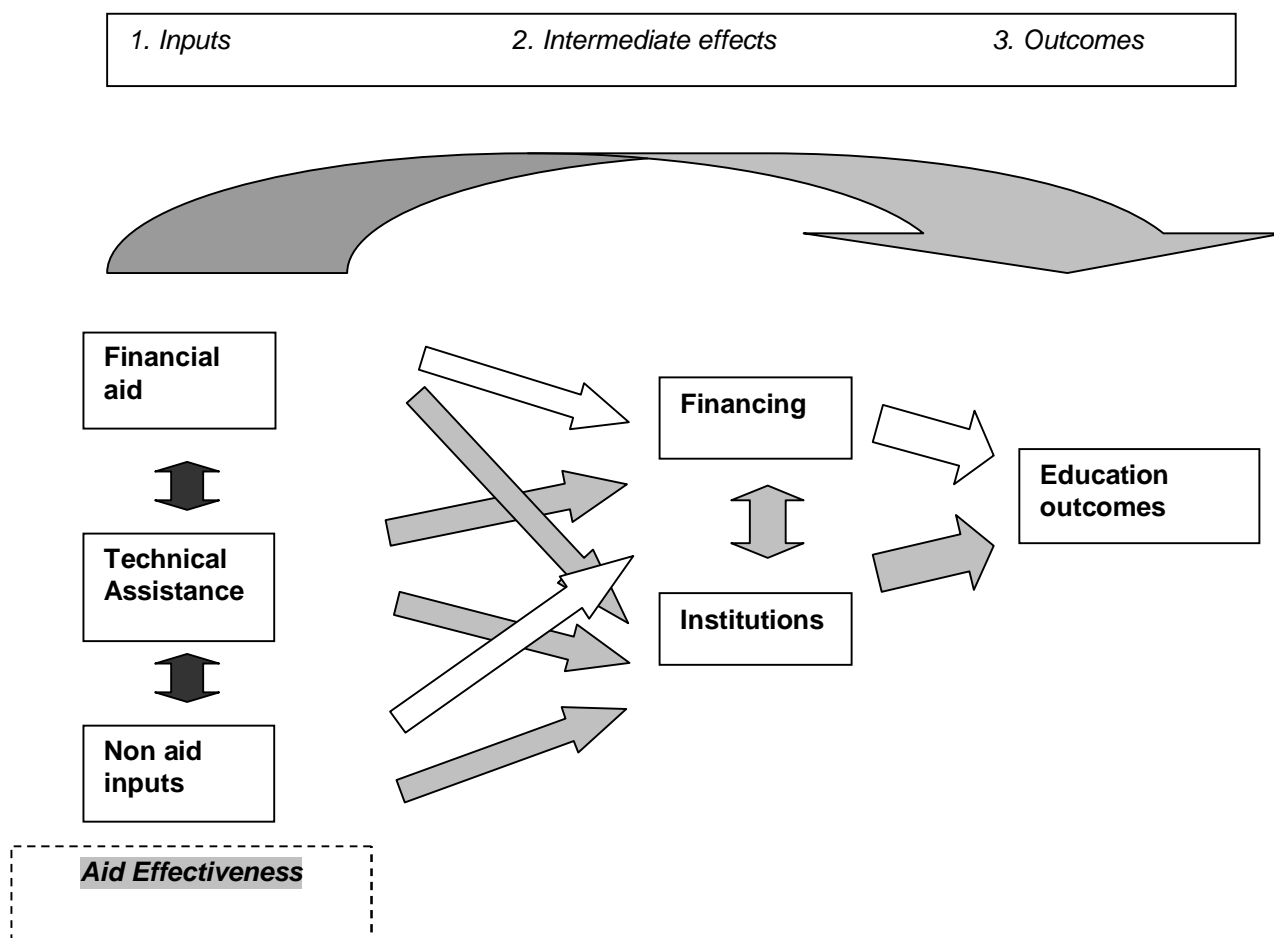


Figure 3.11. Theoretical Framework (Stage 4)

### 3.5 Stage 5 – establishing entry conditions (e.g. stability, political will)

The Evaluability Study for the Joint Evaluation of General Budget Support proposed that the evaluation framework should include and assess certain ‘entry conditions’, based on the claim that there were certain underlying or prior contextual factors that are key determinants of the effectiveness of the

instrument. The preceding analysis of this Chapter suggests that a similar approach be used here. There are emerging contextual themes that seem to be consistent across the literature and other evidence sources. For example, Nicolai (2009) notes “preferable conditions for reform”, including security, basic governance capacity and political consensus. Building on Nicolai’s conditions for reform, I propose three themes, for which supporting evidence will be sought in this section: (i) security / stability, (ii) political will / ownership, (iii) community ownership.

### *3.5.1 Security / stability*

Intuitively, it would seem that there is a strong case that security and stability is a pre-condition for significant progress in education. This seems to be borne out empirically. Of the 20 countries assessed by UNESCO Institute of Statistics as having made the best progress on MDG2 between 1999 and 2005 (see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2), only one country, Nepal, could be said to be undergoing armed conflict.

There are many reasons why conflict and instability are not conducive to education outcomes, including but not limited to physical destruction (Colenso 2005a). For example, it is not unusual for the majority of schools to require repair or reconstruction: Timor Leste (95%); Iraq (85%); Kosovo (65%); Bosnia-Herzegovina (50%) (World Bank, 2005).

One reason cited by analysts and lobbyists – notably Save the Children (UK) – for lack of progress on education in countries affected by conflict and by natural disasters is the low levels of humanitarian aid allocated to education. The CAS provides some data in support of this claim. Brannelly et al. (2009) provide more recent data, noting that humanitarian aid in 2007 totalled over US\$7.5 billion in current prices, of which only 1.9% (US\$146 million) was allocated to education. Of the major donors, France provided the lowest proportion (0.16%) and Denmark the highest (4.71%), with the UK at 0.84%.

Munoz (2008) argues that the de-prioritisation by donor agencies of education in emergency situations sits in contrast to the demands of refugees and internally displaced people themselves, who frequently list education as a priority need after food and shelter.

The DFID Education Portfolio Analysis confirms that “conflict” and “social unrest” has been an impediment to project performance, with examples from Burundi (Burundi; English Language Teaching; 1993) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC; English Language Training; 1993). This reinforces the earlier hypothesis that non-aid instruments are as key to achieving education outcomes as aid instruments, and that interventions outside of the education sector are critical to achieving education outcomes.

We might conclude that, while progress can be made in countries affected by conflict and major instability, this progress may be short-termist and subject to patterns and cycles of conflict. It would seem therefore, that evidence in support of this hypothesis seems be strong.

### *3.5.2 Political will*

Rose and Greeley's (2006) analysis concludes that progress on education service delivery is likely to pertain in fragile states where there is some political will and the beginnings of policy turnarounds.

As evidence from country case studies in the four different conditions of fragility illustrates, the importance of transition from international to national leadership, with emphasis on promoting domestic ownership of education sector development, is found to be crucial for promoting legitimacy, and resonates with principles associated with turnaround...The likelihood that donor support will help create turnaround conditions is very low where will is weak or non-existent. (Rose & Greeley, 2006, page 6)

This is confirmed by Berry: “...in trying to get stakeholders behind a joint planning process, it is important to have government ownership of the planning process, even if this can only be achieved at sub-national levels” (Berry, 2009,

page 5). This is further reinforced by the econometric analysis of Chauvet and Collier (2004), who, as cited above, suggest that technical assistance can be highly effective in fragile states “...when governments do want and need it” (Chauvet and Collier, 2004, page 15).

Agreement between the analysis of Rose and Greeley (principally literature reviews, case study and interviews) and of Collier (cross-country econometric analysis) is further corroborated by the Portfolio Analysis of DFID education projects in fragile states. Political will and government ownership are shown to be key to project success, particularly when introducing new concepts into the public sector, scaling up innovation, and using delivery channels aligned to government systems. The understanding, commitment and leadership of senior national officials have been central to the success of a number of projects: (Burundi; English Language Teaching; 1993); (Indonesia; Active Learning ALPS Schools; 1996); (Cambodia; Sec. English Teaching Project; 1997).

Many projects noted the importance of working through existing government agencies: “...operating from within Ministry departments increases ownership, credibility, power of influence and access to counterparts” (Cambodia; Secondary English Teaching Project; 2001). “If a project uses the existing line agencies rather than setting up parallel structures, capacity building is reinforced...” (Nepal; Secondary Education Development Project; 2001). One project in Nigeria noted that strong governmental ownership was needed to introduce new concepts into public sector, and to scale up NGO innovations (Nigeria; Life Planning Education; 2003). The leadership of partners, rather than DFID, was frequently considered key to the success and potential sustainability of projects (e.g. Kiribati; Strengthening of Tarawa Technical Institute; 2001).

Evidence cited above builds on evidence examined in the Critical Analytic Study. Post-conflict Uganda is a positive example of: a ‘turnaround’ country that has made progress in moving from conflict – at least from a national conflict to a localized conflict – into a period of relative stability and economic growth, accompanied by considerable progress towards the education MDGs.



...there again is now [sic] clear research evidence about whether there was some 'magic mix' of national leadership and donor leadership in the late 1980s that got it just right. What is known is that tremendous effort did go into rebuilding government infrastructure and human capacity, reasonably quickly (donors were initially hesitant just after the NRM [National Resistance Government] took power), and that this has reaped benefits in terms of pro-poor policies. (Carlson et al., 2005, page 13)

The CAS also cites the negative example of the health sector in Angola.

There appeared to be a minimum commitment to health and the provision of health services in general by government. As a result, and despite donor efforts at institutional strengthening at central Ministry of Health level, as well as provincial and municipality level, projects had limited impact as there was little strategic direction and little outreach to communities (Fustukian, 2004, cited in Carlson et al., 2005, page 9).

