



Knowledge, evidence
and learning for
development

Non-state education provision; access and quality for the marginalised

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11 August 2017

Question

*This rapid review summarises **what is known** and **in what contexts** and **with what degree of confidence** around the provision of non-state schooling in developing contexts, in particular on the effectiveness of non-state schooling to raise education quality and learning outcomes, with a particular focus on equity and the most marginalised children (poverty, gender, disabled, informal urban dwellers, children in conflict/crisis).*

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1. Overview

This report undertakes a rapid review of some recent, high quality syntheses and reports to summarise the evidence on the effectiveness of different types of non-state schools in reaching the marginalised and providing quality education to them.

Non-state provision has risen dramatically over the last few decades especially across South and West Asia and the Latin America and Caribbean region and provides opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. The all-encompassing term 'non-state' constitutes a spectrum of providers with different characteristics, scope and scale. Overall, the evidence is indicative of potential improvements in learning outcomes in certain types of non-state provision but this is caveated by the very low overall learning outcomes across education systems, as well as by the extent to which non-state provision is aligned with human rights. There is evidence of certain types of non-state providers being able to reach the marginalised and disadvantaged more effectively but questions exist with regards to their sustainability. Whilst different types of arrangements may work in different contexts, the critical factor remains the governments' ability to both foster an enabling environment but also combine it with effective legislation, monitoring and regulation to ensure quality education provision.

There is evidence of certain types of non-state actors being able to achieve better learning outcomes than state school counterparts (moderate evidence for low-fee private (LFP) schools and philanthropic schools) and of certain types of arrangements with governments (subsidies to non-state actors) showing weakly positive indications of improved educational quality. The evidence on equity in access to quality education is more ambiguous and mixed and differs depending on type of non-state provider.

- There is moderate evidence that girls are less likely to access **private schools (albeit context specific)**, but the evidence is more ambiguous on these types of schools being able to reach the poor and in the poor's ability to pay for them.
- The evidence of **philanthropic schools** (and to some extent religious schools) reaching the poor and marginalised is strong with the evidence being more moderate with respect to their ability to target females and achieve gender parity. Evidence on affordability of these providers for parents is, however, weak and inconclusive.
- There is indicative and emerging evidence that **charter schools in developing contexts** may be able to reach the more disadvantaged but robust evidence on whether they directly reach the poorest remains limited.
- There is some evidence that non-state providers that are **subsidised** by the government may also be able to reach poorer members of society but there appears to be convincing evidence of **voucher programmes** resulting in increased stratification, at least in the Chilean context.
- There is evidence that certain types of non-state providers (in particular **philanthropic, religious and community schools or simple partnership arrangements** between the government and non-state providers) may be able to fill gaps in education provision, particularly in fragile contexts in the short-term and contribute to rebuilding the education system in the long-term.

Our understanding of the extent to which different types of non-state providers are able to improve educational quality (as measured by learning outcomes) - especially for the more marginalised and disadvantaged - is limited by methodological, definitional and data weaknesses as well as the limited number of studies of certain types of provision. There are some key gaps in research, with quality studies on the role of non-state provision for the disabled and for children in crisis and conflict settings either non-existent or few and far between. There is also no consensus on what 'affordability' of non-state schooling actually means within different settings.

2. Non-state schooling in developing contexts

2.1 Blurred boundaries and ‘limitless’ variants

From the literature, it is clear to see that there are numerous hybrids and models of the all-encompassing ‘non-state’ schooling term with often blurred boundaries within the various categorisations. Recent reviews summarising the evidence on non-state schooling also agree that there is typically a lack of an agreed set of definitions and limited information on providers (Day Ashley and Wales, 2015). Not only do providers differ in their scale but also in their scope and the extent of their penetration across various contexts; they also differ in terms of their management structures, financing arrangements, relationship with the government, extent of regulation and so on. In other words, the term ‘non-state’ provider encompasses a spectrum of providers with varying modalities and objectives, and ultimately with varied ability to impact on equity and learning outcomes.

