



# **Inter-agency Seminar on the use of political economy analysis for Education in Fragile Situations**

**October 18th-19th 2011 – Brussels**

**Section 1: Summary Report**

**Section 2: Participants List**

## Section 1: Summary Report

The European Commission (EC), in collaboration with CfBT Education Trust, hosted a two -day seminar to stimulate interest and understanding about carrying out 'political economy analysis' (PEA) in the education sector in fragile situations. The event brought t together 45 experienced practitioners working to support education in fragile countries, including donors, UN agencies and international NGOs. It was designed as a 'learning event' to better understand the benefits and challenges of conducting different types of education sector analysis in fragile situations, and the implications and relevance for programme design and implementation.

### Presentation highlights

During the seminar, Alex Duncan (The Policy Practice) provided an excellent introduction to PEA, including its historical precedents and theoretical basis. PEA was presented as an approach to better understand 'the interaction of political and economic processes in a society; the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals; and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time'.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by an explanation of the different levels (macro/country, sector/thematic and problem -driven) and entry points for PEA, including its potential added value at different moments of the programming cycle. Important questions were raised about the challenges of carrying out PEA including the need to adapt and update the analysis in response to the changing political context in a country, and the need for development agencies to take account of their own political economy in decision making. Two concrete examples were provided whereby PEA was integrated as part of broader governance assessments in Rwanda and Bangladesh. These examples illustrated the different levels of government engagement and how this can impact on the analysis. Both cases emphasised the importance of starting with local realities and context, rather than normative approaches. Alex later outlined some of the existing analytical frameworks, including DEVCO's recent background paper on PEA,<sup>2</sup> offering practical suggestions and lessons learnt for integrating PEA as part of the day -to-day work of development agencies.

The EC and CfBT shared experiences from a recent project to apply PEA in the education sector in fragile situations, including presentations from Nepal and Zimbabwe. The Nepal presentation provided the research team's perspective on how to go about conducting PEA, highlighting some of the challenges which were met. The presentation was delivered by two members of the research team - Tejendra Pherali (Liverpool John Moores University) and Alan Smith (University of Ulster). The study was commissioned by a small group of development partners, led by the EC and carried out by three international and three national consultants with strong academic/research credentials. The presentation highlighted the importance of securing experts with profound knowledge of the context and the sector. The study outlined the challenges for development partners in confronting and adapting to the political realities of the context in which they work. The second presentation on Zimbabwe reflected positively on the practical utility of PEA from an EU Delegation perspective. Even though the study was a more limited exercise involving one local and one international expert, a range of different research methods were used including analysis of national media articles and interviews with stakeholders at community level. The study was undertaken to further deepen the Delegation's understanding of the political dynamics inside and outside the sector, and to inform priorities and actions for the period 2011 - 13.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.oecd.org/dac/governance/politicaconomy](http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance/politicaconomy)

<sup>2</sup> <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/political-economy/blog/using-political-economy-analysis-improve-eu-development-effectivenessdraft>

Through subsequent panel discussions, four development partners were invited to present their experiences and insights of carrying out different types of education sector analysis in fragile situations, including the integration of conflict analysis. UNICEF (Jordan Naidoo) presented recent work to evaluate approaches to support peace-building objectives as part of education programmes, drawing on case study material from Sierra Leone. Save the Children (Emily Echessa) presented their experiences of promoting flexible approaches to education in the particularly fragile Somali region of Ethiopia. USAID (Yolande Miller-Grandvaux) and GIZ (Ronja Hoelzer) both presented on their (donor) experiences of integrating conflict analysis, to build in 'conflict sensitivity' and 'conflict mitigation' aspects as part of education project/programme design. As Alan Smith reflected, each agency is now seeking to deepen its analysis of the education sector, but is able to do so within the parameters of the agency's own political economy.

## Issues arising

During the seminar, there was general consensus about the potential added value of PEA for the education sector. It was acknowledged that every good education project manager does this kind of analysis all the time – but that PEA forces you to structure your thinking and gather the evidence to back up your 'gut feeling' about what is actually happening in the sector.

With PEA, it is argued that development partners can avoid normative approaches and develop a more grounded and context-specific understanding of options. However, participants noted that PEA is more than just context and stakeholder analysis; importantly it facilitates the engagement of a much wider range of different stakeholders and disciplines than would normally be engaged in sector analysis. It seeks to challenge those assumptions and technical solutions which are not built on political realities.