Recent analytical and policy work from DFID emphasises the importance of 'inclusive' political settlements in fragile states, particularly in post-conflict situations (DFID, 2010b). A political settlement is an agreement within a society about how power is allocated and exercised. This may be reflected in formal rules (e.g. through a constitution, laws governing elections and markets) or informal arrangements that underpin important relationships (e.g. between elite families, powerful tribal or ethnic groups). Inclusivity can refer both to the way in which a settlement is reached (a process involving multiple stakeholders and, significantly, not alienating minority groups or groups with grievances), as well as the outcome of that settlement. DFID policy guidance (DFID, 2010a, 2010b) suggests that inclusive political settlements are better able to address the causes of conflict and meet public expectations (and therefore address poverty/development challenges).

Evidence is cited in support of this claim. ODI (2007) claim that without a political settlement, alongside the ability to exercise security and basic administration, a state will be unable to deliver key functions (e.g. justice, economic management) effectively. Lindeman (2008) claims that while inclusive elite bargains permit the maintenance of political stability, exclusionary elite bargains give rise to trajectories of civil war. There is evidence to the effect that

authoritarian regimes and full democracies are the most stable, while partial democracies are more prone to instability.<sup>43</sup>

Guelke (2003) claims that peace processes provide a window of opportunity to reshape existing political settlements; and that an inclusive peace process is essential to building a legitimate and comprehensive peace agreement that is more likely to be acceptable to the population. In a recent publication, the OECD DAC (2010) claims that interventions by donor agencies can influence the incentives for elites to buy into peacebuilding process. For example, donor support to electoral process in Sierra Leone led to a more inclusive political settlement. In contrast, the donor supported election in Afghanistan resulted in an exclusionary political settlement which contained incentives for the continuation of armed conflict.

It would seem, therefore, that there exists strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that political will and ownership may form a key 'entry condition' to the effectiveness of aid in driving education outcomes in fragile states. Evidence is cited above from a variety of sources (albeit with potential for observer bias), using a number of methods, and with no discrepant cases found.

### *3.5.3 Community ownership*

A number of sources of evidence point to the importance of communities – and aid interventions that empower and resource communities – in improving education outcomes in fragile states.

The process of decentralization in post-conflict El Salvador was facilitated at the local level by incentives to schools that chose to directly manage their funds (quality bonus, teacher training allowance, food voucher schemes etc.) Part of the success of El Salvador's Education with Community Participation Program (EDUCO) is that it built on the successful community-controlled

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<sup>43</sup> The source of this claim is the Political Instability Task Force – a group of Harvard-based academics active in 2003. I have not been able to confirm the source of this claim but I believe that it is derived from a data set held by the University of Maryland.

schooling that emerged during the conflict<sup>44</sup> (World Bank, 2005, page 45).

Nicolai (2004) claims that community action was a critical factor in ensuring [in Timor Leste] that 86% of classrooms and 80% of furniture were rehabilitated within 18 months, and that 50% of books were delivered to students. In Kosovo, communities initiated the resumption of schooling, with significant support from international agencies and a back-to-school advocacy campaign that delivered supplies, textbooks, tents and shelter materials (Sommers and Buckland, 2004). In Cambodia, grants to schools and school clusters helped engage parents with teachers and school authorities in strategies to improve the quality of the learning environment (World Bank, 2005).

The review of the literature in the CAS – see particularly Slaymaker et al. (2005) – on the determinants of successful community-based approaches notes a range of different objectives associated with such approaches. They note that care should be taken to define and differentiate between objectives, in particular: differentiating between adopting a community-based approach and simply implementing projects at a community level; avoiding the assumption that because community-based approaches *can* be used to achieve a range of different objectives, using them *will* achieve those objectives; identifying a hierarchy of objectives and acknowledging trade-offs between them.

They note that challenges include defining the user community, the degree of local authority involvement, and targeting and financing. Key to the success of community-based approaches is “...the existence of an ‘enabling environment’ which can provide information to support identification of appropriate solutions, decide on the optimum level of provision, ensure maintenance of minimum standards, and respond flexibly to changing demand for services over time.” (Slaymaker et al., 2005, page 4).

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<sup>44</sup> Sommers (2002) notes that “...emergency education is community-centred largely by default. Governments involved in wars are usually too weak or too negligent to lead the education sector during times of war.” (Sommers, 2002, page 27)

In the recent IIEP publication, Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly (2009) note the following factors which contribute to promoting community participation and fostering partnerships between communities, the state and other education stakeholders: the restoration of trust; the importance of context; planning for the long-term; keeping expectations realistic; building partnerships. They trace the following policy implications:

- promote the use of existing positive community structures;
- work with existing community capacity and needs;
- integrate capacity development and training for communities;
- integrate education responses with broader community initiatives;
- plan for the long term and utilise examples of good practice.

It is hard to argue with these policy implications. They are generic to the point of being self-evident, as are the 'implementation recommendations' cited later in the study, e.g. "ensure education programmes are adapted to meet the specific needs of communities"; "build on local capacity to strengthen education programming" (Sullivan-Owomoyela and Brannelly, 2009). The methods involved in this study are: literature review; 'field reviews' of the West Bank, Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Liberia; desk review of Afghanistan, South Sudan and northern Uganda. Citing Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), the authors characterise this as a "mixed method complementarity design", using multiple inductive and deductive methods of data collection and analysis.

There is also considerable supportive evidence from the DFID Project Portfolio Analysis. The key message is that projects can catalyse community involvement, which in turn can increase the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of reforms. In two projects in Kenya, community involvement and local ownership were considered critical to project success (Kenya; Secondary School Science Labs; 1991) (Kenya; English Language Teaching in Secondary Schools; 1992). There were examples of successful education projects in fragile states have been built specifically around community involvement (e.g. Nigeria; Community education programme; 2003). A 2004 project in Sudan noted that projects themselves can be the catalyst for community activity: "The benefits of the project have incentivised community involvement: community leaders'

participation in education and Parent Teacher Councils were strengthened." (Sudan; UNICEF Peace Education; 2004).

Linked to the idea of community ownership is the critical issue of demand for education from communities, households and individuals. The CAS reports a 2004 Nigeria Ed-Data District Household Survey which found that the most significant reason for children never attending school is that their labour is needed in the family (34%). It is an even higher proportion for girls (37%). This is well ahead of the next most important reason: the monetary cost of education (23%). Supply-side factors are less significant, including the school being too far from home (20%) and poor school quality (14%). This has significant implications for education strategies. Demand-side financing of education – for example, through cash transfers – may be more effective than just simply abolishing fees, which may in turn be more effective than focussing resources on supply-side constraints.

The need for local ownership also appears throughout the literature on governance and state-building (see for example Chesterman et al., 2005; Narten, 2006).

In summary, evidence of the importance of community ownership as an entry condition and determinant of success seems to be medium to strong. While methods might be described as medium, corroboration is high and observer bias might reasonably be assessed as low to medium.

Finally, we might reasonably point to a relationship between the three entry conditions: i.e. linkages – and the importance of understanding those linkages in theoretical, policy and operational terms – between political will, community ownership, and social stability / security. That these interactions are critical is clear, though we can not claim to understand them. Nor has a full examination of these relationships – requiring consideration of extensive literature in the fields of political science and sociology among others – been considered to be within the scope of this thesis.

The following adjustments might therefore be made to the theoretical framework.

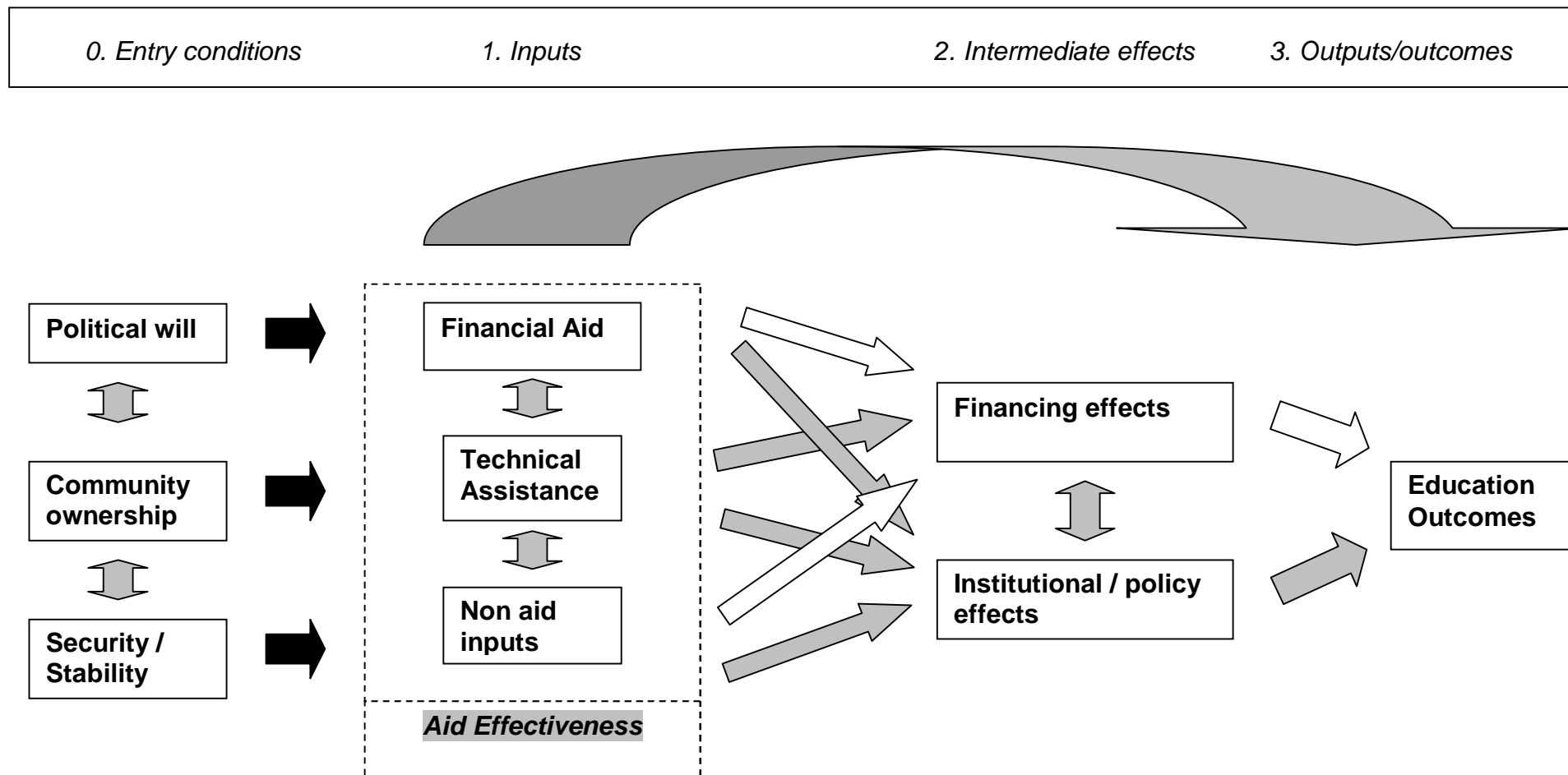


Figure 3.12. Theoretical Framework (Stage 5)

### **3.6 Stage 5 – understanding the relationship between education and fragility**

A key hypothesis to investigate in building a theory linking aid to education outcomes in fragile states is the oft-cited, and intuitively plausible, connection between education and social cohesion: the idea that the more that people are educated, the more they are likely to co-exist peacefully. Is there evidence to confirm the proposition that education is linked to increased social stability? Stage 5 will take us through the evidence for and against this proposition, including different measures of peace, social stability and social cohesion<sup>45</sup>. If we can ascertain this linkage, it is potentially useful for our theoretical framework, providing an important loop back from education outcomes into addressing the very sources of fragility that define fragile states.