Non-state provision encompasses a variety of models – both purely ‘private’ schools with a large degree of independence from the state (Day Ashley et al. 2014; Day Ashley and Wales, 2015) as well as other arrangements with varying degrees of state involvement across different institutional arrangements. In particular, the term ‘non-state’ encompasses a host of:

- *Ownership/provision structures*: with providers owned and managed by individual proprietors or private school chains for the profit motive (with further distinctions between those charging very high fees and catering to the elite versus those locating in rural and slum areas and charging relatively low fees, hence being called ‘low fee’ or ‘affordable’ private schools); providers owned and managed by faith-based organisations, foundations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities or even the state. These ownership structures may be different from management – the actors owning the schools may not necessarily manage them – for example, a state-owned school may be contracted out to an NGO or to a private provider for management in the form of a ‘public-private partnership’ (PPP) or a ‘mixed education system’¹ where the state and non-state sector enter into some form of contractual agreement to provide education (Aslam, Rawal & Saeed, 2017: 1).
- Different models arising due to differing *funding arrangements*: the schools could be funded internally by school owners (such as in foundation schools or NGO schools). Schools could also be funded completely by the state or by private means via household fees. There are further modalities within each, for example state funding can take the form of direct subsidisation through capitation grants, or with the state paying teacher salaries, or with the state funding other elements of the schooling system (such as provision of learning materials or by directly providing vouchers to parents/students). Any one non-state provider may further receive more than one form of funding and could be for-profit or non-profit.
- It is also worth noting that the state’s involvement in non-state provision (either in terms of ownership or in terms of finance) varies with often *blurred boundaries* across the various dimensions – the state’s role could range from minimal (for example some regulation) to deeply engaged.

Figure 1 summarises the typology of non-state provision. This review draws from some recent, rigorous summaries of evidence which analyse the role of non-state provision across the different typologies².

¹ Ron-Balsera et al. (2016) use this term in their study.

² It is important to note that the studies review specific aspects of a given typology – for example, the Day Ashley et al. (2014) study focuses on LFP schools within box A and not on the other institutional arrangements within A.

Figure 1: Typologies of state and non-state providers and studies reviewing evidence on each

Typology of state and non-state education provision	
<p>A. Private provision; private finance (Day Ashley et al. 2014; Wales et al. 2015; Elacqua et al. 2015; Caerus Capital, 2016; R4D, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private schools • Affordable private schools • Home schooling • Non-subsidised NGO schools/learning centres • Non-subsidised community schools • Non-subsidised religious schools 	<p>B. State provision; private finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School fees or tuition fees in state schools • Individual philanthropy to support state schools • ‘Corporate social responsibility’ • Private sponsorship of state schools
<p>C. Private provision; public finance (Patrinos et al. 2009; Wales et al. 2015; Elacqua et al. 2015; Ron-Balsera et al. 2016; Aslam et al. 2017; R4D, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vouchers for private schools • State subsidies or scholarships for private schools • Education service contracts • Private management of public schools • State-subsidised NGO schools/learning centres • State-subsidised community schools • State-subsidised religious schools 	<p>D. State provision; public finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State schools, without fees.

Based on Verger (2012)

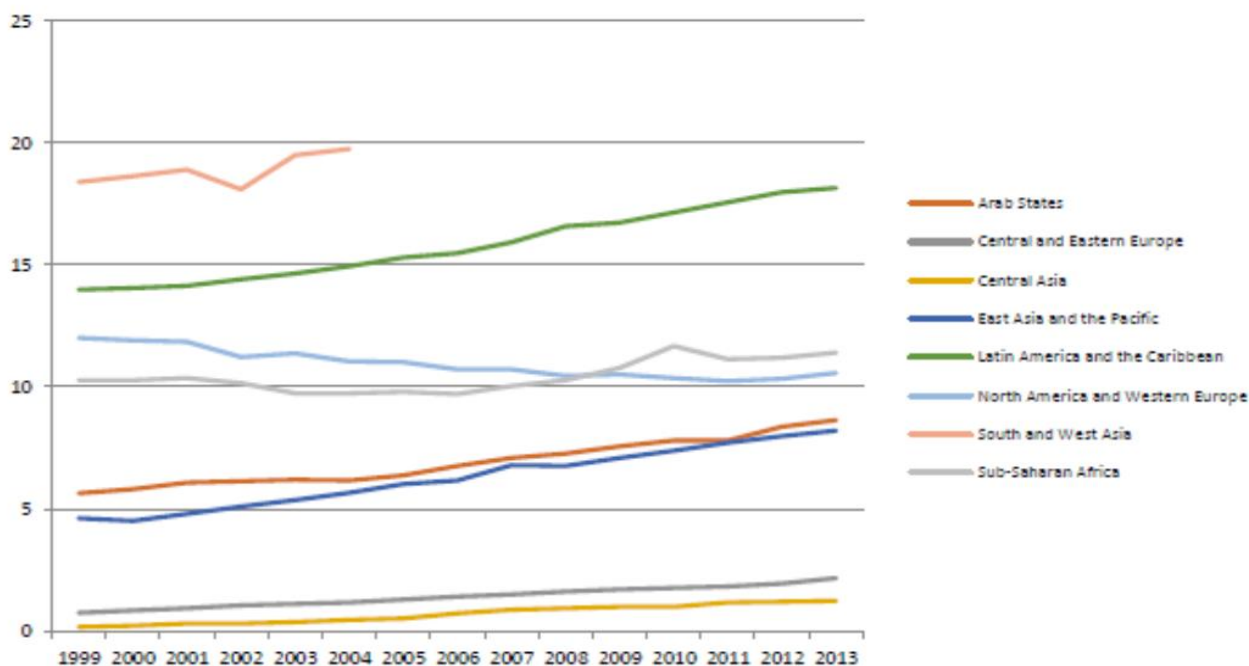
2.2 Trends in non-state schooling provision in recent years

