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How does political context shape education reforms and their success?

Lessons from the Development Progress project

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Abbreviations

CPC	Communist Party of China
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EFA	Education for All
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPs	Members of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SIMCE	Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Students at an elementary school in Indonesia. Photo: © Ramadian Bachtiar courtesy of CIFOR.

Executive summary and key messages

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 – *'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'* – is one of the most important and challenging tasks in international development. In order to fulfil it, we require a better understanding of why progress and the impact of interventions varies so widely by context. One striking gap in our knowledge here is a lack of analysis as to how education systems interact with political contexts that they operate in.

This report addresses this gap by drawing on evidence from eight education-focused country case studies conducted by ODI's Development Progress project and applying political settlements analysis to explore how political context can shape opportunities and barriers for achieving progress in education access and learning outcomes. It gives an introduction to political settlements theory and presents a basic model for applying it to education. It then classifies the case study countries into three broad groups (developmental, mixed hybrid and spoils-driven hybrid) and explores the common features and differences in their progress stories.

The key messages emerging from this analysis include that:

- Improvements in access at both the primary and secondary level can be achieved across all three of the political settlement types analysed here, to an extent that can allow sustained and near universal access to education.
- The prospects for improving (or sustaining) education quality are strongest in developmental states. Improvements are also observed, at a slower pace, in mixed hybrid states, but the prospects appear poor in spoils-driven hybrid states.
- Periods of transition – the emergence of new elites, changes in the relative power of social groups and shifts in the political settlement – create opportunities for reform and progress.
- Improved education financing is not sufficient for achieving progress, but may be a necessary enabling condition when resources were low previously. Potential sources include economic growth, debt relief, improved revenue collection, redistribution and external aid.
- The political incentives underlying the reforms studied fall into two broad categories:
    - The use of education as a route to creating a skilled workforce, as one element of elite coordination around a broad national development project (prominent in developmental and mixed hybrid states);
    - The use of education provision as a mechanism to build and secure support from elite groups and their followers (through a mix of policy programmes and patron-client networks, with the latter prominent in mixed hybrid and spoils-driven states).

The manner in which this analysis has found systematic patterns of similarities and differences in education progress and reform processes across different political settlement types has two important implications:

- Firstly, that the application of political settlements analysis can help to explain patterns of progress in education access and quality, and to identify the political incentives underlying them. Education systems therefore need to be understood and researched in the light of their political context, rather than in isolation from it.
- Secondly, it demonstrates that there are benefits from tailoring donor and international agency approaches to education programming to the context of the political settlement in question.

This report concludes that immediate priorities for the future must include a movement from theory into practice and outlines a series of potential entry points for reform in different types of political settlements. The emerging strategies outlined below are not definitive, but provide a set of ideas for donors and international agencies to test and experiment with as they work to improve education systems.

Developmental states

- Work closely with governments where their national vision incorporates education and, where it does not, work with pro-education reformers to provide evidence and lobbying as to the benefits of mass education.
- Provide appropriate technical assistance and support the development of monitoring and evaluation capacity in order to facilitate the implementation of government-led policy strategies that encompass access, quality and equity dimensions.
- Provide financial and programme support through the state where necessary.
- Advocate for the most marginalised groups and provide support to non-state actors serving these groups (within state frameworks) where they are neglected.

Mixed hybrid states

- Identify, link and work with groups of pro-reform actors across the government, bureaucracy, politicians, business and civil society.
- Provide technical assistance and financial support for the building and strengthening of islands of excellence within the education system.
- Provide evidence, evaluation and convening power to help build a consensus on education.
- Identify and exploit key political moments and incentives that can be leveraged to advocate for a greater focus on education.
- Provide support to non-state actors serving marginalised groups and work with the state to build frameworks that can coordinate providers.

Spoils driven hybrid states:

- Provide financial support for expanding education access, particularly when targeted at marginalised groups and accompanied by viable implementation plans.
- Provide financial and technical support to islands of excellence within the education system, particularly targeting specific, credible programmes focused on education quality.
- Work with and support non-state actors where they have the potential to reach marginalised groups and improve education quality, whilst working with the state to build frameworks that can coordinate these forms of providers.
- Generate electoral incentives to focus on learning outcomes by facilitating and supporting information campaigns to highlight issues of education quality.
- Identify and exploit key political moments and incentives that can be leveraged to advocate for a greater focus on education, particularly learning outcomes.
- Leveraging donor influence alongside strong international financing can create incentives to expand access, but is unlikely to result in meaningful reforms around education quality.

1. Introduction

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 – '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*' – is one of the most important and challenging tasks in international development. The toolkit of interventions, policies and programmes aimed at achieving this goal has never been so well stocked, nor its contents so rigorously researched. However, the fact that similar interventions often have strikingly different impacts across education systems presents a significant puzzle.

