FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES
The World Bank estimates that more than 1 billion people live in states affected by fragility and conflict. Children in these states face a number of unique challenges hindering their ability to learn, such as violence, trauma, or a lack of access to safe spaces. In response, many organizations are implementing programs targeted to those beset by conflict and uncertainty.

Reflective of the growing importance of education innovations in fragile and conflict-affected states, the Center for Education Innovations (CEI) has identified and profiled more than 50 programs around the world that have implemented creative solutions to support educational development in fragile and conflict-affected states.
COMMON THEMES ACROSS PROGRAMS

This database at a glance highlights eight common approaches and characteristics across documented fragile and conflict-affected states models.

1. Focusing on girls marginalized or threatened by conflict:

In many fragile and conflict-affected states, gender-based violence is extremely common, and girls’ access to basic education is often threatened. More than one quarter of fragile and conflict-affected states programs in the CEI database are responding to this vulnerability by providing vocational trainings, offering safe spaces for girls’ and children, and alleviating the financial burden of school.

In Uganda, the Pader Girls Academy serves child mothers and vulnerable girls who cannot attend or complete formal education due to displacement and abduction. The Academy offers girls aged between 13 and 22 the opportunity to attend secondary school or receive vocational training. In addition, girls who have children borne from abduction or captivity can utilize the academy’s nursery school, allowing mothers to breastfeed their children between classes and spend time with them during evenings and weekends.

Another program, Supporting Marginalised Girls in Sierra Leone to Complete Basic Education with Improved Learning Outcomes, supplies thousands of girls with textbooks, uniforms, and scholarships to reduce their financial burden. Recognizing the prevalence of gender-based violence, the program also trains mentors to teach young girls about sexual and reproductive health, and aims to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all by raising community awareness about such issues.

2. Bolstering the teacher workforce through training and technical support:

Many regions affected by conflict have a limited number of qualified teachers due to insufficient funding and support during times of crisis, a lack of accountability, and/or violence against teachers. To address this shortage, several programs in fragile and conflict-affected states are recruiting, training, and providing support to local community members to fill the gap and become quality teachers themselves.

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Little Ripples, a comprehensive early childhood development program for those in Darfuri refugee camps in Eastern Chad, hires and trains female refugees between the ages of 16 and 26. The implementing organization, i-ACT, provides a detailed curriculum and necessary resources that is supplemented with the refugees’ own cultural knowledge. This allows them to leverage their unique understanding of the needs of the children from their communities.

Learn more at educationinnovations.org/topics
Launched in Afghanistan, the **Darakht-e Danesh Online Library for Afghan Educators** takes advantage of an increasing prevalence of technology to deliver tools to teachers who face a lack of instructional materials and isolation from the Ministry of Education in Kabul. The online repository includes lesson plans, workbooks, and curriculums, as well as other resources, to aid teachers in improving their understanding of the subjects and to encourage them to move away from less efficient methods such as rote memorization and drill exercises.

### 3. Building - or rebuilding - basic educational infrastructure:

When conflicts leave a state or community in ruin, schools in these areas are especially dilapidated. Close to 20 percent of CEI programs in fragile and conflict-affected states focus on developing communities’ high-quality infrastructure for learning by refurbishing damaged schools, delivering furniture and learning materials for classrooms, and sustainably transferring ownership of the infrastructure to local communities.

**Better Schools Program**, implemented by SeeBeyondBorders, collaborates with Cambodia’s District Offices of Education and individual schools to build, repair, and maintain school buildings and classrooms, as well as additional facilities like water and sanitation systems, gardens, and teacher housing.

Another similar program is **Access to Education: War Child in the Democratic Republic of Congo**, which has been working since 2005 to reconstruct classrooms and provide necessary supplies for conflict-affected students in the South Kivu province. Like the Better Schools program, War Child Canada eventually transfers the management of this infrastructure to the communities in order to help foster community engagement and participation.

On the Thai-Burmese border, **MOVINGschools** takes a slightly different approach to providing refugees and migrant populations the necessary infrastructure. Its schools can be constructed and disassembled as many times as needed, allowing them to be easily moved and rebuilt to serve communities that don’t have access to land rights. The structures are also designed to minimize the detrimental effects of flooding, maximize natural light, and ensure passive

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ventilation, providing a safe, light, and clean environment for all community members who utilize the space.

