

Katanga
 reforming school fees
 building alliances
 Improving Service delivery
 Learning outcomes
 Theory of change
 fill knowledge gaps
 Public financial management
 Educational outcomes
 Conflict sensitive
 Interim Education Plan
 design
 Accountability
 Kasai Occidental
 embedded support
 risk mitigation
 integrating



ACCELERE!2
 Accès Lecture Rétention Redevabilité
 Programme d'appui à la réforme du secteur de l'éducation en RDC

Policy Brief ... Why does governance matter ?

This policy brief is a reflection as a governance project working in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Drawing on lessons learned from working in the education sector, we highlight why governance reform is a basis for sustainable change, even when aiming at improving service delivery outcomes such as quality or access to education. Beyond the education sector, we reflect on the need to put governance at the core of a reform agenda no matter what the sector is, especially in fragile states

In a fragile state like DRC, people have developed short term survival strategies and leaders tend to run the country in a constant crisis mode due to decades of instability. As a result, reform agendas are more often supported by outside actors, rather than led by local actors. Supporting a governance reform, whatever the sector, can appear as a challenge in such contexts.

Additionally, governance is often not well understood, and is often confused with government, and so linked to the political context, and not institutional or system reform. Consequently, governance can fall down the list of priorities for international development actors. This should not be the case. Without good governance, the most vulnerable in society will always lose out, as they will be denied access to basic social services of sufficient quality. Improving governance can underpin wider development work, ensuring sustainability of wider efforts as it enables system actors and governments to take responsibility for delivering basic services.

What do we mean by a fragile state?

There exist many ways of defining post conflict and fragile states. The causes and indicators to measure the degree of fragility are various. One of the main characteristics is the incapacity or very low capacity of the state to assume its basic functions and deliver basic services, including security. A power vacuum leaves space for informal practices and behaviours.

Poor people are the first to suffer from the lack of a state. First because of the failure in delivering basic services. Second because of the absence of rule of law it relies on. This encourages unequal practices, as the informal governance at play favours those who can exploit the instability of the situation. Actors, benefiting or not from the system, incrementally internalise 'that's the way it is' making it difficult to change the situation.

One definition among others

Governance can be defined in many different ways. This is why it became a vague concept people know about without really having a common understanding of its content and objectives. Among others, the UNDP definition is a useful one for practitioners as it clearly highlights three key dimensions:

Governance can be defined as the set of rules, procedures and behaviours through which interests are articulated, resources managed, power exercised, and rulers held accountable.

Ministry of Education
 oversight and accountability
 trade-offs
 coordination
 strengthening systems and capacity
 data driven
 impact
 Influencing policy
 casted strategy
 replicability
 Teacher professional development
 sufficient funds
 Schools
 surveys
 inception
Technical Assistance
 Education sector strategy
 Organizational effectiveness
Political economy
 Alignment
 good practices
 Capacity
 Use of data
 Do not harm
 Evidence
 Results framework
 School grants
 sequencing
 Quality assurance
 Communication
DFID Education Governance Programme
 Kasai Oriental
 better understanding
 budgeting
 Independent observatory for Education
 pilots
 entry points
 lessons learnt
 drivers of change
 Inspection and Supervision
 positive incentives
 building blocks
 legislative Poverty
 Equateur
 informal payments
 teacher salary
 innovation, new ideas
 diagnostic surveys
 social monitoring Equity
 Parents Associations
 needs assessments
 Capacity development
 Faith based organizations
 Oversight
 Teachers
 public expenditure
 Restructuring MEPS JMC
 school performance
 Value for money
 Finance
 problem solving
 Policy
 sustainability
 Logframe
Cambridge Education
 norms and standards
 direct contact
Statistics
 School based management committees
 Monitoring and Evaluation
 Teachers' Unions
 scale-up
 Civil society organisations
 Local education authorities
 Human resource Management
 responsive to changes
 success
 cost-effective
 incentives
 Research and learning

Governance versus good governance

There is always a governance model in place, no matter what the context is. Formal or informal, complete or incomplete, there are always (i) rules, (ii) some kind of procedures even though they might not have been designed as such and widely or officially shared and (iii) practices and behaviour that have been developed against rules (formal or informal) in place. This is why when talking about governance, we often talk about 'good governance'. The aim of focusing on good governance is to switch from an informal and/or incomplete governance framework to a clear and complete framework in order to drive actors to work and collaborate efficiently. 'Good governance' is needed to improve systems, as informal governance leads to ineffective, inefficient as well as sometimes unethical behaviours, practices and system. To do so, research and experience have proven that governance should be based on key principles such as transparency, accountability, proximity and participation.

Why is governance reform so important in fragile states?