Solving this conundrum is crucial to designing reforms that can improve teaching and learning, but at present there are clearly pieces missing that could facilitate the achievement of SDG4. One striking gap is the lack of analysis of how education systems interact with the political context in which they operate. Whether countries are run on the basis of patronage networks, whether politicians have short or long time horizons, and the relative power of different groups will all affect whether a government invests in education, how it undertakes reforms, and how effectively policies are designed and implemented. Understanding the political structures and incentives underlying education systems should therefore be a priority.

This report begins to examine these issues and outlines a series of hypotheses as to how donors and development actors might best engage with education systems in different political contexts. The emerging strategies are not definitive, but provide a set of initial entry points for donors and international agencies to experiment with as they look at improving education systems.

The approach taken here draws on evidence from eight education-focused country case studies that were undertaken by ODI's Development Progress project.[1] These countries have shown clear and sustained progress in education that can be measured using existing development outcome indicators, such as net primary enrolment, gross secondary enrolment or performance in international assessment tests.[2] The case studies identify the political, economic and technical processes and drivers of the national progress observed in education outcomes.[3] This now allows us to examine patterns in the strategies utilised across countries with both similar and differentiated political contexts.

In order to group countries by political context, this report uses the lens of political settlements theory. Political settlements are, in short, the written and unwritten laws, norms and institutions that underlie the political order of a state and maintain a balance of power between elites.[4] The nature of the settlement has implications for the way that political incentives and competition works within it, meaning that countries whose rules and institutions operate in similar ways should have similar patterns of progress in services such as education. We therefore take the approach of clustering the different case studies into political settlement types and exploring common features across their progress stories.

We would expect any political settlement to have varying degrees of influence on the different aspects of education reform. At times there will be a very direct influence, as when a reform is clearly aligned with, or opposed to, the interests of the dominant coalition. At other times it merely sets the parameters within which actors operate in terms of education policy, and provides some constraints on what can be achieved. However, by identifying common strategies to progress in countries that share political settlement types, we should be able to identify elements that could be applied to other countries with similar settlements.

We first provide an introduction to political settlements theory and the model used to classify the case study countries. We then provide some of the case study background, and examine in detail the patterns of similarities and differences that can be observed within and across these different political settlement groups. Based on these findings, we propose a series of hypotheses as to what entry points may be most effective for donors to pursue in these different settlement types. We conclude by outlining priorities for future programming and research in this area.

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[1] Benin (Engel et al., 2011), Cambodia (Engel and Rose, 2011a), Chile (Wales et al., 2014), Ethiopia (Engel and Rose, 2011b), Ghana (Lenhardt et al., 2015), Kenya (Nicolai et al., 2014a), Indonesia (Tobias et al., 2014), and Mongolia (Engel et al., 2014).

[2] Depending on the country, these were a mixture of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study).

[3] The political drivers of progress in education access and quality were also explored in Nicolai et al. (2014b), drawing largely on the Development Progress case studies.

[4] The definition of elites here refers specifically to individuals or groups with the ability to incite or organise a sustained campaign of disorder or violence, including actors such as trade unions, traditional tribal chiefs, etc.

2. Political settlements and incentives

2.1 What is a political settlement?

Context matters. The way that decisions around education are made in Sweden will be very different to the ways that the same types of decisions are made in Zimbabwe. This is due to the two countries having very different government structures, laws, histories, cultures and education systems – to name only a few factors. Trying to shape the direction of public policy and learn lessons, however, requires us to not treat each context as if it were wholly unique, but to recognise shared characteristics in institutions and the ways that they operate.

Political settlements analysis provides a way of classifying and understanding what the formal and informal rules and institutions look like in a given country or context, and the subsequent implications for the incentives and relative power of different actors. Formal institutions here include codified constitutions, laws, policies, rights and regulations, while informal institutions include unwritten and informal rules, norms and behaviours (Leftwich and Sen, 2010).

A number of authors have proposed a range of definitions for political settlements (see Box 1). A common thread is the idea of a balance of power between elite groups that leads to peaceful political contestation. Kelsall et al. (2016a: 8) summarises this assumption as: '*A political settlement exists where powerful groups have agreed to stop fighting and pursue their aims through peaceful politics*'. The substance of the political settlement is therefore the set of rules and institutions – both formal and informal – that create and sustain equilibrium. In most models, economic rents – how powerful groups divide the wealth of society between them – play an important part. Essentially, '*political settlements are formed and peace reigns when a society's institutions distribute rents in a way that is acceptable to powerful groups*' (Ibid.).

Understanding the nature of the political settlement helps to explain the way that the formal and informal institutions work, and the incentives that these create for different actors. This is useful from a policy and programme perspective, as it can inform the design of institutions and interventions, as well as shape appropriate strategies to achieve change.