The Critical Analytic Study notes an increase of analytical work since 2000 focussing on the links between education and social cohesion. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) pointed to “the two faces of education in ethnic conflict”, highlighting the potential role of education in amplifying social divisions and as a precipitating factor in the outbreak of political violence. They identify a number of ways in which education has exacerbated hostility, including: the uneven distribution of education; education as a weapon of cultural repression; denial of education as a weapon of war; the manipulation of history for political ends; the manipulation of textbooks; and segregated education that can reinforce inequality, low self-esteem and stereotyping (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). These themes have subsequently been developed by, amongst others, CIDA (2002), Smith and Vaux (2003), UNESCO IBE (2004) and Colenso (2005b). Most of these studies have employed literature review, case study and interview methods.

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<sup>45</sup> As Green, Preston and Sabates (2003) point out: “Social capital does not always translate into societal cohesion, since intracommunity bonding does not necessarily lead to inter-community harmony. Some types of association may be beneficial for wider societal trust and harmony; others may not be.” (Green et al. 2003, page iii)



Using econometric methods, Stewart (2000)<sup>46</sup> argues that civil wars occur when groups mobilise against each other, often on the basis of ethnicity or religion, and that such mobilisation is effective where there are substantial horizontal inequalities (e.g. inequalities between ethnic groups) which cause resentment. Stewart proposes four dimensions of inequalities: (i) political participation, (ii) economic assets, (iii) incomes and employment, and (iv) social aspects. Stewart draws the following policy implications with respect to basic services, including education:

To ensure balance in group access to education at all levels; health services; water and sanitation; housing and consumer subsidies (if relevant). Equality of access in education is particularly important since this contributes to equity in income earning potential, while its absence perpetuates inequality in incomes. (Stewart, 2000, cited in Colenso, 2005, page 19)

Building on Stewart's analysis, Østby (2003) uses data from Demographic and Health Surveys from 33 developing countries to establish indicators on inequality between ethnic groups along three dimensions: (i) social, (ii) economic, and (iii) health-related. He confirms the findings of World Bank studies of civil war (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000a, 2000b) that vertical inequality (i.e. between individuals) does not increase the risk of internal armed conflict. However, in support of Stewart's (2000) thesis, he finds evidence that horizontal inequalities are positively related to domestic armed conflict.

Putnam (2004) frames his investigation in positive terms. He makes the following claim about links between education, social capital and social cohesion:

For any government concerned to increase social capital and social cohesion, the educational process is the single most important policy lever...in most (perhaps all) countries the best predictor of high social capital is simply years of formal education. (Putnam, 2004, cited in Colenso, 2005, page 19)

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<sup>46</sup> Stewart refers to "general analysis of conflicts which is partly drawn from the findings of a recent research programme into the economic and social causes of conflict", but does not elaborate further on methodology and methods underpinning the analysis of her paper.

Putnam cites empirical quantitative evidence to claim that *quantity* of education alone (i.e. aggregate years of schooling) is strongly associated with social cohesion. Although he uses data drawn from OECD countries, his research is potentially important for fragile states, if an empirical (and theoretical) link can be established between education and social unrest / conflict.

In contrast to Putnam, however, Green & Preston (2001)<sup>47</sup> claim that there appears to be no significant correlation at national level between *aggregate* levels of education and social cohesion. Green and Preston analyse cross-national data on education outcomes (IALS data), income inequality (Gini coefficient and GNP per capita taken from World Bank, 2001), and measures of social cohesion. They conclude that while there appears to be no significant correlation at national level between aggregate levels of education and social cohesion, *inequality* of educational outcomes, however, is closely connected to income inequality, which is closely connected to many of the measures of social cohesion. In other words, it is not the total *amount* of education that is significant, as per Putnam's claim, but the *distribution* of education outcomes. The authors point out, however, that in these relationships it is not clear in which direction the causal arrows might run. Green and Preston's model is shown in Figure 3.13 below<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Green and Preston's work on social capital and social cohesion is further developed in Green, Preston and Sabates (2003) and Green and Peston (2003).

<sup>48</sup> Green and Preston do not however test the 'socialisation' function of education, i.e. that children develop competencies such as tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the classroom.

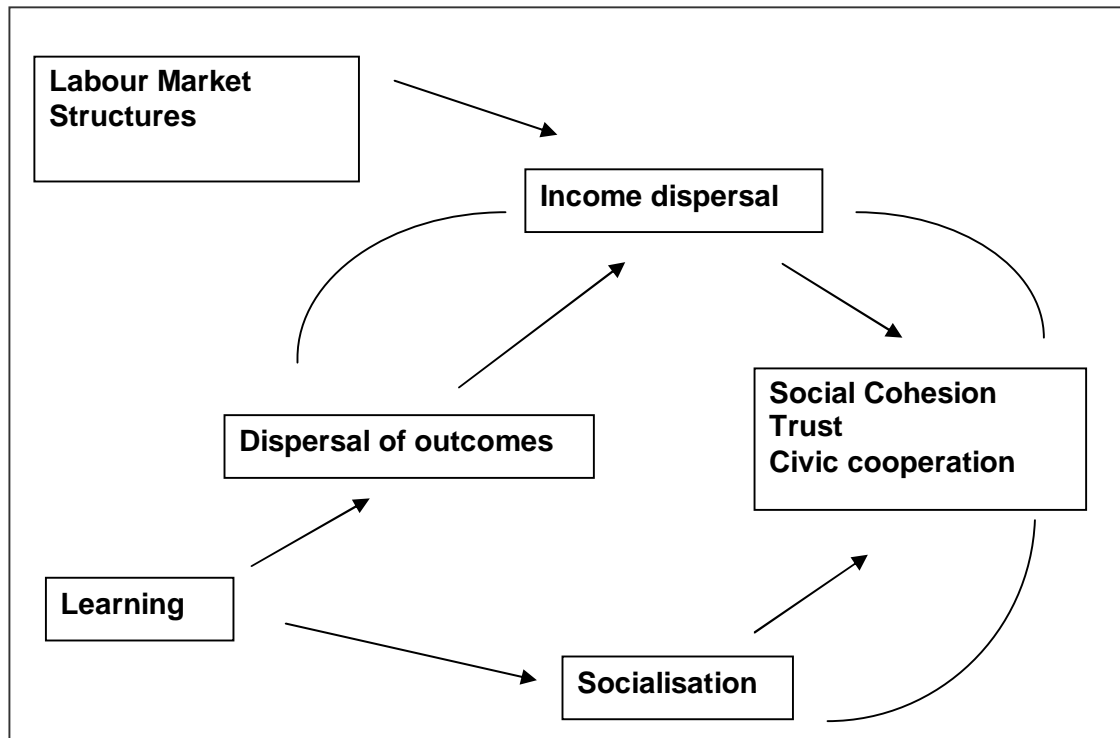


Figure 3.13. Framework for understanding linkages between education and social cohesion (Green & Preston, 2001)

Putnam and Green & Preston arrive at different conclusions mainly because they have different definitions of what constitutes 'social cohesion'. Green & Preston reject Putnam's social capital model, which, they contend, treats social cohesion as an aggregation of individual-level characteristics (particularly 'associational membership'). Instead, they present a 'societal approach to social cohesion', identifying a set of variables that form a combined indicator of national-level social cohesion. These variables include measures of 'general trust', 'trust in government' and 'cheating' taken from the World Values Surveys<sup>49</sup> of 1990 and 1995, and crime data<sup>50</sup> taken from INTERPOL (1996). Green & Preston conclude that in addition to focusing on the development of shared or cooperative values, education policy-makers should focus more attention on the attenuation of inequalities in educational outcomes (Green & Preston, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> For the World Values Surveys survey instruments, see <http://wvs.isr.umich.edu/wvs-ques4.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Sabates and Feinstein have developed further evidence on education and crime reduction in the UK. See for example, Sabates (2008, 2010), Sabates and Feinstein (2008).

Ritzen, Wang & Duthilleul (2002) use similar data sets to examine the role of education in building 'cohesive', productive societies, analysing 'trust' as a measure of social cohesion<sup>51</sup>. They confirm a negative relation between income inequality and trust (i.e. the higher the income inequality, the lower the level of trust), and between education inequality and trust (i.e. the higher the level of education inequality, the lower the level of trust). The authors conclude that "...from the perspective of cohesion, a new push is required to reduce the inequality in education achievement, in particular where this inequality lowers average achievement" (Ritzen et al., 2002, page 22).

There is further quantitative evidence supporting the links between education and reducing fragility. Based on cross-country regression analysis, it has been estimated that each year of education reduces the risk of conflict by 20 percent, with secondary education found to be particularly important for promoting state 'turnaround' (Meagher, 2005; Chauvet and Collier, 2005). However, it is difficult to disentangle education's effect from other influences. Moreover, there is evidence of education contributing to *increased* fragility, for example through concentrating resources and opportunities in the hands of elites, or orienting the curriculum and learning materials towards a particular ethnic or language group (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Wickrema and Colenso, 2003; Davies, 2004; Seitz, 2004; Burde, 2005; Vaux and Visman, 2005; World Bank, 2005).