It was agreed that PEA could help identify entry points for further action, be they political or programme-related. It could also help to address 'do no harm' and/or sustainability objectives within programme design, as well as identify the unintended consequences of our actions; which is all particularly relevant for fragile situations. However, participants also argued strongly that PEA was just one of many analytical tools that can be used for sector analysis. PEA should therefore be combined and/or embedded with other types of sector analysis, in order to have greatest added value.

Existing PEA frameworks appear to be quite flexible, providing a useful structure and a set of guiding questions to be considered and answered through the analysis. Therefore, this allows flexibility for staff to tailor their analysis to a particular set of problems, questions or challenges within the sector. An important issue arising from the seminar was that much more attention should be placed on identifying the right kind of people to carry out PEA, as opposed to focusing too much on implementing a strict or specific PEA methodology or tool.

It was acknowledged that great care should be taken in the design and management of PEA, not only due to the sensitivities but to ensure the credibility of findings. A number of participants thought there could be potential, in the future, for some partner Governments to engage fully with PEA as a tool for their own sector analysis and planning; however, it was not immediately clear in which settings this might be possible.

Due to the politically sensitive nature of some findings, it was acknowledged that PEA could have negative consequences for relationships amongst stakeholders, and in particular with

government. In fact, it was noted that the specific nature of the relationship between government and partners would normally define the level of involvement or engagement of government (e.g. joint analysis, shared analysis, 'not shared' analysis).

The need for joint and/or shared PEA amongst development partners was also identified as important, but it was recognised as challenging, both politically and logistically. It was agreed that development partners should however aim to minimise the duplication of analysis, and to share and build consensus around PEA findings and recommendations at country and sector level, wherever possible.

### **Next steps**

1) Sharing learning/guidance: Drawing on the work carried out in four countries, and on discussions in the seminar, the EC and CfBT will prepare a short guidance note on how to apply PEA in the education sector. A small peer group of participants will review the note and it will be completed and circulated at the end of 2011.

2) Engaging other agencies/partners: Participants noted the need to engage other partners involved in this kind of analytical work, particularly the Global Partnership for Education which plays a key role in appraising and endorsing interim and full education sector plans. Additionally, participants noted that the INEE Working Group on Education and Fragility should serve as learning fora for different types of sector analysis.

3) Expanding availability of PEA education studies: The EC will provide further examples of PEA in the education sector – such as the soon-to-be-released PEA education study from Nepal – shared through the Capacity4Dev website (<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/political-economy>) along with other useful resource materials on PEA.

## Section 2: Participants List

Name		Organisation
Alan	Smith	University of Ulster
Alex	Duncan	The Policy Practice
Anton	Jensen	EuropeAid
Bautista	Logioco	Inter-agency Framework Team for Preventive Action
Carole	Rigaud	EU Delegation, Syria
Clare	Davidson	CfBT Education Trust
Cornelia	Janke	Education Development Centre Inc
Corrado	Scognamillo	EuropeAid
David	Knott	CfBT
Elin	Martinez	Save the Children
Elizabeth	Cole	United States Institute for Peace
Emily	Echessa	Save the Children
Emily	Oldmeadow	EuropeAid
Grace	Akukwe	American Insitutes for Research
Harvey	Smith	CfBT Education Trust
Ian	Attfield	EU Delegation, Zimbabwe
Jacques	Malpel	EuropeAid
Jane	Millar-Wood	Creative Associates International
Janice	Dolan	CfBT Education Trust
Jeanne	Moulton	Education Development Centre Inc
Jennifer	Sklar	IRC
Jessica	Oliver	Canadian International Development Agency
Joan	Casanova-Arasa	EU Delegation, Liberia
Jordan	Naidoo	UNICEF
Jorge	Rodriguez Bilbao	EuropeAid
Jos	Jonckers	EuropeAid
Joseph	Gallacher	EuropeAid
Karina	Kleivan	IBIS
Kaviraj	Appadu	EuropeAid
Kerstin	Tebbe	Independent
Lila	Peters	UNICEF
Lori	Heninger	INEE
Lyndsay	Bird	UNESCO - IIEP
Martha	Hewison	Save the Children
Mary Joy	Pigozzi	FHI360
Oliver	Blake	EuropeAid
Pierre	Andriamamoianina	EuropeAid
Ronja	Hoelzer	GIZ
Ruth	Bradley Jones	DFID
Sarah	Nogueira Sanca	Education Development Centre Inc
Simone	Seper	EU Delegation, Eritrea
Steve	Passingham	EuropeAid
Susy	Ndaruhutse	CfBT Education Trust
Tejendra	Pherali	Liverpool John Moores University
Yolande	Miller-Grandvaux	USAID