Despite the almost ‘limitless’ variants, there is broad consensus in the literature that non-state providers have emerged in various guises across different contexts and are catering to very large populations in certain settings. Figure 2 illustrates the rapid rise in private enrolments³ across the different regions over the past decade or so. The highest enrolments in private primary schools were recorded in South and West Asia and the Latin America and the Caribbean region (Elacqua et al. 2016: 5). The rapid rise of private enrolments across Africa has also most recently been documented by the Caerus Capital report (2016) which reports that 21% of children and youth are currently being educated in the private sector, with this predicted to increase to 25% by 2021⁴.

³ It is not entirely clear what types of schools constitute ‘private’ in the graph cited from Elacqua et al. (2016). However, the authors start the subsection within which these graphs are illustrated by saying: ‘Over the last decades, the private sector in education, which includes for-profit, non-profit, and religious schools, has grown significantly around the world’ (p. 4) which suggests that the ‘private’ enrolment refers to these kinds of non-state schools.

⁴ Data sources on private school enrolment, especially from government sources are often heavily under-reported, due to the transitory nature of unregistered schools and weak data systems. This could explain the difference in private enrolment as reported for SSA by the Caerus Capital report (21%) compared to those in Figure 2 (~12%).

Figure 2: Percentage of private enrolments in primary schools by region (2015)



Source: UNESCO (2015) and authors' calculations.

Source: Elacqua et al. (2016), p. 5.

3. The extent to which non-state schooling improves educational quality and learning outcomes especially for the marginalised

3.1 How do 'private' providers fare in providing quality education especially to the marginalised?

Summary of evidence on 'low-fee private' schools:

- There is **strong evidence** of better teaching in private schools.
- There is **moderate evidence** of private school pupils achieving better learning outcomes compared to state school counterparts and in being more cost-effective in delivering education. There is also moderate evidence that girls are less likely to access private schools.
- There is **ambiguous evidence** on private schools geographically reaching the poor and in the poor's ability to pay for private schools.

Day Ashley et al. (2014) summarise the more rigorous evidence on the role and impact of 'private' schools post-2008. In particular, the review provides evidence on private (fee-charging) school delivery of education to the poorer sections of society and specifically the role of low-fee-private schools in the provision of quality education. In terms of figure 1, it focuses specifically on certain types of schools within box A. Evidence from R4D's (2017) review of non-state schooling in conflict and crisis situations is also cited where relevant.

- ***Low-fee private schools may have slightly better outcomes than state counterparts and may be more cost effective***

The review finds **moderate evidence of private school pupils achieving better learning outcomes compared to their state school counterparts**⁵. Importantly, whilst the evidence on this is not always rigorously available, there is **moderate evidence of private schools being more ‘cost-effective’** in delivering education mainly due to the lower salaries they pay their teachers and **strong evidence of better teaching** (in terms of higher teacher presence, teaching activity and teaching approaches that potentially improve learning outcomes) in private schools compared to state schools.