Taken together, the analysis – principally empirical and quantitative – of Vallings and Moreno Torres (2005), Stewart (2000), Østby (2003), Putnam (2004), Green & Preston (2001) and Ritzen et al. (2002), Meagher (2005), Chauvet and Collier (2005), supports the thesis that there exist links between education and social unrest / conflict. It should be noted that – with the exception of Chauvet and Collier – these studies use data sets principally from OECD countries.

Davies (2004) analyses this issue from a different perspective and using different methods. Drawing heavily from theory in the social sciences and using

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<sup>51</sup> The authors substitute the Program for International Student Achievement (PISA) scores for IALS scores.

principally qualitative data, Davies explores the relationship between schooling and conflict in terms of three analytic categories: (i) economic and class relations, (ii) gender and violence, and (iii) pluralism and identity. Davies uses the theoretical framework of complexity theory to underpin her analysis of education and conflict. She stresses that complexity is not a 'grand narrative'<sup>52</sup> of social interaction, but more a way of seeing connections and possibilities. Davies emphasises as central to complexity and chaos theory the notion of dynamic and non-linear 'complex adaptive systems'.

This is an appealing framework for both education and conflict (or indeed fragility), as neither leads itself to a reductionist, mechanistic explanatory framework, in particular when the two are combined i.e. exploring the connections between education and conflict / fragility. Emphasising the non-linearity of complexity theory, Davies observes: "...this is why the school effectiveness movement was destined to fail, in its simple cause-and-effect, factorial, decontextualised models of change (Harber and Davies, 1997; Byrne, 1998; Brooke-Smith, 2001)." Davies concludes as follows: "...education indirectly does more to contribute to the underlying causes of conflict than it does to contribute to peace."

This is a bold assertion, and it is not clear that it is, or could be, empirically grounded. Davies goes on to explain why she believes this is the case.

This is through reproduction of economic inequality and the bifurcation of wealth/poverty; through the promotion of a particular version of hegemonic masculinity and gender segregation; and through magnifying ethnic and religious segregation or intolerance. Schools are adaptive, but they tend towards equilibrium rather than radical emergence; hence at best they do not challenge existing social patterns which are generative of conflict. At worst, they act as amplifying mechanisms (Davies, 2004, page 203).

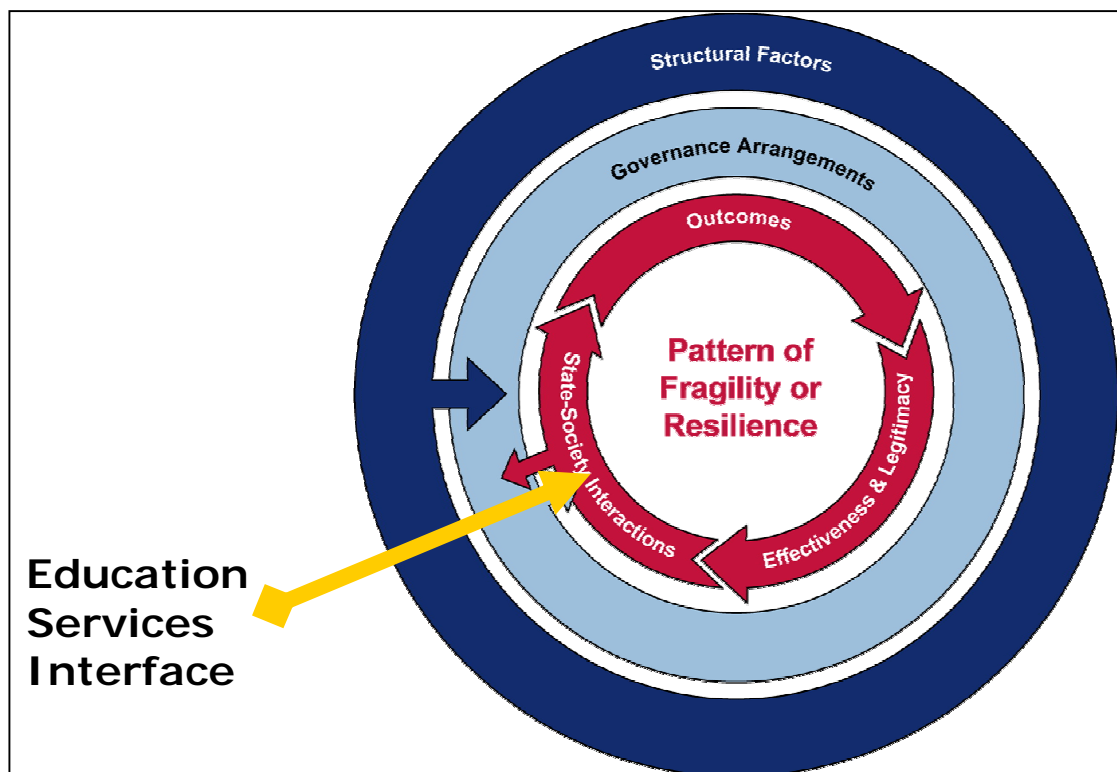
Davies is not claiming that education *per se* does this. It is more that the institutions of schooling tend to generate conflict because of the way that they are constituted.

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<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 2 for a short discussion of 'grand theories' in sociology.

Davies' use of complexity theory poses an interesting challenge to the project of this thesis. Davies's view is that the model of complexity theory poses two basic models of change: "major cataclysm", and "...the small system nested in other systems which can work at the boundaries, and create the tiny perturbations which can have amplifying effects" (Davies, 2004). This may not sit easily with a theory-building approach that seeks to understand relationships between variables and to organise them into an explanatory and potentially predictive model. We will return to this challenge in the final chapter of this thesis.

Of all international development agencies, it is the biggest – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – who have gone furthest in embracing an analytical and policy model that links education directly and causally to reduced fragility. USAID (2006a) has developed the conceptual framework outlined in Figure 3.14 below.



*Figure 3.14 Conceptual framework for a relationship between education and patterns of fragility / resilience (USAID, 2006a)*

A USAID (2006b) assessment tool on education and fragile states outlines seven key 'patterns of fragility'. It proposes the following strategic approach:

The agency's strategic approach is particularly concerned with issues of legitimacy and effectiveness in governance as it pertains to four domains: economic, social, political and security. The Fragility Framework analyzes specific patterns of fragility such as organized violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement. Conditions of fragility require new ways of conceptualizing, delivering and evaluating the impact of development assistance, particularly in education. (USAID, 2006b, page 3)

USAID (2006a) highlights five key areas of focus: (i) seek government recognition of alternative service delivery systems while rebuilding appropriate government capacity, (ii) target critical groups such as youth, (iii) involve key groups outside the education sector who can influence a wider perception of state legitimacy, (iv) work across sectors, (v) seek outcomes beyond education.

The evidence base for these analyses and conclusions is not apparent in the published documents. The toolkit (USAID, 2006a) does however cite examples of education programmes designed in part to mitigate fragility: ending the issuance of false degrees and nepotism in hiring in Guinea; using radio networks for community awareness campaign on the consequences of exclusion in Burundi; working with security forces and parents to organize against school violence in Haiti.

Among the implications that can be drawn from the analysis described in this section are the importance of: (i) inclusive structures of education governance, (ii) equitable distribution of education resources and opportunities, and (iii) opportunities to break down ethnic, religious and gender divides in the classroom. Colenso (2005b) attempts to draw together literature on education and social cohesion into a policy and operational framework founded on three propositions across three domains:

- (i) political economy / governance: education affects social cohesion through transparency and participation in education policy formulation, planning and management;

- (ii) equity / equality of opportunity: education affects social cohesion through the distribution of education resources, opportunities and outcomes;
- (iii) teaching / learning: education affects social cohesion through the development of certain competencies in students.

This framework is echoed in Berry's recent (2009) article.

... equitable access to education services and inclusive policies at the school level are crucial to long-term efforts to build social cohesion in fragile states. A combination of *weak government capacity, limited geographical access, and contended curriculum*, makes it extremely challenging to tackle these issues in the education sector. (Berry 2009, emphasis added, page 12)

Based on the analysis of this section, we might conclude the following:

- there is evidence both for and against the proposition that education can increase social cohesion and mitigate fragility; it clearly has the potential to do both;
- there is both quantitative and qualitative evidence in support of the proposition that education can mitigate fragility, but most of the quantitative evidence is drawn from OECD countries, rather than low income countries or even fragile states; this may be a function of availability of data and the focus of existing studies, rather than a presumption that this relationship does not hold in low-income countries or fragile states;
- to understand this proposition fully, we must unpack different dimensions of education, notably access, distribution and quality; this potentially has significant implications for the design and delivery of aid programmes;
- we might therefore reasonably conclude that it is possible for external inputs, including aid, to support a positive relationship between education outcomes and measures of social cohesion related to peace-building and state-building; for which the evidence can be assessed as medium.



This is reflected in a revised theoretical framework below, which incorporates a new grey-shaded arrow pointing back from education outcomes to the entry conditions examined in the previous section.