Kelsall et al. (2016a) highlight four underlying assumptions as to why political settlements matter in terms of understanding development outcomes, and how different actors can best influence these:

1. In the absence of a political settlement, sustainable or inclusive development is impossible.
2. The way that societies solve the problem of violence, in other words the nature of the political settlement, creates powerful path dependencies for future development, strongly influencing the ability of the state to raise revenue through taxation, to hire and fire competent civil servants, to privilege certain sectors for economic development or to advance the position of different social groups, among other things.
3. Political settlements tend to evolve gradually until such a time as a tipping point is reached, after which change can be dramatic and discontinuous
4. Institutions and policies are most likely to take root or be implemented effectively where they are aligned with the underlying political settlement.

In exploring how political settlements affect the prospects and strategies for education progress we are particularly interested in: (i) how institutions and interventions interact with the incentives created by the political settlement; and (ii) which actors have the power and incentives to engage in reform. These factors will shape if and how systemic change is feasible in the short to medium term.

Box 1: Defining political settlements in the literature

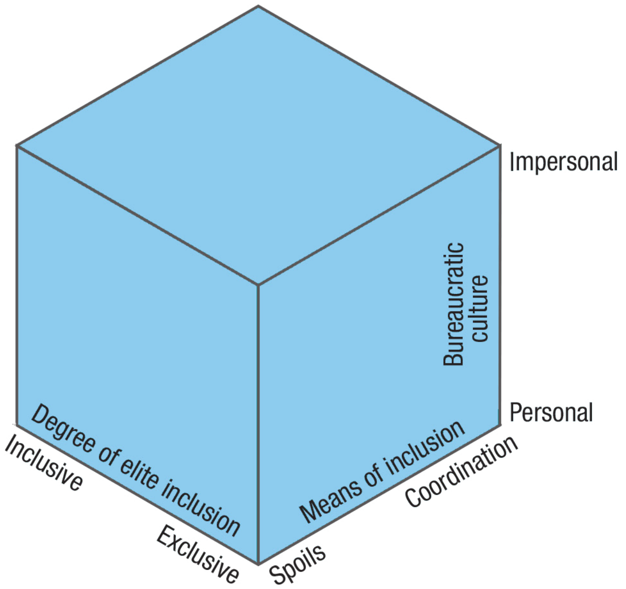
Di John and Putzel (2009: 4): 'the balance of power between contending social groups and social classes, on which any state is based'.

DFID (2010: 22): the 'expression of a common understanding, usually forged between elites, about how power is organised and exercised'.

Khan (2010: 4): 'a combination of power and institutions that is mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability'.

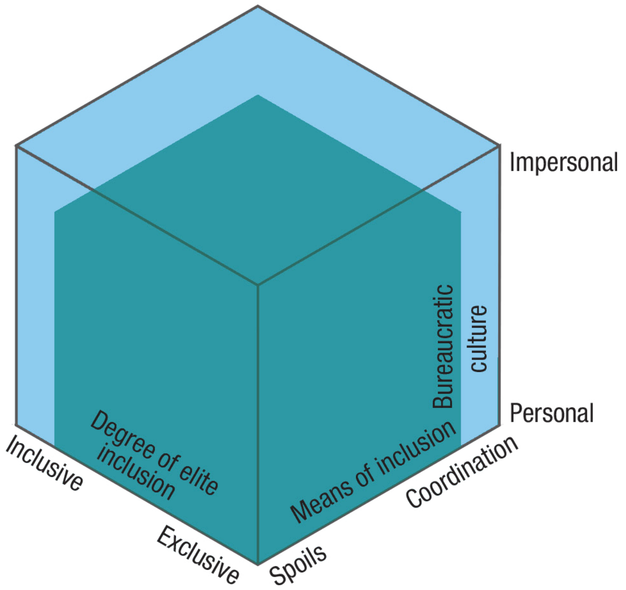
Levy (2012: 5) 'the set of institutional relationships through which a country restrains violence'.

Figure 1: The 3D political settlement space



Source: *Kelsall (2016).*

Figure 2: Example of an inclusive, coordinated and impersonal settlement



2.2 How can political settlements be applied to understand education systems?

A number of typologies have been proposed for political settlements and the impact they appear to have on particular development outcomes.[5] In this report, however, we utilise an approach proposed by Booth (2015) and further developed by Kelsall (2016). While the complexity of some approaches have been deemed problematic for policy makers[6], this approach synthesises and simplifies elements from a number of different typologies[7] so as to allow 'good enough' analysis of settlement types that can be easily conducted by policy-makers.

Political settlements are evaluated here in terms of three dimensions: (i) the degree of elite inclusion, (ii) the means of inclusion and (iii) the prevailing bureaucratic culture (Figure 1).[8] The space that the political settlement of a state occupies across these dimensions can be roughly located by interrogating the evidence on the form and operation of their political systems (see Figure 2).