- ***The evidence on geographical outreach of low-fee schools is ambiguous***

The **evidence on whether private schools geographically reach the poor is more ambiguous**, with private schools tending to locate in urban areas but increasingly being found in rural areas and slums. Nevertheless, the extent to which they can reach the poor is debatable. Day Ashley et al. (2014) cite studies that provide neutral, counter and supporting evidence with respect to the question of whether LFP schools in DFID priority country contexts are able to geographically reach the poor (p. 22-23). Several studies find that LFP schools locate in rural areas, though this is ‘rarely taken to mean they generally serve the poorest at the aggregate level’ (p. 22). For example, a study by Schirmer (2010) in South Africa notices that these schools are found in ‘unexpected places’ geographically but cautions that this does not suggest that they are always accessible to the poor. Woodhead et al. (2013) also note that the largest growth in low-fee schools in India may have occurred in rural regions but their largest share remains within urban contexts. However, another study in India by Kremer and Muralidharan (2008) notes that 28% of rural India has access to a private school and that their presence appears to be greatest in economically poorest states (where government provision is the weakest) and smallest in the richest states (Day Ashley et al. 2014: 23). In another context, Tooley et al. (2008) find that ‘large numbers of children from disadvantaged areas [in Kibera, Kenya] are enrolled in LFPs close to where they live’ (Day Ashley et al. 2014: 23).

- ***Evidence of the affordability of low-fee private schools for the poor is also ambiguous***

The evidence is also **ambiguous on the poor’s ability to pay private school fees** with a number of studies in the review finding a small share of children from lower economic quintiles accessing private schools. The review notes that ‘[f]inancial constraints are a key factor limiting or preventing poorer households from enrolling their children in private schools. Where children of poorer households do attend private schools, research indicates that welfare sacrifices are made and continued attendance is difficult to sustain’ (Day Ashley et al. 2014: 2). In terms of the overall evidence reviewed by Day Ashley et al. (2014), there appears to be no positive evidence to indicate that LFP schools are ‘affordable’ for the poor (with most evidence either neutral or negative). For example, amongst the studies cited in their review, Härmä and Rose (2012) found only 10% of children in the poorest quintiles accessing private schools in their sample in India, compared to 70% in the richest quintile (p. 28). In another context, Akaguri (2013) noted that whilst children from the lowest quintiles did enrol in low-fee schools in rural Ghana, they were also more likely to be at a risk of dropping out. However, Tooley et al. (2008) in their study of some peri-urban parts of Kenya, Nigeria and India noted that all children enrolled in low-fee schools were paying fees and that these schools had enrolled children from disadvantaged backgrounds with fee-reductions or free-spaces (p. 28). Nevertheless, the overall body of evidence reviewed by Day Ashley et al. (2014) leads them to the conclusion that limited

⁵ However, the authors not only emphasise the very low threshold of learning against which private school outcomes are deemed ‘better’, they also note the ambiguity about the true size of the private school effect due to inability to always control for family background effectively.

affordability (variously defined) remains a constraint in accessing low-fee schools, especially for the marginalised.

- **Girls are found to be less likely to access private schools, though this evidence is context specific**

The evidence on low-fee schools reviewed by Day Ashley et al. (2014) indicates that **girls are less likely to access private schools, although the evidence in this regard is moderate and context specific** and a small number of studies suggest that private schools may be able to reduce the gender gap in school access that may be found in state schools (p. 24). The review cites evidence from India, Pakistan, rural Kenya and rural Tanzania, that indicates that boys and girls are not able to equally access private schooling. However, there is further neutral and supporting evidence from India and Pakistan that shows the opposite. A qualitative study of households in Lucknow, India, by Srivastava (2008) finds an equal likelihood of sending girls and boys to LFP schools, whilst Andrabi et al.'s (2008) study of rural Pakistan finds that '...the share of female enrolment in private schools is 3–5 percentage points higher than in government schools' (p. 25).

3.2 Do other types of non-state providers provide quality education especially to the marginalised?

- **Evidence on philanthropic and religious schools**

Summary of evidence on philanthropic and religious schools⁶:

- There is **strong evidence** of philanthropic provision using innovative techniques aligned to pupil needs that can be important in improving education quality. There is also **strong evidence** of philanthropic schools (and to some extent religious schools) **reaching the poor and marginalised**.
- There is **moderate evidence** of learning outcomes in philanthropic schools being better than or as good as those of state school students with the evidence on religious schools being more mixed. There is also moderate evidence of these providers being able to target females and achieve gender parity.
- The evidence on affordability of these providers for parents is **weak and inconclusive**.