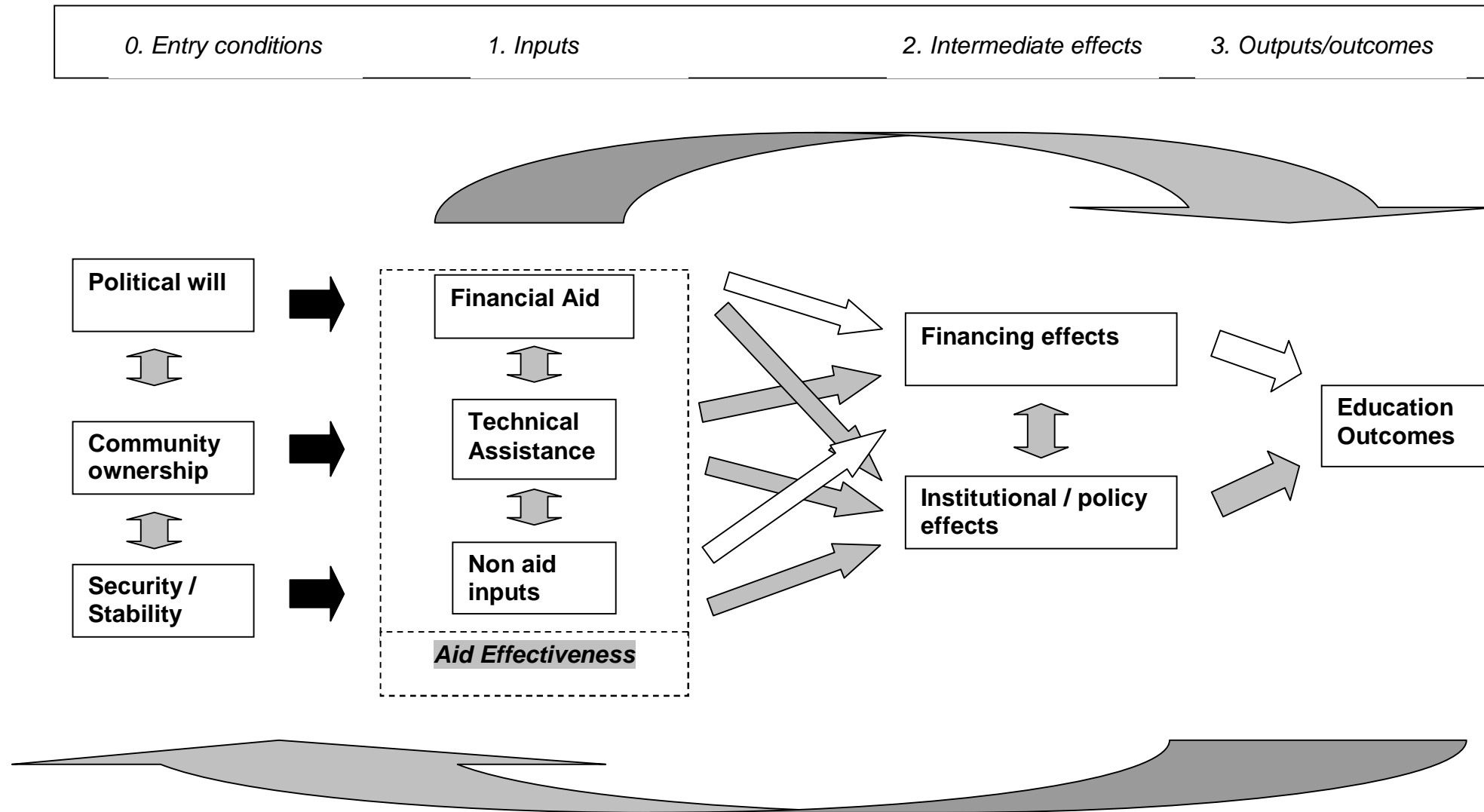


Figure 3.15. Theoretical Framework (Stage 6)

### 3.7 Linking evidence to policy and practice

#### 3.7.1 *Summarising the evidence*

The following narrative summarises the findings from this Chapter that have informed the final theoretical framework presented in Figure 3.15 above. These are described in linear form from left (entry conditions) to right (education outcomes) in the framework.

#### 0. Entry conditions

- There are factors extraneous to the relationship between aid and education outcomes in fragile states that seem to be key determinants of the relationship between these variables; these are described in the theoretical framework at Level 0 as 'Entry conditions', and are suggested to be political will, community ownership, security / stability.
- The evidence suggests relatively strong evidence – denoted by dark-shaded arrows – linking these three entry conditions and education outcomes, particularly when viewed in terms of sustainability.
- There is also reason to signal the strong interaction between these 'entry conditions' – denoted by grey-shaded arrows between them – although a full examination of these relationships has been beyond the scope of this thesis.

#### 1. Inputs

- On the basis of evidence emerging in the literature, inputs originally described as 'aid' have been disaggregated and further described in three ways: (i) aid has been broken down into 'financial aid' and 'technical assistance', (ii) a third category has been added as a key interlinked input, i.e. non-aid inputs (e.g. peacekeeping, diplomacy), (iii) the literature has shown that the effectiveness of these three inputs

together is at least in part determined by the way they are delivered, described here as 'aid effectiveness'.

- Evidence suggests that the effectiveness of the three inputs is to some degree determined by their interaction; this is denoted by grey-shaded arrows connecting the three.
- The evidence also supports a medium relationship overall between these inputs (Level 1) and the dependent variable, i.e. Education outcomes (Level 3), denoted by a grey-shaded arrow.
- Relationships were tested between the different types of inputs and Level 2 Intermediate effects, as follows: (i) the evidence indicated a weak relationship between financial aid and financing effects (due in part to fungibility), but a medium relationship between financial aid and institutional / policy effects, (ii) it indicated a medium relationship between technical assistance and both financing and institutional / policy effects, (iii) the evidence indicated a weak relationship between non-aid inputs and financing effects, but a medium relationship between non-aid inputs and institutional effects; in each case the strength of the evidence in support of the relationship is again denoted by the degree of shading of the arrow.

## 2. Intermediate effects

- The evidence suggested a weak relationship between financing effects and education outcomes, and a medium relationship between institutional / policy effects and education outcomes.

## 3. Outputs / outcomes

- I also examined a relationship – suggested in the literature and particularly present in policy and operational approaches of organisations including USAID – between education outcomes and Level 0 Entry conditions, particularly whether the evidence supports a link between education outcomes (both type and distribution) and social stability; this relationship was found to be medium – education has the potential both to contribute to social cohesion, and to undermine it.

### 3.7.2 *What are the lessons for policy and practice?*

The findings of this research confirm a potential relationship, though perhaps less strong than thought by some, between aid inputs and education outcomes in fragile states. Positing that this relationship might work somehow through intermediate financing and institutional effects, it finds stronger evidence for institutional effects than for financing effects. In particular, the evidence linking financial aid and financing effects, and finance and education outcomes, is found to be relatively weak. This seems counter-intuitive, and it should probably also be of concern for aid agencies, including my own. Financing effects seem to be a weak transmission mechanism between aid inputs and education outcomes.

The relatively weak relationship between external inputs – aid and non-aid inputs – and financing effects suggest that the key interaction between external inputs and education outcomes in fragile states might be through the institutional changes that aid can support. There is also evidence to suggest that in the case of both aid and non-aid inputs, external inputs are better at supporting existing incipient reform, rather than generating or driving that reform in the absence of existing will or momentum. In terms of aid policy and practice, this would suggest a stronger focus on institutional change than on financial resources, and a need to match investments and interventions in a more ‘opportunistic’ way to recipient ‘home-owned’ reform on a case-by-case basis. This argues against a blueprint approach that assumes the effectiveness of certain types of aid interventions regardless of context (see e.g. Easterly, 2009).

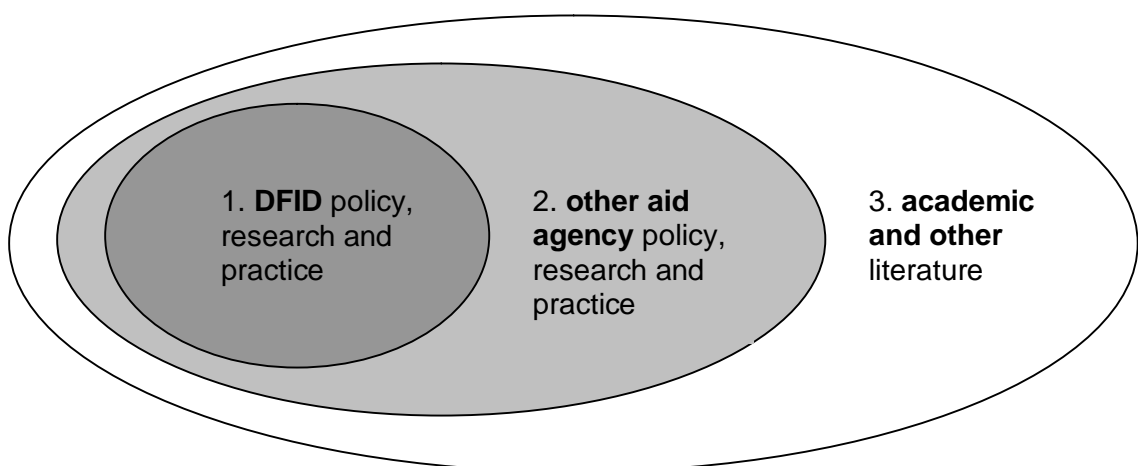
The strong inter-dependence – described at Level 1 ‘Inputs’ – between financial aid and technical assistance, and also, albeit possibly slightly weaker, between aid inputs and non-aid inputs, would suggest the importance of deploying instruments in combination, and within a single approach to strategy and possibly even delivery. The evidence on ‘aid effectiveness’ is found to be somewhat weaker than the significance many agencies, including DFID, seem to ascribe to applying aid effectiveness principles. The arguments in favour of harmonisation and alignment in particular seem to be more compelling when

emphasising the counter-factual i.e. free-standing projects delinked from national priorities and systems struggle to reach beyond both localised and short-term impact.

The lack of developing country evidence linking education and social stability in fragile states may be concerning for those advocating the importance of investing in education to mitigate fragility. This finding may be particularly significant for critical theorists who question the wisdom and motives of governments such as the US and UK investing heavily in countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan to counter radicalisation. This is an issue that has received limited critical scholarship, particularly from educationalists, although a literature may be emerging (see for example Davies, 2008).

### *3.7.3 A short commentary on the availability of evidence*

Before turning to the concluding section, it is worth reflecting on the availability and nature of evidence. The literature review of the CAS used an organising principle for determining the sequencing and prioritisation of literature, expanding out through three concentric rings: (i) DFID policy, research and practice papers, (ii) similar literature defining and influencing policy and practice in other development agencies, (iii) academic and other literature (see Figure 3.16 below).