The definition of elites used in this model is important, as it refers specifically to individuals or groups with the ability to incite or organise a sustained campaign of disorder or violence. Groups or individuals such as trade unions, traditional tribal chiefs, criminal gangs or even civil society could therefore count as elites under this definition.

In terms of applying this model to our work, all case studies took place in states that would be categorised with a high degree of elite inclusion, where there is broad support for the settlement and conflicts between different elites are generally resolved without violence. Therefore our analysis does not focus on the inclusive-exclusive dimension. The case study countries vary significantly in terms of means of inclusion and bureaucratic culture, however, and we thus focus on the extent to which differences in these dimensions explain differences in education progress. Below we examine these two dimensions through diagnostic questions proposed by Kelsall (2016), and consider the implications these may have for education provision.

Means of inclusion

Diagnostic question: what motivates elites to accept the political settlement?

Coordinated: they are coordinated around a common purpose.
Spoils-driven: they are given a share of spoils.

This dimension relates to the question of how elites are included in the political settlement, with a spectrum between spoils-driven and coordinated settlements. In spoils-driven settlements elites agree to keep the peace and accept the settlement due to access to spoils or economic rents (policy-induced revenue streams). Nigeria is an example of a spoils-driven state: it lacks a coherent and widely shared national vision, with division of spoils – particularly arising from oil revenues – being a vital element underpinning the political settlement. In contrast, coordinated settlements have elites that are motivated by a common purpose – for example nation-building, inclusive development or external warfare. These settlements may include a belief that elites will receive benefits in the future as the purpose is realised, but crucially they are willing to make short-term sacrifices and anticipated benefits do not take the form of inter-personal *quid pro quo* exchanges. China is an example of a coordinated state: it has a clear national vision articulated by the Communist Party of China (CPC), around which its elites are coordinated.

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[5] For recent examples see Levy and Walton (2013) and Lavers and Hickey (2015).

[6] These issues were discussed at the Development Leadership Programme (DLP) workshop in 2015. See reflections from participants linked here: http://www.dlprog.org/events/political-settlements-workshop.php

[7] Specifically Jones et al. (2012), Booth (2015), Levy (2014) and Levy and Walton (2013).

[8] It is important to note that, as with the figure, the answers to these questions will be on a spectrum, rather than binary.

In terms of education, the degree of coordination in a state should be a strong predictor of the extent to which it is capable of provision. Coordination provides a mechanism to forge consensus on common goals, but also implies willingness amongst elites to make short-term sacrifices – such as foregoing free-riding and shirking of responsibilities – in order to achieve long-term benefits. Education is a long-term investment that arguably takes a generation to deliver returns, and so coordination may be particularly important compared to other public goods that can produce rapid returns such as infrastructure investment. However, the nature of common purpose, and the priorities it creates, also has implications. Elites with a consensus on long-term economic growth may prioritise education and improving learning outcomes, but their strategies will vary. For example, they may focus on creating an elite cadre of well-educated scientists and engineers, rather than on basic education for all. Equally, a consensus on nation-building may lead to basic education for all being prioritised, even at the expense of education quality, in order to integrate groups into the state and cement a common culture, language, religion or understanding of history.

The interaction of the political settlement type with the education system – particularly along this coordination-spoils dimension – will therefore be conditioned by a range of factors. The form that inclusion takes in authoritarian states may vary from that in democratic states, while similarly, states that have a particular ideological alignment (i.e. socialism, capitalism or religion) may favour inclusion through different mechanisms (i.e. comprehensive state education, voucher provision or private education, etc.). This may also apply to some extent to how governments engage with key actors such as trade unions. Whether they interact in a pluralistic, corporatist or conflictual manner will depend partly upon historical, cultural and ideological leanings, as well as the nature of the settlement. The nature of the common purpose where elites are coordinated is also crucial to the identification of entry-points and plausible pathways for education policy.

Settlements that are spoils-driven are likely to be less capable of education provision. However, there may still be incentives – particularly if the education system provides a route through which rents can be extracted and spoils can be disbursed. Access to education, or higher levels of education, may be prioritised for particular groups within the settlement and access to teaching posts – or teaching posts in more attractive urban schools – may be privileged to politically important groups. Political actors may also have incentives to expand education in particular areas in order to provide their client groups with education related rents and secure their support in return. Spoils-driven settlements may be less capable of providing broad-based quality education, particularly if elites cannot coordinate or are unable to sacrifice short-term rents to allow long-term institutional investment in an education system that can deliver strong learning outcomes.