The evidence on the role and impact of 'other' non-state providers (such as faith-based and philanthropic schools, and PPP models such as charter schools, government subsidised schools etc.) is summarised in Wales et al. (2015), Patrinos et al. (2009), and more recently Aslam et al. (2017). The Wales et al. (2015) study summarises the evidence on non-state providers whose 'foundational ideology is religious (religious schools) and those founded as philanthropic organisations, such as NGOs, CSOs, etc., (philanthropic schools)' (p. 4). In terms of figure 1, the review potentially covers different types of schools across quadrants A and C. The Aslam et al.

⁶ The evidence is for all types of providers that broadly fall into 'philanthropic' and 'religious' categories. The review notes: 'Precisely defining and classifying this group of schools and education providers presents a significant challenge. It includes a wide range of actors outside the state and not classified as private, implementing education in a variety of ways and involved in a spectrum of relationships with the state. Within the literature itself, there is no one agreed typology that currently captures this diversity and there are ongoing definitional debates' (Wales et al. 2015:11). Moreover, the authors note that 'The degree of state support and collaboration also varies widely across actors and defies easy categorisation. Few philanthropic and religious schools have absolutely no interaction or collaboration with the state, but the continuum is broad and not necessarily linear. The schools included in the review vary from fully state-supported and financed mission schools, to schools that receive state funding, for example for teachers, but operate largely independently, to non-formal schools, which operate under government contracts or with memorandums of understanding or even informal agreements.' (p. 13).

(2017) study aimed to focus attention on what we know about different types of PPP arrangements and other forms of private provision coupled with public finance.

- ***These types of non-state providers may use more innovative techniques and cater to child-specific needs***

Wales et al. (2015) **find strong evidence of quality philanthropic provision** using innovative, child-centred pedagogies, curriculums aligned to the needs of their pupils and flexible schooling structures (such as locally hired staff and community involvement). The study also finds **moderate evidence of students in philanthropic schools having learning outcomes that are better than or as good as those of state school students. The evidence of learning outcomes in religious schools is mixed** but the authors caution that the evidence on learning outcomes needs to be treated cautiously as with the 'private' schools review, many studies suffer from being unable to control for socio-economic factors.

- ***They may be able to reach the marginalised***

In terms of **equity (when focusing on the poor and marginalised)**, the study finds **strong evidence that philanthropic schools in particular, and religious schools to some extent, reach the poor and marginalised** by locating themselves in hard-to-reach areas (slums, poor communities) and adapting their practices to meet the needs of their pupils (Wales et al. 2015: 5). There is, however, **moderate evidence that these providers target female enrolment** and achieve gender parity with the evidence more supportive of this for philanthropic schools and more mixed with respect to religious schools. The **evidence on affordability of these school types for parents remains weak and inconclusive.**

4. Do PPP arrangements improve access and provide quality education to the marginalised?

Aslam, Rawal and Saeed (2017) review evidence on programmes where public finance is combined with private provision taking various forms (quadrant C in figure 1). This recent study follows the comprehensive review of the literature on these arrangements by Patrinos et al. (2009)⁷ and focuses on studies post-2009.

Summary of evidence on specific PPP arrangements:

- The evidence on **charter schools' ability to improve student learning outcomes in comparison to state schools remains weak and inconclusive** in the developing contexts. There is **indicative evidence** that these arrangements **may be able to reach the more disadvantaged** in certain contexts but **robust evidence on whether they directly reach the poorest remains limited.**
- The evidence on **subsidies to non-state schools is weakly positive with indications of benefits in terms of improved learning outcomes.** There is also **some evidence of these types of arrangements being able to reach poorer members of society with the potential to improve their learning outcomes.**
- The evidence on **voucher schemes** (most researched in Chile, with a few studies in other geographies) **is at best mixed and controversial with weakly positive indications of improvements in learning outcomes but evidence of increased social stratification.**
- Certain types of **non-state schooling can improve access for females and for the poor and marginalised in contexts of crisis and conflict.**

⁷ It is worth noting that the PPP arrangements discussed by these two reviews also include philanthropic and religious schools that may receive public finance and hence, there is likely to be some overlap between the studies reviewed by Wales et al. (2015) and by Aslam et al. (2017).