*Figure 3.16. Conceptual framework for sequencing and prioritisation of literature review, reproduced from Colenso 2005a*

The decision to privilege DFID and other agency literature was in part determined by a wish to examine reflexively my own professional context, but also by the availability of literature, which was, and remains, dominated by agency literature including grey literature. Colenso (2005a) conducted a key word search of four academic databases, which yielded the following results<sup>53</sup>:

- British Education Index, 1976 - June 2005:
  - word search for 'education AND fragile states' yielded 0 returns;
  - word search for 'education AND reconstruction' yielded 60 returns (reduced to 6 relevant records after screening);
- ERIC – CIJE & RIE, 1990 – Sep 2004:
  - word search for 'education AND fragile states' yielded 0 returns;
  - word search for 'education AND reconstruction' yielded 545 returns (reduced to 22 relevant records after screening);
- Australian Education Index, 1976 - June 2005:
  - word search for 'education AND fragile states' yielded 0 returns;
  - word search for 'education AND reconstruction' yielded 184 returns (reduced to 29 relevant records after screening);
- Web of Science, 1995-2005:
  - word search for 'education AND fragile states' yielded 0 returns;
  - word search for 'education AND reconstruction' yielded 269 returns (reduced to 10 after screening).

This has 2 implications. First, availability: the data pool is relatively small. Second, quality: what is available will typically not have been subject to peer review and academic quality control process; there is also a higher risk of observer bias – one of the three criteria established in Chapter 1 to grade the evidence – given that the implementer is also frequently the assessor. Both availability and quality of data are compounded by the problem, referred to earlier in this thesis, of the lack of available data on education in fragile states,

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<sup>53</sup> Criteria for screening were that articles were relevant to two or more of the following categories: education, fragile states, aid.

given weaknesses in data collection and in statistical capacity. This applies to both administrative data and survey data.

Finally, the literature that is available is dominated by 2 methods: case study, and, to a lesser degree, cross-country regression analysis. There is relatively little literature available on, for example, what is happening in the classroom, and relatively little literature using, for example, ethnographic and micro-level research. This leads to perhaps three conclusions for this thesis. First, there is a need to strengthen data collection and also research in fragile states. Second, there are significant gaps in the research, and a huge agenda for the research community to pursue. Third, researchers and other development professionals should be acutely aware of the shortcomings of their evidence base – in terms of availability, quality and impartiality – when advancing conclusions on evidence, designing policy, and implementing operations.



## 4. Conclusion

People often assume that data are simple, graspable and trustworthy, whereas theory is complex, recondite and slippery, and so give the former priority. In the case of climate change, as in much of science, the reverse is at least as fair a picture. *Data are vexatious; theory is quite straightforward.* Constructing a set of data that tells you about the temperature of the Earth over time is much harder than putting together the basic theoretical story of how the temperature should be changing, given what else is known about the universe in general. (The Economist, March 20<sup>th</sup> 2010, page 34, emphasis added)

This article in The Economist is dealing with climate change, but the point has general application. Should we believe The Economist, or is the author of this article betraying a lack of rigour of which a researcher should be suspicious? To answer this question, and to assess whether the theory I have generated in the previous chapter has any validity or utility, I will return in this final chapter to issues of methodology and method, and particularly to the characteristics and tests of what might constitute theory.

### 4.1 Methodology, methods and theory

Section 1.2 of this thesis, entitled ‘methodology and methods’, established methodological distinctions within the overlapping disciplines of research and evaluation. Building on Habermas’ (1972) distinction between three research paradigms (positivist, interpretive, critical theory), it asked whether theory was essentially a positivist project, defined by “prediction and control” – better for the natural sciences than for the complexity (fallibility?) of the social sciences. It outlined a similar debate in the field of evaluation and evaluative research, contrasting “rationalist-objectivist” approaches to evaluation with “argumentative-subjectivist” approaches (Van der Knapp, 1995, cited in Martin & Sanderson, 1999).

Section 1.2 also proposed a pragmatic way through these distinctions. Within research, Bryman's (1996) productive tension between positivist quantitative methods and interactionist qualitative methods, whereby "...participant observation can be deployed within a *theory testing framework* with which the epistemological basis of quantitative research is conventionally associated." Within evaluation, Martin and Sanderson's (1999) "formative policy learning approach", embracing "a wider variety of experimental sites" and indeed methods, including subjective judgements based largely on qualitative information.

I decided to adopt a 'mixed-method' approach. In so doing, I have argued in Section 1.3 for what I called "the legitimacy and admissibility of qualitative evidence for building theory", giving particular attention to the research methods that dominate the literature on education and fragile states: the case study. I argued that when case studies and other principally qualitative methods generate data that are subjected to a logically stronger process of generalisation – such as analytical induction and constant comparison, including comparison against data derived through quantitative methods – then claims to evidence and then theory may be stronger than if the case study was the sole method utilised.

In examining methods, I have given some particular consideration to the increasing use of randomised trials, and to some agencies' preference for the seemingly hard facts derived from regression analysis. While welcoming both methods, I have recommended that the limits of each is thoroughly critiqued. This argues for a mixed-method approach, as proposed by Easterly below.

The RE [randomised experiments] studies have suffered from over-promising and dogmatism from their proponents, heroic extrapolation from results in small samples in particular contexts to general conclusions, and lack of a link to behavioral models. A more constructive approach might target REs more to shed light on behavioral parameters, perhaps use them more to hold aid accountable for results, and to be more open to using diverse types of evidence from case studies, other micro empirical research, and micro and macro stylized facts and some of the more well-executed

macro regressions (with appropriate cautions on the severe limitations of the latter). (Easterly, 2009, page 105)

Having established a methodological position, Section 1.3, 'Grading the evidence – designing an instrument', then went on to identify three features or domains to be adopted in this thesis for grading evidence: method, degree of bias, degree of corroboration. It was these criteria that helped guide my assessment of the evidence, for each hypothesis presented and tested in Chapter 3. This included evidence generated by new research conducted for this thesis.

Through Chapter 3, I have attempted to build a theoretical framework to describe the complex relationship between aid and education outcomes in fragile states. I have also briefly assessed the implications of this theory for policy and practice. This concluding Chapter asks the question: does Figure 3.16 constitute 'theory', or is it somehow something less? To answer this question, I will return to my earlier definition of theory, and further expand on this definition through proposing some characteristics of theory, and then assessing whether the theory developed in Chapter 3 does indeed possess these characteristics.

## **4.2 The characteristics and tests of theory**

Chapter 1 introduced Kerlinger's characterisation of theory as: "...a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (Kerlinger, 1970, cited in Cohen et al., 2000, page 11). In assessing whether or not this thesis can be said to have generated theory, it is worth returning to Kerlinger, and specifically his description of the characteristics of effective empirical theory; as follows:

- (i) a theoretical system must permit deductions and generate laws that can be tested empirically, providing the means for its confirmation or rejection;
- (ii) theories must be compatible with both observation and with previously compatible theories; grounded in verified empirical data and sound hypotheses;
- (iii) parsimony i.e. stated in simple terms;
- (iv) should have considerable explanatory and predictive potential;
- (v) should be able to respond to observed anomalies;
- (vi) should spawn research i.e. its 'fertility';
- (vii) should demonstrate precision and universality, and set the terms for its own falsification and verification;
- (viii) must be operationalisable;
- (ix) a test of theory must be replicable.

May and Powell (2008) offers five characteristics, or 'bases', of theory:

- (i) its needing to be based solely in fact (inductivism);
- (ii) its being subjected to empirical falsification (deductivism);
- (iii) its reflecting the dominant trends of the discipline; not being based on rules of method but on preferences of sciences;
- (iv) its ability to diagnose and to inform change (critical theory);
- (v) being grounded in the same constructs as people use in interpreting their social environments in everyday life.

Combining and distilling these two, I propose to adopt five key characteristics of theory, against which I will test the theory generated in this thesis:

- (i) empirical grounding: is it based in observable reality?
- (ii) explanatory power: does it satisfactorily explain a phenomenon or phenomena, in simple, intelligible and plausible terms?
- (iii) predictive power: can it help predict that phenomenon or phenomena?
- (iv) utility: can it be acted upon? can it inform change?

- (v) verification / falsification: can it be either proved or disproved?

The rest of this section will consider each of the five characteristics, answering 'yes', 'partially' or 'no' to each question posed.

#### 4.2.1 *Empirical grounding: is it based in observable reality?*

It has been the central project of this thesis to base the theory in fact; to mine existing literature and evidence sources, both qualitative and quantitative, to generate data through new research conducted for this thesis, and to develop and deploy an instrument to test the reliability and validity of the evidence examined. From this point of view, it would seem to be well grounded empirically. However, in grading the evidence, the theoretical framework has also tried to indicate where evidence is mixed or weak. Where evidence is deemed weak, it could be said that the proposed theory is not grounded in fact, but in supposition or hypothesis, with insufficient or contradictory underlying evidence.

In view of comments made in the last section of Chapter 3 relating to the dominance of agency literature, it is also worth reflecting on a challenge set by critical theorists:

Data are not collected but produced. Facts do not exist independently of the medium through which they are interpreted, whether that is an explicit theoretical model, a set of assumptions, or interests that have led to the data being collected in the first instance. (May, 1999)

Should we be suspicious of the fact that much of the literature on the subject of education, aid and fragile estates is commissioned and published by development agencies, with an incentive to reinforce existing policy and to promote positive results of their investments? At a minimum, the thesis has frequently noted the risk of observer bias, if not the manifestation of that risk (which may anyway be difficult to observe).

In response to the issue of empirical grounding, and the question of whether this theory can be said to be grounded in fact, I would propose therefore to answer only partially, on two grounds. First, in grading the evidence for different hypotheses in Chapter 3, the evidence underpinning these hypotheses has been assessed for the most part only as ‘medium’, and occasionally as ‘weak’. This would indicate at best a partial grounding in ‘fact’. Second, the strong risk of observer bias would seem to indicate an answer of ‘partially’.

*4.2.2 Explanatory power: does it satisfactorily explain a phenomenon or phenomena, in simple, intelligible and plausible terms?*

I would argue that the proposed theory does satisfactorily explain a relationship between aid and education in fragile states. The different levels – entry conditions, inputs, intermediate effects, outputs/outcomes – provide a logical and potentially causally linked sequence or relationship between the variables. At a minimum, it provides an explanatory framework to test whether and how these relationships work. In what is clearly a highly complex relationship, a balance has been sought between reflecting that complexity, while retaining sufficient economy and simplicity to make the relationships and overall framework intelligible.