4. Comprehensive approach emphasizing students’ psychosocial and mental health:

Students in fragile and conflict-affected states are among the most vulnerable. They include former child combatants, child mothers, and a multitude of other marginalized groups. Approximately one in five fragile and conflict-affected states programs profiled on the CEI database emphasizes the importance of emotional and mental support for students. These programs are using team-building sports and recreational activities, learning through play and group activities, creative arts, and other innovative strategies to facilitate healing after conflict.

War Child Canada’s initiative in South Sudan, Opportunities for Children and Youth, provides training to facilitators on using team-building sports, cultural, and recreational activities as tools for psychosocial support for students. The program also awards small grants for youth projects that engage students in similarly constructive extracurricular activities.

The Reel Lives Core Program is another project implementing a comprehensive approach to children’s education. The South African program promotes creative arts as an outlet for emotions triggered by trauma. Reel Lives Core trains marginalized youth to develop skills in film making and encourages program participants to explore their past experiences through the creation of personal documentaries that can facilitate the healing process.

5. Vocational training to boost employability:

Conflict often wreaks havoc on the local economy. Nearly 15 percent of CEI programs in fragile and conflict-affected states provide vocational training or courses in marketable skills in order to help youth—many of whom could not complete basic education due to conflict—enter the workforce. These programs provide trainings in skills specific to local markets, finance classes to manage expenses and businesses, and loans and professional support to help launch businesses.

In Afghanistan, where many children are too old to be integrated into public primary schools, Children in Crisis – Community Based Education Centres has vocational classes for women on topics requested by community members. These locally responsive classes include instruction in tailoring, literacy, and finance, designed to help women manage expenses and businesses.

Photo courtesy of School of Leadership, Afghanistan
Several vocational training programs in fragile and conflict-affected states also issue loans or give other forms of support to help students launch businesses based on their newly acquired skills. In Afghanistan, War Child’s **Empowering Mothers, Giving Children a Chance** encourages financial self-sufficiency for women through business and finance trainings. After these classes women are given microfinance loans and receive professional support to assist them in launching their own business and gain from the skills they’ve learned.

6. Establishing community ownership of education:

A growing number of fragile and conflict-affected states programs in CEI’s database collaborate with local communities to discuss and prioritize the unique needs of children and make the community a part of students’ learning.

In post-conflict regions of Uganda, **African Revival: LEARN (Learning and Earning through School Gardens)** aims to re-engage parents in their children’s education using a school garden. Parents on the school garden committee receive training in agricultural practices and earn money from the harvest. 30 percent of the income from the harvest is donated to the school, and the parents in this committee, along with teachers, can decide where to allocate these funds. Also, because the parents are at the school weekly to tend to the garden, they have more input and opportunities to provide feedback on other issues at the schools.

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Another program that strongly emphasizes community engagement is **We Love Reading**, which operates in many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Tunisia, and Iraq. The program trains women to read aloud to children in their communities to foster a love of reading. The model uses an existing communal space, such as a mosque, as the “library,” which contains a collection of books that community members invest in, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

7. Focus on peace building and civic education for post-conflict society:

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One program that focuses on civic education and peace building is the **School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA)**. SOLA is a boarding school for middle- and high-school aged girls. The school delivers a comprehensive curriculum that highlights civic leadership skills and cultural self-awareness, then aids the students in attaining a post-graduate education abroad before returning to Afghanistan to assume leadership roles in Afghan NGOs, corporations, and governmental ministries.

The **Akassa Community Partnership for the Development of Education** in Nigeria trains local populations in good citizenship practices in order to develop local capacity to solve and manage community development problems. The partnership oversees a General Assembly with equal representation from all 19 communities in the Akassa region, and encourages responsible and democratic citizenship in the new, post-conflict arrangement.

8. Accelerated learning programs supporting the transition to formal education:

In order to help students who have missed any formal education due to conflict in their region, some organizations are implementing an accelerated learning program to allow students to transition or return to the formal education system in a timely manner.

Children in Crisis’s **Community Based Education Centres** help out-of-school children in some of the poorest districts of Kabul complete more than six years of Afghanistan’s primary school curriculum in three years. The students follow a fast-paced curriculum, but receive additional support in subjects they struggle with. The center also follows up with absent students to ensure nobody falls behind. Through an agreement with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education, the centers’ students can be integrated into a state secondary school upon completion of the program.

In Sudan, **eLearning Sudan** has developed an accelerated learning program for children including former child soldiers, displaced children, and demobilized children. The program delivers instruction through content that is accessible on tablets powered by local solar charging stations. In the future, the organization plans to make content available for all subjects in grades one to eight, allowing students the chance to obtain their Certificate for Primary Education, which is necessary for secondary education.