In fragile states, all sectors are a priority. State and human security are at stake, food security is not assured and there might even be severe humanitarian issues to tackle. This is why governance often falls off the priority list and is often postponed for when the situation is more stable. However, governance reform should be a priority even in a crisis or protracted crisis.

- **Sustainability:** Development and humanitarian work in fragile states will be short lived or severely limited without sustained governance reform as the system will not be able to continue the work without external support
- **Equality:** Governance reform works to ensure the system in place works for the majority, in a fairer and more transparent way. Fragile states can encourage unfair behaviours and practices, and this can impact how resources are distributed, including development and aid work.
- **Accountability:** It aims at putting in place a formal framework against which actors can be held to account and monitored, and therefore restore state authority.
- **Corruption:** Governance reform helps ensure systems serve the wider population and not just a minority, which is particularly important in a fragile state where corruption is endemic.
- **Resilience:** Without governance reform, crises risk to repeat themselves, or develop into protracted crises, as the underlying state capacity is still low in the fragile state. Ensuring that state systems can deliver basic services and uphold law, rules and regulations, will strengthen the resilience of fragile state systems to prevent future crises.

Governance reform: where to start?

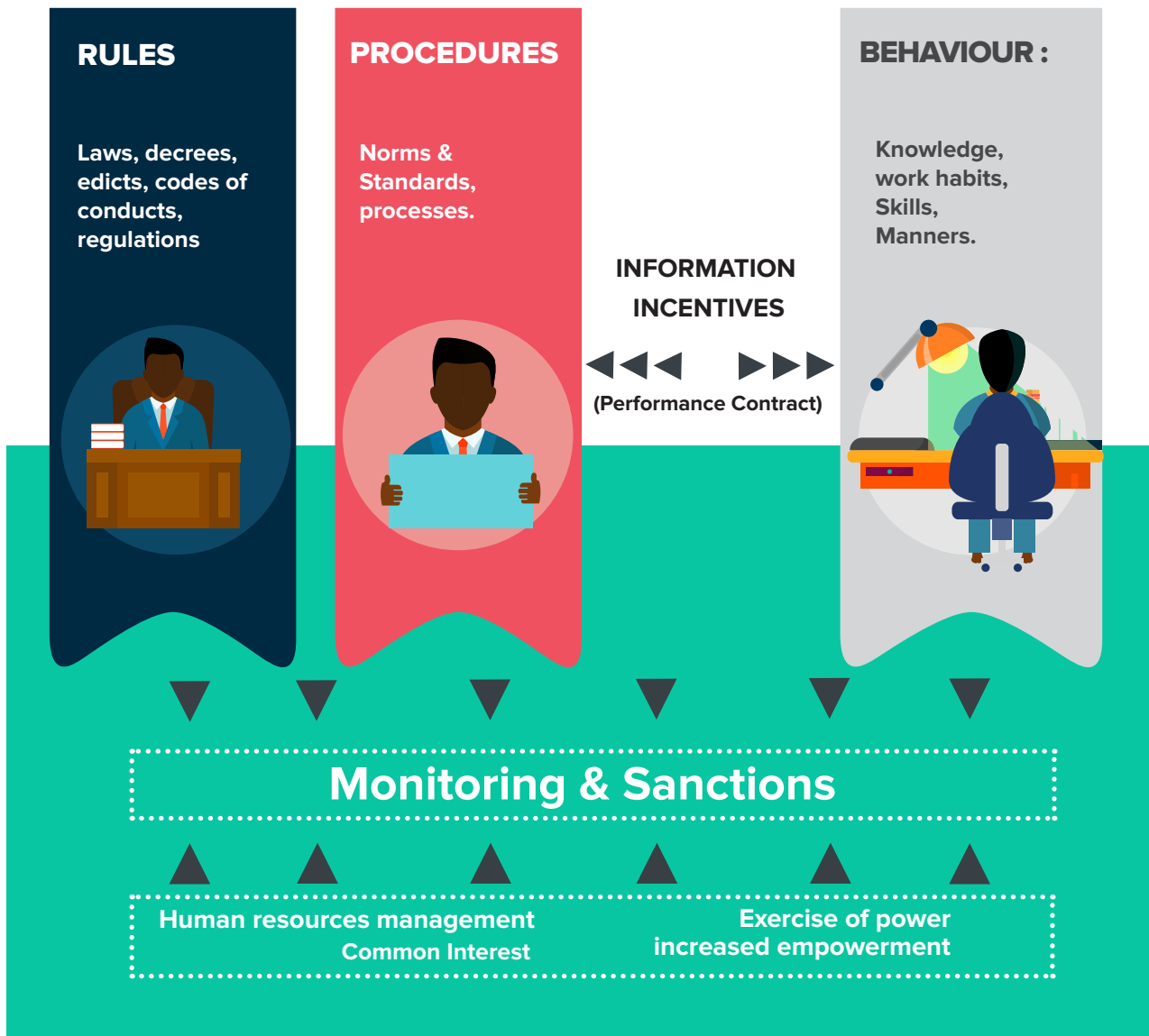
As the UNDP definition above highlights, there are three main pillars to governance: rules, procedures and behaviours. One place to start with governance reform is to ensure that the framework (of laws, regulations, norms, standards etc.) in place is fit for purpose. This provides the bedrock for holding actors responsible for their actions, in a more formal and transparent way, and therefore leads to wider behaviour change.