However, this is not to say that there are not significant gaps in how the relationship between aid inputs and education is described and validated in this proposed theory. First, there is little treatment in this thesis – reflecting a bias in the available literature – on the agency of national actors (citizens, communities, formal institutions including but not limited to the state), as opposed to aid agencies themselves and their instruments. This in part reflects a bias / preference on behalf of aid agencies and the literature to focus on supply-side, as opposed to demand-side, instruments and determinants of education outcomes. Once again, this could be remedied by more micro-level and ethnographic research that gets to grips with individual, household and

community level factors that are critical to driving education outcomes. Second, as noted in Section 3.7.3 above, the theory – again reflecting a shortcoming in the literature – is weak in how it describes what happens in the classroom and at the broader school level: learning, pedagogy, resource and people management.

Nonetheless, I would argue that the theory passes the test of ‘explanatory power’; that it does satisfactorily explain the phenomenon under investigation, for the most part in simple, intelligible and plausible terms.

#### *4.2.3 Predictive power: can it help predict that phenomenon or phenomena?*

I would answer no. The evidence and analysis presented in Chapter has continually shown that the success of development interventions in fragile states is highly context-specific. There are no hard and fast rules as to what works where. This would call into the question the predictive power of the theory presented in Chapter 3. Section 3.3.1 cited Berry’s (2009) recent review of successful approaches to supporting education in fragile states:

...there is a wide range of fragile states, and consequently it is difficult to generalise across these diverse development settings. A one size fits all approach will not work...(Berry, 2009, page 4)

In order to explain better and test the relationships explored in this thesis, I posited and tested in Section 3.2 certain intermediate effects, and whether or not they might explain a transmission mechanism or some form of causality between inputs and outputs/outcomes. If I had been successful in establishing these relationships, the theory would arguably have had greater predictive power. However, this proved only partially successful in the case of policy and institutional effects (where evidence was assessed as ‘medium’), and unsuccessful in the case of financing effects (where evidence was assessed as ‘weak’).

Indeed, as suggested by Berry above, it is arguable that for the subject of this thesis, the variables are too broad, and the relationships too complex, to be captured by any equation that tries to explain and predict the relationship between aid inputs and education outcomes. This is certainly the view of Harber and Davies (1997), as cited in Section 3.6, criticising the school effectiveness movement on the basis of “...simple cause-and-effect, factorial, decontextualised models of change.”

As a comment on predictive power, it is worth reflecting on whether the explanation of any development intervention could be said to be sufficiently robust and bounded to have predictive power. It could perhaps be said of interventions such as vaccination – where the intervention is sufficiently bounded and sufficiently underpinned by laws of natural science – but less so of broader interventions, of the scale and complexity of the subject of this thesis. Indeed, some commentators have argued that it is the mistaken application of a conventional change paradigm that has contributed to aid’s lack of success. Easterley (2001) contends that aid does not work because of an over-reliance on a western planning paradigm that does not conform to the way that change happens in the real world.

In later work, Easterly (2009) dwells further on the problem of ‘implementation’: i.e. if a randomised experiment shows positive results from a particular project or intervention that is executed, it does not follow that giving aid for that purpose will automatically result in project execution. He quotes Reinikka and Svensson (2005):

When scaling-up a specific program found to work in a controlled experiment run by a specific organization (often an NGO with substantial assistance from the research team), it is crucial also to have an understanding of the whole delivery chain; from the institutional constraints that affect central government policy decisions, through the incentive constraints that influence different layers of government agencies and officials implementing a given policy, to the actions and incentives of the end-producers (schools) and beneficiaries (students and parents). Lack of attention to the service delivery system, and adjustment of policy accordingly, may



imply effects very different. (Reinikka and Svensson (2005), cited in Easterly, 2009, page 40)

As noted in Section 3.6 above, Davies (2004) uses complexity theory to challenge conventional paradigms of change in what she calls “complex adaptive systems”:

Within complexity theory, we can call on at least two directions for change. The first is the major cataclysm that can force a real radical emergence, a sudden leap to the edge of chaos, compelling reconsideration; the second is the small system nested in other systems which can work at the boundaries, and create the tiny perturbations which can have amplifying effects. (Davies, 2004, page 35)

Nicolai (2009) puts forward a theory of change that can be either radical or incremental, distinguishing between five types of change: major change; sudden change; unexpected change; rapid change; irreversible change.

In conclusion, I would say that the evidence examined for this thesis suggests strongly that development interventions can be successfully planned and implemented. However, for the reasons cited above, I do not propose that the theory developed in Chapter 3 could be said to have predictive power; the variables are too many, their interactions too complex, and causality, and so generalisability, too difficult to establish. I will return to this point in the concluding section of this thesis.

#### 4.2.4 *Utility: can it be acted upon? can it inform change?*

I would argue yes. Sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 summarise the key findings from the evidence examined in Chapter 3, and the implications for policy and operations. While the theory does not represent an ‘investment guarantee’ – i.e. predicting with confidence whether, where and how aid can support education

outcomes in fragile states – it does provide a framework that can guide policy and practice.

Among the key lessons or benefits of the theory presented in Chapter 3 are the following:

- specifying entry conditions (political will; community ownership; security / stability), analysis of which can help influence the design and implementation of interventions;
- proposing how different inputs can be categorised (financial aid, technical assistance, non aid inputs), and understanding their interaction, and their role in delivering outcomes (including how they might draw on certain principles of aid effectiveness);
- understanding not only whether and how inputs can contribute to education outcomes, but also how they may, or may not, contribute to certain intermediate effects (financing effects; policy and institutional effects);
- understanding whether and how education outcomes can in turn contribute to increased stability.

#### 4.2.5 Verification / falsification: can it be either proved or disproved?

I would argue no, for similar reasons cited above in Section 4.2.3 when assessing the theory's predictive power. It is hard to see how a framework that attempts to describe such a complex and irreducible process could be verified or falsified. In terms of verification, no amount of successful examples of overseas development aid supporting education outcomes in fragile states could establish that the relationship described in the theory necessarily holds. Equally, in terms of falsification, counter-examples – examples of overseas development aid failing to support education outcomes in fragile states (and there are many) – should not be said to falsify the theory.

I would argue therefore that the theory described in Chapter 3 is not amenable to verification or falsification, in a way that that is conventionally understood i.e. following a positivist paradigm of experimentation in the natural sciences. Nor perhaps should we expect it to be, given the complexity of the issue under investigation.

### 4.3 Conclusion

In testing my theory therefore against the five characteristics of theory I proposed in Section 4.2, I have concluded as follows:

- (i) empirical grounding: partially
- (ii) explanatory power: yes
- (iii) predictive power: no
- (iv) utility: yes
- (v) verification / falsification: no

Is it reasonable therefore to conclude that I have failed in the project of this thesis: to build a theoretical framework to understand the role of aid in achieving the Education Millennium Development Goals in fragile states?

My assessment against the five characteristics of theory has emphasised the ‘explanatory power’ and the ‘utility’ of the theory. Where it falls significantly short – ‘predictive power’ and ‘verification / falsification’ – is arguably in its generalisability. To help us understand the issue of generalisability in social theory, it may be help to borrow from a theoretician in the field of management, given that management, like education, is a process less immediately amenable to positivist generalisable laws.

Sensitivity to context is especially important for theories based on experience. According to the contextualist perspective (Gergin, 1982), meaning is derived from context. That is, we understand what is going on by appreciating where and when it is happening. Observations are embedded and must be understood within a context. Therefore, *authors of inductively generated theories have a*

*particular responsibility for discussing limits of generalizability...*In the process of testing these ideas in various settings, we discover the inherent limiting conditions. In the absence of this breadth of experimental evidence, we must be realistic regarding the extent of a theorist's foreknowledge of all the possible limitations on a theory's applicability. (Whetten, 1989, page 492, emphasis added)

It is interesting that Easterly (2009) develops the implications of the limits of generalisability in operational terms. He concludes that because sensitivity to context prevents us from predicting what interventions might work in a generalisable sense or on a large scale, we should stick to the small scale. He builds on the idea put forward by Pritchett and Woolcock (2004) that government services and aid perform the worst in areas that are both transaction-intensive and discretionary. His conclusion is that aid agencies shift from a "transformational" approach (West saves Africa)... to a "marginal" approach (West takes one small step at a time to help individual Africans)." (Easterly 2009). Whether or not we accept Easterly's conclusion, when assessing the limits and utility of our theory, we must surely take the pill of humility that Easterly prescribes when citing Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments:

The man of system, on the contrary, is apt to be very wise in his own conceit; and is often so enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan of government, that he cannot suffer the smallest deviation from any part of it. He goes on to establish it completely and in all its parts, without any regard either to the great interests, or to the strong prejudices which may oppose it. He seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board. He does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse [sic] to impress upon it. (cited in Easterly, 2009, page 106)

To conclude, my view is that I have indeed succeeded in inductively generating a theory, but that that theory – common to most social theory – should not make claims of generalisability. As Pawson and Tilley (2009) argue, it is a combination of mechanism and context that generates outcomes, and without

that combination, scientific progress is not possible. The advantage of my theory should be seen in its utility, in an industry and realm of professional practice that is light on theory. As Deaton notes:

The demand that experiments be theory-driven is, of course, no guarantee to success, though the lack of it is close to guarantee of failure. (Deaton, 2008, page 154).

Deaton goes on to say that, in the field of economics at least: "...empiricists and theorists seem further apart now than at any period in the last quarter century." (Deaton, 2008, page 154).

Both formal institutions and (bad) policy tend towards rigidity. I know this as a policy maker in a government department. This thesis has shown that, at least in this realm of social policy and practice, a closer examination of the evidence does not support certainty. But nor should that, however, diminish the need to seek a firmer basis on which to make policy and operational decisions.

I would argue that this thesis and its product – the ‘theory’ – has provided a framework that advances our understanding of the relationships between aid and education outcomes in fragile states; that it has tested the evidence base for these proposed relationships; and that it has provided a narrative and a framework that has practical utility – notwithstanding limits of generalisability – for future research, policy development and programming.

