



## SABER

# Education Resilience Approaches

2016

*It is widely recognized that countries need strong education systems that promote learning, life skills, and social cohesion. However, systems struggle to deliver education services in adverse contexts such as natural disasters, political crises, health epidemics, pervasive violence, and armed conflict. Paradoxically, education can also help mitigate the risks of such adversity and help children and youth to succeed despite severe challenges. This is one dimension of the kind of resilience people, communities, and the institutions that serve them must develop to recover, succeed, and experience positive change in the face of adversity. The World Bank Group's Education Resilience Approaches (ERA) program is a special set of tools designed to provide contextual analysis of resilience processes in education systems based on local data on adversity, assets, school-community relations, and education policies and services in adverse contexts. This complements the World Bank Group's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) platform that countries have been using to benchmark and analyze various aspects of their education systems.*

## Why do countries invest in resilient education systems?

Violence, conflict, and other contexts of adversity present significant challenges as countries try to deliver learning for all. However, research and practice in these situations have also highlighted how education can protect vulnerable children and youth by providing them with an appropriate environment within which to nurture their learning and psychosocial well-being. Many students succeed academically in spite of adverse economic conditions, homelessness

and transitory situations, conflict-affected settings, social exclusion, and other overwhelming risks. Although the social and economic environment of a learner is an important predictor of academic results, additional success factors strongly correlate with positive school and life outcomes of children and youth living in adverse contexts. These include individual factors (e.g., hope, purpose, social competence, problem solving, and autonomy), environmental factors (e.g., care, support, high expectations and opportunities for meaningful participation in school, family, and the

community), and institutional factors (relevant policies, programs and resources for access with safety, learning with socioemotional well-being, and productive and social transformation skills).

## What challenges exist?

Adverse situations, and especially conflict and violence, affect children and youth cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally across all stages of their development. Contexts of adversity deter learning. Cognitive and emotional functions are deeply affected by traumatic experience, including

mental executive functions which are crucial for higher-level learning and attention. Regarding adolescents and youth, adversity affects their sense of identity; of capacity, performance and future purpose; and of group belonging. Adolescents and youth also seek answers to ethical, social and existential questions regarding the adversities they experience. If these questions remain unanswered and misunderstood, there could be a negative impact on cognitive, emotional, and social capacities and skills, as well as an increase in maladaptive and violent behavior.

## What is the Education Resilience Approaches program?

Using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy information, the World Bank Group's SABER platform collects and analyzes comparative data and knowledge on education systems around the world and highlights the policies and institutions that matter most to promote learning for all children and youth. SABER's detailed data-gathering and analysis are organized by "domains," or areas of education policymaking within an education system. These currently include levels of education (early childhood development, primary and secondary, workforce development, and tertiary), types of quality resources and supports (school finance, school health and school feeding, and teachers), areas of governance (engaging

the private sector and school autonomy and accountability), information sources (education management information systems and student assessment), and complementary inputs and cross-cutting themes (equity and inclusion, information and communication technologies, and resilience). SABER aims to give all parties with a stake in educational results—from students, administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and business people—an accessible, detailed, objective snapshot of how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

To complement SABER, the ERA program is used to conduct situational analysis in education systems facing adversities. In addition to assessing risks, it identifies the assets and level of interest among communities to design relevant and more effective education responses towards the safety, socioemotional well-being, and school success of learners. ERA, in contrast to other SABER tools, does not benchmark or compare countries with a quantitative rubric, instead offering a process for contextualized education resilience studies. It collects and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data on adversities, assets, school-community relations, and education policies and services in each context.

## What drives effective education resilience?

Similar to SABER, the ERA program has a systemic framework that is divided into four components, and their corresponding associated policy goals. The framework also includes Resilience Levers under each goal to guide data collection and to share lessons across countries:

### ***Manage and minimize adversity in education***

#### ***Resilience component: Education in adversity***

- Identification of adversities faced by students
- Identification of current responses to risks in schools

### ***Use and protect positive engagement and assets in education communities***

#### ***Resilience component: Assets and engagement***

- Resilience through control, competence and being accountable
- Resilience through socioemotional well-being, engagement with others and identity formation

### ***Foster relevant school and community support***

#### ***Resilience component: Relevant school and community support***

- Relevant approaches to access and permanence
- Relevant approaches to learning and teaching

- Relevant approaches to school management, school climate and community relations

### **Align education system services to the resilience assets**

#### **Resilience component: Aligned education system support**

- Meaningful and relevant strategic direction for education in contexts of adversity
- Innovative education programs for learning, socioemotional well-being and protection
- Available and equitable human, material and financial resources

### **How is the Education Resilience Approaches program helping to improve education systems?**

ERA provides a range of technical support options to collect valuable resilience evidence, either as part of a situational analysis for program design or a more general research endeavor. Two support instruments are available at this time:

- **Resilience Rapid Assessment** instrument to conduct situational analysis on existing risks, existing individual, school and community assets that can protect students and promote their educational goals, and relevant education policies and programs in adverse contexts.

- **Resilience Research Training** program using mixed-methods approaches (qualitative and quantitative) to guide local researchers in contexts of adversity to conduct their own resilience-based studies and evaluations.

Both instruments are designed to contribute resilience-based evidence for assessments, planning, and program design. This evidence can also support policy dialogue in education systems seeking to provide more relevant education services in the midst of acute and chronic crises. The program's focus on protection of risks and promotion of assets within communities helps to bridge education systems' response to crisis within their longer-term development and planning activities. Such combined assessments can contribute to preparedness and prevention activities in the education sector.

ERA has also developed a range of policy guidance and documents the lessons learned from its various applications through a *Field Notes* series.

### **How are countries, regions, and partner organizations using the Education Resilience Approaches program to improve system effectiveness?**

**Mali.** In 2014, both ERA tools (Resilience Rapid Assessment and Research Training) were

combined to support Mali's study of the impact of the 2012 security crisis on the social sectors. Local researchers were trained in the ERA methodology and the rapid assessment was used to conduct a situational analysis of the risks and assets present in displaced communities from the north and host communities in the south, after the crisis. The ERA-based situational analysis is helping guide policy discussions in Mali, as well as develop a more integrated approach across education, health, and social protection.

**South Asia.** Research training on ERA was the basis for the November 2013 Resilience Research and Mixed-Methods workshop held in Delhi and Kathmandu, and was attended by twenty researchers from five countries (Afghanistan, Nepal, India, Bhutan, and Syria). Participants included Ministry of Education staff, University academics, United Nations agencies' staff, NGOs, and consulting firms. Over the course of four days, they learned and discussed resilience theory and its application to education settings, as well as the value of mixed-methods research design to inform education policies and practice aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable populations. Their own resilience studies are published on the SABER website.

**West Bank and Gaza.** The Resilience Rapid Assessment was used as one of the data

collection and analysis tools in the preparation of the study *Learning in the Face of Adversity: the UNRWA Education Program for Palestine Refugees* (Abdul-Hamid et al. 2016). This research showed the usefulness of combining ERA with other econometric, classroom observation, and evaluation approaches. ERA guided the qualitative component documenting the

risks and assets of UNRWA students.

### **Who has Education Resilience Approaches partnered with?**

ERA has received support from the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) through the DFID-World Bank Group Partnership for Education Development (PFED),

as well as from the multi-donor Rapid Social Response (RSR) program, which is supported by the Russian Federation, Norway, the U.K., Australia, and Sweden. The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is also a strong supporter of SABER and education systems research and has done much work to support the application of SABER globally.