

Group D: Education and conflict

Questions

1. What does a peacebuilding approach to education in situations of conflict and fragility entail?
 2. How can external actors support access to education in situations of conflict and fragility, and what are good practices in this area?
 3. To what extent can education (or a lack thereof) be a driver of crisis situations (e.g. migration, internal displacement and radicalisation)?
- 80% of learning actually occurs outside the formal setting.
 - Groups may portray past conflicts in ways which divide them and turn them against each other. This must be addressed.
 - Education should include conflict-, cultural- and gender-sensitive approaches.
 - Countries' failures to teach students about their own histories of violent conflicts can limit their young people's understanding of the current social and political settings; this can pose a long-term threat to stability.
 - It is important to pay attention to innovative forms of education (e.g. art); these can both help students to express their concerns in alternative ways and serve as a means of reaching out to victims.
 - It is necessary to help students to confront legacies which may not be addressed in schools under normal circumstances.
 - Education can serve as a sort of memorialisation (i.e. recognising past conflicts and divisions, and acknowledging a desire to leave them aside).
 - Support with learning local languages can help refugees to integrate into societies.
 - Schools can act as a sort of safe zone for children and other young people who have experienced violent conflicts.
 - Empowering young people depends on providing them with opportunities; it goes beyond primary or secondary school.
 - If unaccompanied minors arrive at certain refugee camps by the age of six, they receive an education. However, if they are aged 12 or older, they can miss out on that opportunity.
 - It is important to recognise the presence of trauma in children who have experienced violent conflicts.
 - There are a number of issues which need to be taken into consideration: What is the level of devastation in the home community? Are the schools physically destroyed? Even if school buildings remain standing, is it still possible to educate students in them when a violent conflict is ongoing?
 - It is important to work with ministries of education so that they can plan curricula for conflict-affected situations.
 - External actors need to try to work closely with local communities: local partnerships are key to providing legitimacy in the eyes of those communities.
 - It is necessary to take a conflict-sensitive approach and to adjust it to specific contexts (e.g. adjusting education systems to balance local customs and international recommendations, and teaching through unconventional means such as music or art).
 - It is important to try to implement policies which involve reforms but which do not infringe upon national sovereignty.
 - It is necessary to implement policies with long-term interests in mind and to go beyond the 'Do No Harm' approach.

- To understand the most effective, long-term, strategic approach, the European Commission's (EC) Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) must invest in studying specific situations.
- The gap between the time when the EC's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) moves out of a conflict-affected region and its DG for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) moves in must be shortened.
- Religious institutions play a key role in influencing communities and building relationships with international actors. This can either work in favour of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or against them.
- It is necessary to narrow the broad concept of 'peacebuilding' in order to meet the specific needs of certain situations.
- FPI must act as a more effective liaison between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO.
- It is necessary to go beyond educating young people and to try to extend the conflict-sensitive approach to education to the wider population through some form of civic education.