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## APPENDIX 1. Key education indicators for fragile states

**(DFID proxy list)** (Source: updated from the CAS using data from

UNESCO, 2010)

	Primary school-age population (000)	Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in Primary Education				Primary out of school children		Secondary	
		1999	GPI	2007	GPI	2007 (000)	% girls	1999	2007
Country or territory	2006	Total	(F/M)	Total	(F/M)			%F	%F
<b>Arab States</b>									
Djibouti	122	27	0.73	45	0.89	56	52	42	41
Sudan	5,966	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	47
Yemen	3,803	56	0.59	75	0.76	906	70	26	32
<b>Central Asia</b>									
Azerbaijan	443	89	1.01	95	0.99	20	55	49	48
Georgia	325	...	...	94	0.97	18	60	49	49
Tajikistan	682	...	...	97	0.96	17	86	46	45
Uzbekistan	2,267	...	...	91	0.97	145	59	49	49
<b>East Asia and the Pacific</b>									
Cambodia	2,080	83	0.91	89	0.95	220	58	34	44
Indonesia	25,412	...	...	95	0.96	507	...	...	49
Kiribati	...	97	1.01	...	...	...	...	53	52
Lao PDR	758	76	0.92	86	0.95	104	57	40	43
Myanmar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	50
Papua New Guinea	988	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Solomon Islands	77	...	...	62	0.99	29	48	41	43
Timor-Leste	191	...	...	63	0.95	71	50	...	49
Tonga	15	88	0.96	96	0.97	0.2	...	50	48
Vanuatu	35	91	0.99	87	0.99	4	51	45	...
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>									
Dominica	...	94	0.98	...	...	...	...	57	50
Guyana	97	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	49
Haiti	1,397	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>South and West Asia</b>									
Afghanistan	4,600	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Nepal	3,574	65	0.79	80	0.96	714	53	40	47

	Primary school-age population (000)	Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in Primary Education				Primary out of school children		Secondary GPI	
		1999	GPI	2007	GPI	2007 (000)	% girls	1999	2007
Country or territory	2006	Total	(F/M)	Total	(F/M)			%F	%F
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>									
Angola	1,968	...	...	...	...	...	...	43	...
Burundi	1,303	...	...	81	0.98	244	53	...	42
Cameroon	2,846	...	...	...	...	...	...	45	44
Central African Republic	700	...	...	56	0.74	310	60	...	...
Chad	1,790	51	0.62	...	...	...	...	21	31
Comoros	132	49	0.85	...	...	...	...	44	43
Congo	587	...	...	54	0.92	244	52	...	...
Côte d'Ivoire	3,022	52	0.75	...	...	...	...	35	...
D. R. Congo	10,383	33	0.95	...	...	...	...	34	35
Eritrea	604	33	0.66	41	0.68	349	52	41	41
Ethiopia	13,415	34	0.69	71	0.92	3,721	55	40	40
Gambia	253	72	0.89	67	1.09	86	45	40	48
Guinea	1,451	45	0.69	74	0.87	362	60	26	35
Guinea-Bissau	274	45	0.71	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kenya	5,937	63	1.01	86	1.00	769	50	49	46
Liberia	514	42	0.77	31	0.93	447	51	39	...
Mali	2,065	45	0.70	63	0.80	753	59	34	39
Niger	2,316	26	0.68	45	0.75	1,252	55	38	38
Nigeria	24,111	58	0.82	54	0.88	8,221	55	47	44
Sao Tome and Principe	25	86	0.99	97	0.99	0.1	...	...	51
Sierra Leone	899	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	41
Somalia	1,581	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Togo	1,052	79	0.79	77	0.88	222	63	29	35
Zimbabwe	2,396	83	1.01	88	1.01	281	47	47	48

## APPENDIX 2. 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States' (Source: OECD DAC, 2005)

### PREAMBLE

A durable exit from poverty and insecurity for the world's most fragile states will need to be driven by their own leadership and people. International actors can affect outcomes in fragile states in both positive and negative ways. International engagement will not by itself put an end to state fragility, but the adoption of the following shared principles can help maximize the positive impact of engagement and minimise unintentional harm.<sup>54</sup> The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to help national reformers to build legitimate, effective and resilient state institutions. Realisation of this objective requires taking account of and acting according to the following principles:

**1. Take context as the starting point.** All fragile states require sustained international engagement, but analysis and action must be calibrated to particular country circumstances. It is particularly important to recognize different constraints of *capacity* and *political will* and the different needs of: (i) countries *recovering* from conflict, political crisis or poor governance; (ii) those facing *declining* governance environments, and; (iii) those where the state has partially or wholly *collapsed*. Sound political analysis is needed to adapt international responses to country context, above and beyond quantitative indicators of conflict, governance or institutional strength.

**2. Move from reaction to prevention.** Action today can reduce the risk of future outbreaks of conflict and other types of crises, and contribute to long-term global development and security. A shift from reaction to prevention should include sharing risk analyses; acting rapidly where risk is high; looking beyond quick-fix solutions to address the root causes of state fragility; strengthening the capacity of regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts; and helping fragile states themselves to establish resilient institutions which can withstand political and economic pressures.

**3. Focus on state-building as the central objective.** States are fragile when governments and state structures lack capacity – or in some cases, political will - to deliver public safety and security, good governance and poverty reduction to their citizens. The long-term vision for international engagement in these situations must focus on supporting viable sovereign states. State-building rests on three pillars: the capacity of state structures to perform core functions; their legitimacy and accountability; and ability to provide an enabling environment for

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<sup>54</sup> The piloting of the Principles will draw on the experience of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles endorsed in Stockholm (June 2003).



strong economic performance to generate incomes, employment and domestic revenues. Demand for good governance from civil society is a vital component of a healthy state. State-building in the most fragile countries is about depth, not breadth – international engagement should maintain a tight focus on improving governance and capacity in the most basic security, justice, economic and service delivery functions<sup>55</sup>.

**4. Align with local priorities and/or systems.** Where governments demonstrate political will to foster their countries' development but lack capacity, international actors should fully align assistance behind government strategies. Where alignment behind government-led strategies is not possible due to particularly weak governance, international actors should nevertheless consult with a range of national stakeholders in the partner country, and seek opportunities for partial alignment at the sectoral or regional level. Another approach is to use 'shadow alignment' – which helps to build the base for fuller government ownership and alignment in the future - by ensuring that donor programs comply as far as possible with government procedures and systems. This can be done for example by providing information in appropriate budget years and classifications, or by operating within existing administrative boundaries.

**5. Recognise the political-security-development nexus.** The political, security, economic and social spheres are interdependent: failure in one risks failure in all others. International actors should move to support national reformers in developing unified planning frameworks for political, security, humanitarian, economic and development activities at a country level. The use of simple integrated planning tools in fragile states, such as the transitional results matrix, can help set and monitor realistic priorities and improve the coherence of international support across the political, security, economic, development and humanitarian arenas.

**6. Promote coherence between donor government agencies.** Close links on the ground between the political, security, economic and social spheres also require policy coherence within the administration of each international actor. What is necessary is a whole of government approach, involving those responsible for security, political and economic affairs, as well as those responsible for development aid and humanitarian assistance. Recipient governments too need to ensure coherence between different government ministries in the priorities they convey to the international community.

**7. Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors.** This can happen even in the absence of strong government leadership. In these fragile contexts, it is important to work together on upstream analysis;

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<sup>55</sup> For governments where political will exists and capacity is the main constraint, supporting state-building means direct support for government plans, budgets, decision-making processes and implementing structures. In countries where political will is the main constraint, support for long-term state-building does not necessarily imply short-term support for government - but it does mean moving beyond repeated waves of humanitarian responses to a focus on how to support and strengthen viable national institutions which will be resilient in the longer-term. A vibrant civil society is also important for healthy government and may play a critical transitional role in providing services, particularly when government lacks will and/or capacity.

joint assessments; shared strategies; coordination of political engagement; multi-donor trust funds; and practical initiatives such as the establishment of joint donor offices and common reporting and financial requirements. Wherever possible, international actors should work jointly with national reformers in government and civil society to develop a shared analysis of challenges and priorities.

**8. Do no harm.** International actors should especially seek to avoid activities which undermine national institution-building, such as bypassing national budget processes<sup>56</sup> or setting high salaries for local staff which undermine recruitment and retention in national institutions. Donors should work out cost norms for local staff remuneration in consultation with government and other national stakeholders.

**9. Mix and sequence aid instruments to fit the context.** Fragile states require a mix of aid instruments, including, in particular for countries in promising but high risk transitions, support to recurrent financing. Instruments to provide long-term support to health, education and other basic services are needed in countries facing stalled or deteriorating governance – but careful consideration must be given to how service delivery channels are designed to avoid long-term dependence on parallel, unsustainable structures while at the same time providing sufficient scaling up to meet urgent basic and humanitarian needs. A vibrant civil society is important for healthy government and may also play a critical transitional role in providing services, particularly when the government lacks will and/or capacity.

**10. Act fast...** Assistance to fragile states needs to be capable of flexibility at short notice to take advantage of windows of opportunity and respond to changing conditions on the ground.

**11. ...but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance.** Given low capacity and the extent of the challenges facing fragile states, investments in development, diplomatic and security engagement may need to be of longer-duration than in other low-income countries: capacity development in core institutions will normally require an engagement of at least ten years. Since volatility of engagement (not only aid volumes, but also diplomatic engagement and field presence) is potentially destabilizing for fragile states, international actors commit to improving aid predictability in these countries, by developing a system of mutual consultation and coordination prior to a significant reduction in programming.

**12. Avoid pockets of exclusion.** International engagement in fragile states needs to address the problems of “aid orphans” - states where there are no significant political barriers to engagement but few donors are now engaged and aid volumes are low. To avoid an unintentional exclusionary effect of moves

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<sup>56</sup> The Addis Ababa principle developed in November 2001 as part of the Strategic Partnership for Africa Initiative states: “All donor assistance should be delivered through government systems unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary; where this is not possible, any alternative mechanisms or safeguards must be time-limited and develop and build, rather than undermine or bypass, governmental systems.”

by many donors to be more selective in the partner countries for their aid programs, coordination on field presence and aid flows, and mechanisms to finance promising developments in these countries are essential.