- **Charter schools: very mixed evidence on improved learning outcomes with only emerging evidence on them being able to reach the more disadvantaged in some contexts**

Charter schools are a specific type of PPP arrangement where *private management is combined with public funding and ownership*. Aslam et al.'s (2017) review of the literature post-2009 finds **limited and inconclusive evidence of the extent to which charter schools can improve learning outcomes when compared to state schools**. However, the review suggests that there are '...some indications of the advantages of this type of arrangement, not only in terms of improved learning outcomes but also with respect to other educational aspects, such as **increased enrolment and better management practices**. **Robust evidence on whether these schools directly benefit the poorer quintiles is very limited, but emerging evidence appears to suggest that contract schools may be able to reach the more disadvantaged in certain contexts**' (Aslam et al. 2017: 20). The body of robust evidence on charter schools in developing contexts is very limited.

- **Subsidies to non-state schools: weakly positive evidence of improved learning and reaching the disadvantaged**

An alternative model is an arrangement where the government subsidises a private school or faith-based organisation either through a per-pupil subsidy or via an unconditional grant such as a block grant, which remains flat and constant irrespective of changes in student enrolment over time because it is instead related, for example, to the salaries of a given number of teachers appointed in that school. The evidence reviewed by Aslam et al. (2017) **post 2009 is 'weakly positive'** and '...suggests there are **potential benefits in a government subsidising private schools to improve outcomes and reach the more disadvantaged**. However, this must be combined with the caveat that many of the studies reviewed [in their study] face methodological constraints' (p. 32).

- **There are examples of government subsidised schools reaching the poor and marginalised and providing quality education**

One example of a government subsidy is provided by the Fe y Alegría (FYA) school, an NGO initiative with religious foundations that started from Venezuela and has since spread to 17 Latin American countries and to parts of Africa and Spain. Osorio and Wodon (2014) note that these schools form a large and influential network that caters to the poor and marginalised. In terms of learning outcomes, the evidence for these schools is also largely positive. In Colombia, for example, although these schools cater to the poor, any learning gaps between FYA students and non-FYA students either disappear or become gains over time (as cited in Aslam et al. 2017, p. 26). In Peru, FYA schools are seen to provide better quality schooling than provided by state schools (ibid)⁸.

Another example of government subsidised schools in the Ugandan context is provided by the Promoting Quality in Access in African Schools (PEAS) initiative, a charity aimed at educating the disadvantaged in Sub-Saharan Africa. Aslam et al.'s (2017) review of evidence of these schools found that PEAS students are from more disadvantaged backgrounds and that this PPP arrangement has increased access for those students who would not have otherwise attended secondary school. In particular, 'three out of five PEAS students are in the poorest two quintiles of household asset distribution' (p.30). Students in PEAS schools have better learning than their state school counterparts and do as well as students in private schools. A further example is the Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS) in Punjab, Pakistan where the government subsidises a LFP school. A study by Malik (2010) found that this PPP arrangement was aimed specifically towards

⁸ However, these schools only represent 1.2% of total enrolments in primary and secondary schooling (Alcázar and Cieza, 2002 as cited by Elacqua et al. 2016).

the economically disadvantaged and those living in slums and that it led to improvements in educational quality especially in terms of meeting the needs of poorer families (p. 30).

- ***Subsidised schools may also be crucial in providing education to those in contexts of conflict and crisis***

Evidence from Sierra Leone cited by Aslam et al. (2017) shows that a public subsidy to a faith based provider in a conflict-afflicted context has been critical in providing access to education especially to the poor (by locating in most disadvantaged areas of the country) and in reaching females (p. 27). The authors note: 'Given that these schools serve disadvantaged pupils and focus on poor rural areas, as well as the fact that they have a very large market particularly at the primary level, and can perform at least as well as government schools...provides an argument in favour of the fact that financial support should be provided by the state to these schools' (Aslam et al. 2017, p. 27).