Once there is a coherent legal framework in place, this should be translated into wider policy documents, outlining clear lines of responsibilities for different actors in the system. These policies can then inform rules, procedures, norms and standards which outline the day-to-day work of individuals and structures.

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Once the framework of laws, rules and procedures is in place, the next challenge is how to use that framework to change behaviour. This is the key to achieving sustainable, positive change when working on governance reform. Often, when looking at institutional reform and governance, we forget about the people and the individuals who make up the system. A more holistic approach is needed, as demonstrated in the graphic above.

One characteristic of fragile states is that key players in the system do not know what is expected from them on a day-to-day basis, and also in a more strategic way. Do school inspectors understand what is expected from them when visiting schools? Do they understand how those school visits feed into the wider education strategy? If their role has never been clearly explained, with clear responsibilities and norms to be held accountable to, how can we expect them to change their behaviour to ensure better education service delivery and to minimise corruption?

Once a framework based on transparency, accountability, participation and proximity is in place, it needs to be widely shared and explained, and actors need to be trained, so that actors at different levels of the system know what the rules, sanctions, responsibilities and objectives are. When actors understand fully what their role is, they become accountable.

Behaviour change

When rules and procedures are not in place or based on clear objectives, it is hard to change behaviour. Actors will keep referring to informal rules and/or to their own interests or those of their hierarchy. Governance reform aims to put in place frameworks and change incentives, leading to shifts in attitudes and ways of working. This is particularly important, as without any clear framework, it is not possible to develop and then implement control mechanisms (including sanctions) as there are no existing rules to refer to and assess against what and how practices should be.

3 myths about governance

Myth #1 Governance is about rebuilding in a post-crisis context

There's a misconception that governance should only be considered once the frontline aid – food, shelter, water, medicine etc. – have been addressed. But governance can play a role from the start of a humanitarian crisis, helping to regulate and prioritise the provision of aid to targeted areas, and minimise the scale of misuse or corruption. For education, the right advance planning can give continuity to students and teachers, rather than trying to pick up the pieces once stability returns. Governance can also help keep education high on the agenda, so that children are not drawn into the violence.

Myth #2 Governance is a luxury bolt-on

Faced with limited budgets and short timeframes, the temptation is to invest in measures that make a tangible and immediate difference. For example, new reading books, uniforms and teacher training courses will raise the standard of learning in a commendable way. However, when you have the right procedures and frameworks to manage resources properly, you can ensure these materials and facilities are allocated fairly based on priorities and planning, and not personal interest. You can ensure the neediest communities receive help before those that suit a political agenda. It can also support longer sustainability of those development efforts, that can then outlive any externally funded programme. Governance is the tool that can turn a 4-year window for 400 students into 40-year system for 400 schools and 40,000 students.

Myth #3 Governance is a short-term measure

Again, governance can fall victim to the standard development cycle of three or four years. Persuading governments to change laws, and to implement new frameworks around planning and budgeting, will only change the system at a superficial level. Arguably, the most important element of governance is how it works to shift engrained principles, attitudes and behaviours that stand in the way of change. The social and cultural structures around corruption, prejudice, social exclusion and poverty are too complex to smash with a sledgehammer in a short time period. You need to chip away, little by little, finding small entry points for incremental progress. By coming at a problem from different angles, you can eventually mobilise all the relevant stakeholders to take action. However, this takes time. There is no quick fix. Even in the most robust systems, backed by political will, the need to plan for the long-term is critical if you want to gain meaningful, lasting impact.

Why is governance so important ?

Governance can often feel a bit abstract. After all, topics like norms and standards, rules and regulations, principles and behaviours, are much less tangible than school desks, training manuals and reading books. However, governance is arguably as - and may be in the long run more -important, than all of these, especially in a fragile state context. Without good governance, often the neediest in a society are the ones who suffer the most, as the strongest are able to profit from the lack of clear structure and the lack of transparency.