Both forms of settlement could theoretically create incentives for the development of non-state provision of education. In the case of coordinated settlements, minority groups that have sufficient resources may seek to establish forms of education outside the state system that better suit their cultural, linguistic and religious needs. In spoils-driven settlements, private provision – both elite and low-fee – may flourish as groups with sufficient resources attempt to avoid education systems that deliver a poor quality of education.

Bureaucratic culture

Diagnostic question: By what norms is the bureaucracy governed?

Impersonal: Impersonal rule-following and meritocracy
Personal: Patron-client relations and nepotism

Bureaucracies operate on a spectrum between making decisions based on personalised norms (i.e. patronage, nepotism and clientelism) and impersonal norms (i.e. based on rights, rules and meritocratic recruitment and promotion). These norms shape the relationship between elites and non-elites, as well as the form that political competition may take in democratic societies, and has important implications for the manner in which public goods and services are delivered by the state. Rwanda is an example of a state with a largely impersonal bureaucracy. Discipline within the civil service is tight and based on service contracts that are linked to national targets and priorities. Uganda, by contrast, has a bureaucracy where the norms are more personal. The civil service has become increasingly politicised, and patronage and clientelism are entrenched in decision-making.

Generally bureaucracies that operate on impersonal norms should be more likely to supply citizens effectively with public goods and services at the frontline. It should also be noted that norms can differ across branches of the bureaucracy – with some operating largely on personal norms, while other 'islands of effectiveness'[9] operate on impersonal norms.

This has implications on two levels for education. The first relates to how education access is delivered. Is it based on impersonal and universal rights to education with expansion based on clear and transparent rules, or on patronage favours to particular communities or pork-barrel handouts to particular politicians? In both cases there may be expansion of education. In settlements with impersonal bureaucracies the absence of discretion in provision may reduce discrimination against certain groups and so lead to wider access. Expansion is also less likely to have perverse impacts on education quality, as it should be rationally planned and implemented. However, access may still be limited if expansion is gradual or if the rules operating within the system are slanted against certain groups, for example through fee charging, admissions tests or classroom language policies. In settlements with more personal bureaucracies, access may be expanded to provide for client groups and those aligned with those in power. However, expanding access to groups that are unorganised or politically marginal may not be a priority, leading to inequity in education provision.

The second implication relates particularly to the quality and discipline of the teaching workforce. Where teacher recruitment, deployment and promotion is made on the basis of patronage and political alignment, it can undermine the effectiveness of the system by creating a degree of impunity for malpractice and absenteeism, as well as discouraging effort by de-linking it with rewards. Impersonal norms are more likely to result in a disciplined, motivated teaching workforce. However, there may also be islands of effectiveness in systems where personal norms dominate, particularly if officials are able to resist political pressures in areas where they exercise authority.

In terms of non-state education, the fact that impersonal bureaucracies should create better functioning education systems should mean there is less demand for non-state education in comparison with personal bureaucracies, all other things being equal. However, impersonal bureaucracies would also be in a better position to effectively regulate and coordinate non-state provision, and so where these types of providers are important, they may also be more effective.

Clustering political settlements – three ideal-types

By looking at the different combinations of political-settlement characteristics it is possible to identify where states occupy similar or different space across these dimensions. Particularly common forms of political settlement are identified by Kelsall (2016) and illustrated as three ideal-types: (i) developmental states, (ii) predatory settlements and (iii) hybrid settlements. These are described in Box 2.

Table 1 outlines the characteristics of these ideal-types along each of the three dimensions, as well as the potential for developmental gain; the potential implications for the education sector; development partner strategies that Kelsall (2016) identifies as being promising; and examples of countries that are close fits with these ideal-types. The following section then evaluates the political settlements of our Development Progress case study countries.

Box 2: The characteristics of three ideal-types of political settlement

Developmental states are characterised by an inclusive settlement, coordinated elites and a bureaucracy that operates on impersonal norms. This combination of political stability, elites that can commit to long-term goals and a rules-based bureaucracy should lead to effective policy-making and provision of public goods. These settlements should therefore have high potential for achieving developmental gains in policy areas that are prioritised by the elite consensus.

Predatory settlements are the polar opposite – characterised by an exclusive settlement, spoils-driven elites and a bureaucracy with ubiquitous patron-client relations. This combination of instability, short-sighted elites and corruption means that these settlements are unlikely to achieve developmental gains or be able to adequately provide public goods.

Hybrid settlements are between these two extremes. There is a significant degree of inclusion and political contestation is largely peaceful, but some elites are excluded and actors may be willing to use political violence. Similarly, some elites are coordinated while others are spoils focused, and the norms within the bureaucracy vary with both elements of patronage and high-functioning pockets that are largely rule-based. Developmental gains are possible in these settlements, but the potential varies across sectors, depending on alliances of elites and bureaucratic norms.