- ***Voucher arrangements and the marginalised: a mixed bag***

An alternative PPP model involves a government-funded tuition coupon being provided directly to students' parents. This 'voucher' is redeemable at eligible private and public schools of their own choice. The Chilean voucher programme is one of the most well researched programmes as it was implemented at scale as a 'universal voucher programme' in 1981 and has remained intact for several decades (Aslam et al. 2017: 34). As with the pre-2009 evidence, Aslam et al.'s (2017) review also finds the **evidence on vouchers and learning outcomes to be very mixed within the Chilean context**. Whilst there is some evidence of a positive relationship between learning outcomes and attending voucher schools (with caveats on methodological constraints within studies), the evidence on vouchers leading to student sorting (and hence stratification and inequity) is empirically strong (p. 37)⁹. There is also evidence that the more advantaged families benefited more from choice created by voucher programmes in Chile. The recent SEP law (Subvención Escolar Preferencial) has, however, improved equity by focusing resources on more vulnerable students and this has improved learning outcomes especially for low-socioeconomic schools (Elacqua et al. 2016: 18). **Evidence on vouchers in other contexts (India and Pakistan) is mostly mixed and only weakly positive in terms of improvements in learning outcomes. The impact of the various programmes for the more marginalised and disadvantaged is not clear. Yet, in specific contexts increased enrolment, particularly for those who would not have otherwise participated in school, is one potential benefit of voucher schemes** (p. 33).

- ***Some non-state schooling arrangements are especially able to reach females, and the poor and marginalised especially in contexts of crisis and conflict***

The R4D review (2017) on non-state schooling in crisis and conflict settings suggests that '[i]n acute crisis and active armed conflict when basic needs are not met...in the short-term, non-state schools can play an important role by filling gaps in education provision and ensuring education is not disrupted.' (p. 20). These schools are mostly philanthropic, religious and community schools and may not form part of traditional definitions of 'formal' schooling and often spill over into the realms of more non-formal structures particularly when playing a gap-filling role in settings of conflict and crisis. There is also a possibility that in the long-term non-state schools are able to contribute to rebuilding the education system by helping strengthen weakened public institutions in contexts of conflict and fragility.

The evidence points to philanthropic, religious and community schools being able to effectively expand education provision and to reach marginalised communities within these contexts (Wales et al. 2015; R4D, 2017). Their ability to reach the more marginalised and disadvantaged

⁹ These findings are echoed by Elacqua et al. (2016) who additionally note a consensus among researchers that vouchers led to a rapid rise in private schools and graduation rates in Chile (p.17).

communities in conflict and crisis settings stems from their strong ties to local communities (R4D, 2017: 21). There is also evidence that increased proximity to education is likely to reduce security concerns especially for the more vulnerable and disadvantaged, such as girls and ethnic minorities (ibid: 21).

A critical element in engaging effectively with the non-state sector by the government is recognising the complementary role these actors can play. However, evidence also points to challenges in coordinating activities between the two especially in crisis and conflict settings (R4D, 2017: 22). The evidence on which specific types of non-state provision may work better within crisis and conflict settings appears to be especially sparse. Verger and Moschetti (2016, cited in R4D, 2017) suggest that simple PPP arrangements are typically adopted in conflict and crisis settings for fulfilling urgent needs, and in situations of active conflict, governments (if they exist) may find partnering with community or NGO schools more useful as they are able to respond quicker to humanitarian needs and the needs of the most disadvantaged (R4D, 2017: 23). Evidence on more complex PPP arrangements (such as subsidies and vouchers) within conflict and crisis settings is minimal.

More specifically, the study by R4D (2017) highlights the role of community and religious schools in improving access to education. Nevertheless, these models face challenges of financial sustainability and may not independently promote system-strengthening' (ibid: 25). These alternative/non-formal programs can often be a stop/gap measure. A range of PPP arrangements can also be helpful in these settings to improve access to education (evidence is limited) but, as in stable contexts, it is crucial that governments are able to effectively monitor and regulate them before entering into partnerships but with the caveat that governments' capacity and capability to do so is especially constrained in settings of conflict and crisis (ibid: 25). The role of affordable private school chains is more contentious as whilst they may lead to short term gains in fragile settings, not only may they undermine the state and its ability to foster strong educational institutions during the longer run (ibid: 29), weak government systems in fragile contexts are unlikely to have the necessary monitoring and oversight capacity required for effective partnership arrangements that provide quality education (ibid: 30).

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Suggested citation

Monazza Aslam (2017). *Non-state education provision; access and quality for the marginalised*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

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K4D services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations working in international development, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), with Education Development Trust, Itad, University of Leeds Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Birmingham International Development Department (IDD) and the University of Manchester Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).

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