This is where governance comes in

When resources are limited, and they always are, it accentuates the need for prioritising, planning and putting in place procedures so that the few existing resources are efficiently managed and can add real value. That is where governance comes in.

Take the example of an aging workforce, something that is a real problem in DRC's education system for instance. How can you change the situation if you do not have a clear vision of how many teachers there are, and how much it would cost to retire them? You cannot plan how much to increase your budget each year. Likewise, there are three million children out of school in the DRC. How to get them to school if you do not plan for additional resources and infrastructure based on a clear assessment of areas most in need? That is where governance comes in.

If you give books to education representatives at the provincial level and ask them to distribute them without a plan, clear procedures and an accountability mechanism, then there is a big chance these books will go to favoured schools or will be sold. How do you make schools accountable for how those books are used, if you do not first give proper guidance? That is where governance comes in.

Why is governance so important for education reform?

When education systems are characterised by weak governance, education service delivery performance is undermined with adverse consequences for education quality and outcomes. Governance strengthening provides an entry point for programmes seeking to improve education performance and outcomes. Indeed, to achieve education performance and outcomes that meet standards, the system must provide basic functions that are all linked with governance including:

- Transparent budgeting and funds allocation
- Making sure funds reach their intended destination
- Recruitment of teachers based on merit
- Teacher allocation based on school staffing needs
- Ensuring that education staff are present at work and perform as expected
- Minimising the scope for informal payments by households for education services
- Creation of schools based on clear procedures and schools mapping

What are the key principles to be considered when it comes to implementing a governance project?

- **Working politically.** Reforming governance is about changing the rules in place, those being formal or not, and ensuring that new rules apply to everyone no matter what. Therefore, it aims at changing the power dynamics and social forces in action. In that sense governance is about “who gets what, when and how”. Governance reform requires us to understand the actors’ dynamics, the power, the sphere of influence, and develop strategies taking into account that stakeholder analysis.
- **Managing adaptatively.** Flexibility is required to adapt programming according to changing realities and opportunities and to unforeseen blockages.
- **Working incrementally.** Changing behaviours and attitudes may seem an impossible task, but with a progressive and incremental mindset, progress is possible. When stakeholders are involved in the conversation, and encouraged to participate individually, then these small entry points start to become inroads. It means taking time to empower beneficiaries to follow and then improve the available frameworks for holding those in power to account.
- **Working through a bottom up/top down approach.** Governance work involves supporting central governments in strengthening their capacity and reforming regulation. However, governance runs from the seat of power all the way down to the school gates – or more accurately from the grass-roots up to the top of the tree. The introduction of sound governance at a local level – such as empowering parents to hold schools to account – will cause ripples through the sub-provincial and provincial levels, that eventually reach the ministry. Lasting change will only happen by gaining the active participation and buy-in of all the players down the chain, resulting in both demand for and supply of accountability.
- **Empowering actors.** Governance is about changing the dynamics of power and ways interests are being articulated, resources managed, and power exercised. Improving service delivery to the poorest requires for them to be able to express their needs and willingness to see change happen. It is therefore about expanding their assets and capabilities to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.
- **Ensuring strong ownership.** Lasting change will only happen by gaining the active participation and buy-in of all the players down the chain, resulting in both demand for and supply of accountability.

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What does it mean for donors willing to support governance reform?

- **Accept that sustainable changes need time and get ready to be involved in the long run.** Of course, every development programme needs to demonstrate progress, but expecting rapid transformation when dealing with governance, and in a context as complicated as the DRC is counter-productive, and even damaging. We must pay heed to the rhythm of change. Governance takes time. In developed countries, with strong political will and robust systems, change takes time. Only when attitudes and behaviours change will change become sustainable. That takes small, slow incremental progress.
- **Think out of the box and get ready to test new ways of working.** Change rarely comes from the elite in place, those who have the power and benefit from current situation. Change relies on other categories of actors' capacities to push for change. When people struggle for a living and are in very short-term dynamics, they can be change adverse also because a large part of their time is spent in finding the daily resources needed to survive. Options to address those issues should be fully considered to develop new ways of working and partner with governments.
- **Accept that governance is about politics.** Technical work and localised interaction need to be pursued in conjunction with lobbying in the corridors of power. Technical issues which do not appear political in first hand turn to be highly political as they will create changes in the dynamics between losers and winners of the system in place.
- **Do not try to transfer blueprint and 'good practices'.** Governance deals with rules, dynamics and political in place. This cannot be approached on 'best practice' models of change. Political and contextual realities are key.
- **Need for donors to speak out loud in a joint voice.** Because governance is about changing the "who gets what, when and how", it requests for the donors to have a joint understanding of what is at stake and what is the best approach to politically manage and ensure that all support go in the same direction.

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