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[9] Public agencies or departments that are reasonably effective, despite operating within the context of otherwise weak and poorly governed states. Variations on the term have been traced back to Daland (1981) and utilised by a range of more recent authors, including Leonard (2008) and Crook (2010).

Table 1: Characteristics of the ideal-types and potential for developmental gains

	Developmental states	Hybrid settlements	Predatory settlements
Inclusive or exclusive settlement?	Inclusive The most important elites have been incorporated and the state is both stable and free of political violence.	Mixed Most powerful elites accept the settlement, but occasionally use violence or the threat of violence. A minority of elites (e.g. regional or radical leaders) may be less accepting and regularly use violence.	Exclusive A minority of elites accept settlement, leading to a constant danger of conflict and instability that can collapse the state into actual conflict.
Coordinated or spoils-driven elites?	Coordinated Elites have a common purpose that unites them. This allows them to organise collectively and make short-term sacrifices to achieve long-term goals.	Mixed Some elites are included through spoils, some are coordinated around a common vision, and some are included through a combination of both.	Spoils-driven Access to short-term spoils keeps elites within the settlement, but they cannot act collectively for common ends.
Impersonal or personal bureaucratic norms?	Impersonal The provision of public goods and services is based on rights and rules, with civil-service recruitment and promotion based on merit.	Mixed The bureaucracy has elements of patronage and nepotism, but there are pockets that are high functioning and civil servants do not entirely neglect their public duties.	Personalised The bureaucracy is riven by patronage and nepotism and cannot supply public goods effectively.
Potential for developmental gains	High	Moderate and sector-dependent	Low
Theoretical implications for education provision	Strong potential for improvements in both education access and quality. Progress depends on whether the elite consensus prioritises education and the way in which it does so.	Potential for improvements in access if it is seen as politically beneficial, but education quality is likely to be low and hard to raise unless there is an elite coalition supporting it. Non-state provision is likely to play an important role, as may sub-national actors.	Limited potential for state-driven improvements in access or quality. Non-state providers are likely to play an important role. Instability and conflict may lead to disruption of provision. Groups may be excluded, with elite dominance at higher levels.
Implications for development partner strategies (from Kelsall, 2016)	The most effective strategies are likely to include: Supplying funds and technical expertise to support government efforts. Provision of evidence and advice in areas that the elite are not focusing on.	Mixed strategies may be most effective: Work with state actors where there are islands of effectiveness or the chances for change appear high. Support for horizontal accountability (e.g. PTAs and school committees). Work with non-state actors on issues where the state is unresponsive. Encourage an increasingly inclusive settlement, where this is not destructive of the settlement itself, or broader security goals.	Substantial reform programmes are unlikely to succeed, but impacts may result from: Working with non-state actors to develop basic provision. Working with any islands of effectiveness to augment state capacity and provide a demonstration effect. Provide minimum support needed to sustain state stability.
Examples	China, Mauritius, Rwanda	Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia	Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Table 2: Political settlements analysis of Development Progress education case study countries

Case study	Inclusive or exclusive?	Coordinated or spoils-driven?	Personal or impersonal bureaucracy?	Overall settlement type
Chile	Inclusive	Coordinated	Impersonal	Developmental
Ethiopia	Inclusive	Coordinated	Impersonal	Developmental
Cambodia	Inclusive	Mixed	Mixed	Hybrid
Ghana	Inclusive	Mixed	Mixed	Hybrid
Indonesia	Inclusive	Mixed	Mixed	Hybrid
Benin	Inclusive	Spoils-driven	Personal	Hybrid
Kenya	Inclusive	Spoils-driven	Mixed	Hybrid
Mongolia	Inclusive	Spoils-driven	Personal	Hybrid

2.3 Classifying the political settlements of the Development Progress case studies

The Development Progress education case studies were chosen on the basis of the countries having shown clear and sustained progress that could be measured using existing development outcome indicators. A rise in primary net enrolment was used as the main indicator to select the cases of Benin, Cambodia and Ethiopia; rising gross secondary enrolment for Kenya and Mongolia; and improvements in quality – as evidenced by performance in international assessment tests (PISA and TIMSS) – for Chile, Ghana and Indonesia. The studies then used a mixture of quantitative analysis, literature reviews, key informant interviews and political economy analysis to identify the political, economic and technical processes and drivers of the national progress observed in education. Annex 1 highlights the key features of each of these case studies. Full details can be found in the case studies themselves, with references and links included in the bibliography of this report.

The political settlements of the eight case study countries were classified along the three political-settlement dimensions using a combination of background research conducted for the Development Progress case studies, existing political settlements literature and classifications, and supplementary political economy analysis literature.[10] It should be noted that this process relies on expert opinion on the functioning of these states, as expressed in the existing literature, and that the nature of the bureaucracy in particular may vary from sector to sector. Although this is a subjective judgement in the broadest sense, the classifications here attempt to capture the *consensus* of expert opinion on these states.

This analysis allowed us to map the nature of the political settlements during the period that the respective case study focused on, and to categorise them into three approximate groups of ideal-type settlements (see Table 2):

- Developmental states (Chile and Ethiopia)
- Mixed hybrid states (Cambodia, Ghana and Indonesia)
- Spoils-driven hybrid states (Benin, Kenya and Mongolia)

As mentioned above, all case studies showed a high degree of elite inclusion, and so this dimension does not feature strongly in our analysis.

Two of the case study countries – Chile and Ethiopia[11] – can be categorised as developmental states (inclusive, coordinated and impersonal). The remaining six country case studies are hybrid settlements and can be further sub-divided into two groups. Cambodia, Ghana and Indonesia are inclusive[12], with a mixture of coordinated and spoils-driven elites, alongside bureaucracies that have a mixture of personal and impersonal norms. Benin, Kenya and Mongolia are all inclusive with spoils-driven elites, but while Benin and Mongolia have bureaucracies operating more on personal norms, Kenya has a mixture of personal and impersonal norms.

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[10] In addition to the Development Progress case studies, supplementary information used for classifying the different political settlements drew on the following sources: Cambodia (Kelsall, 2016; Kelsall et al., 2016b), Ethiopia (Lavers and Hickey, 2015), Ghana (Oduro et al., 2014), Indonesia (Kelsall, 2016; Kelsall et al. 2016a), Kenya (Lavers and Hickey, 2015; Kelsall, 2016) and Mongolia (Linsi, 2012; Osborne et al., 2015). Both Benin and Chile were classified largely using information from their respective Development Progress case studies.

[11] It should be noted that while Ethiopia is classified as being at the inclusive end of the spectrum, there are still serious issues of exclusion for particular ethnic groups and regions that have led to outbreaks of violence. However, the country is stable and demonstrates strong coordination within the elite, as well as broadly impersonal norms in bureaucratic decision-making.

[12] However, Indonesia also faces issues of regional and ethno-linguistic exclusion.

All of these countries are closer to the inclusive end of the political settlement spectrum. This is partly related to the fact that they are – currently – largely stable states and so may be in a better position to build up their education systems. However, it may also indicate that the integration strategies used to secure elite support in these settlements create incentives to expand education provision or improve education quality. It is also striking, although unsurprising, that none of the case studies fit the ideal-type of a predatory settlement. This would support the hypothesis that predatory settlements have a low potential for achieving development gains and improvements in public service provision (see Table 1).

It is notable in relation to this that the majority of these countries underwent major political changes shortly before the period of education progress examined by each case study. Benin, Chile and Indonesia all saw a largely peaceful transition to multi-party democracy – respectively replacing a socialist one-party state, a military dictatorship and a dominant party state with strong military interests. In contrast, Ethiopia and Cambodia both saw the end of long-running periods of civil war and unrest. In the case of Ethiopia this ended in 1991 with the military victory of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and its allies over the ruling Derg – a military led Marxist-Leninist regime, whose rule was characterised by long periods of civil war, as well as severe droughts and famines. In Cambodia, the bulk of progress occurred in the early 2000s, with consolidation of a new political settlement having begun from 1998 onwards. This follows on from almost 25 years of instability during the rise and fall of the Khmer Rouge and subsequent Vietnamese occupation. This suggests that periods of transition – with the emergence of new elites, changes in their relative power and alterations in the structure of the political settlement – may create opportunities for reform and progress.

One challenge to the use of these classifications is that education systems are built over long periods of time and so the current political settlement may have less explanatory power for the state of the system or its progress than the political settlement in earlier periods. While acknowledging that the historical trajectory of political settlement and education systems is certainly an important explanatory factor, we would argue that the focus of the Development Progress project on explaining specific periods of significant or unusual progress should help to mitigate this. Our analysis of the political settlement covers the period of reform that preceded progress and so it should capture the background of all but the very deep drivers of progress. However, there are certainly interesting questions to be asked on the long-term implications of political settlements for education systems.

The three groups of settlements outlined above are used in the following section to examine whether there are common threads in the nature of education progress and how it was achieved, as well as how these contrast across the groups.

3. Case study evidence

This section examines the features of the eight Development Progress cases studies – analysing the patterns of similar and differentiated features both within and across different settlement types, and the extent to which these match up with the predictions of the political settlements model (see Annex 1 also).

We continue to group the case studies into developmental (Chile, Ethiopia), mixed hybrid (Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia) and spoils-driven hybrid (Benin, Kenya, Mongolia) states.

The section below discusses the patterns observed across the different political settlement groups in detail, organised around the type of progress achieved; the economic and education finance context; the key actors involved in driving or blocking progress; and the incentives driving these actors.

3.1 Types of progress

All three of the political settlement groupings include case studies that have made progress on expanding education access, often substantially and in a manner that improves equity of access along gender and socioeconomic lines. These are not differentiated in terms of educational level, with each group having a mixture of case studies with expansion in primary and secondary education. While improvements in equity of access are common across all groups, it is notable that the poorest states within them tend to have wider enduring equity gaps. This suggests that equity of access is, in part, a function of overall levels of economic development, as well as the nature of the political settlement. This is also supported by the fact that the three case studies that achieved and sustained high or near universal primary enrolment before the period examined in the research are spread across the three political settlement groups – Chile (developmental), Indonesia (mixed hybrid) and Mongolia (spoils-driven hybrid). Improvements in access at both the primary and secondary level can be achieved, therefore, across the three different settlements types, to an extent allows sustained and near universal access.

Progress in education quality was examined as a strong theme in only three case studies – Chile, Ghana and Indonesia – however it is positively referenced in the case studies for Ethiopia and Cambodia. The extent and form of this progress varies considerably. Two of the case studies are classified here as developmental states – Chile and Ethiopia. The Chilean case study demonstrates the strongest and most sustained progress in terms of learning outcomes, in line with what would be predicted for a developmental state – although Chile's higher per capita income and more developed economy are also major factors. However Ethiopia has not seen improvements in learning outcomes alongside its expansion in student enrolment. It may be that improving education quality is seen as a secondary priority to increased enrolment, or that expanding both access and quality simultaneously poses significant technical challenges. The case study does note, however, that Ethiopia is an outlier for countries that have recently experienced rapid enrolment surges due to fee abolition, in that the level of learning outcomes has not declined sharply as is generally the case. This suggests stronger planning and coherence in the system, as would be expected from a developmental state.

The three mixed hybrid states – Cambodia, Ghana and Indonesia – are also mentioned in terms of education quality and show quite different trends. In Cambodia improvements in learning outcomes are only minor elements of the progress story, with education quality generally being poor. However, areas tend to perform better where non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors have been strongly involved. This fits to some extent with the expectations of the political settlements model that progress is restricted to 'islands of excellence' in the state and the potential of non-state actors. Ghana and Indonesia demonstrated much stronger progress in learning outcomes by comparison. However, Ghana still has low overall learning outcomes despite strong progress, while progress in Indonesia has been gradual, as well as uneven across time and subjects.

None of the case studies in the spoils-driven hybrid group – Benin, Kenya and Mongolia – have positive references to education quality and several mention declines in learning outcomes associated with education expansion. The absence of progress in this group may be related to the settlement structure, with elite groups being unable to commit to the long-term investments and policies, alongside immediate technical factors such as an absence of a skilled teaching workforce.

These trends suggest that the prospects for improving (or sustaining) education quality are strongest in developmental states, but that progress can also be made in mixed hybrid states – albeit with different coalitions of actors and at a slower pace. The prospects appear poor in spoils-driven hybrid states, based on this sample of case studies.

Box 3: Education systems in predatory states – the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The DRC is an example of a predatory state, providing an important contrast to the Development Progress case studies. Spoils-driven governance, corruption and patrimonialism became entrenched during the long regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled the country as a personal dictatorship from 1965 to 1990, and has persisted through the transition to democratic rule and the current, electorally dominant government of Joseph Kabila (Kelsall et al., 2016a; Transparency International, 2013). Today, much of the country is increasingly isolated and outside the reach of the central state, with only a minority of elites accepting the settlement. Non-state actors provide many of the basic services, including education; and three-quarters of schools are managed by faith-based organisations, chiefly the Catholic Church. While the state formally appoints teachers and sanctions degrees, low levels of public spending mean that it often falls to local communities to pool their resources to pay teachers, build schools and provide supplies, with one in every three teachers paid for by school fees and community contributions (USAID, 2012; Titeca et al., 2013). A combination of these and other factors has resulted in an estimated 29% – or over 7 million children – out of school and low overall learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2015).

There are, however, signs of increased political commitment to education issues, driven in part by a need for skilled workers to fill growing employment opportunities. Total government spending directed towards education has almost doubled from 9% of the national budget in 2010 to 16% in 2013, and there are further commitments to increase the share of gross domestic product (GDP) allocated to education to 4.5%, representing at least 18% of the national budget, with almost half of funding to be allocated to basic education (GPE, 2015). The '2012-2014 Education Sector Plan' also outlined a strategy for developing the sub-sectors of primary, secondary and vocational education – aiming to improve access and accessibility to primary education; improve the quality of teaching and learning; and strengthen governance (MEPSP, 2012).

However, historically, commitments to reform have rarely led to action and the weakness of the state means policies are likely to have a limited impact on the functioning of the education system in practice (Transparency International, 2013; Titeca et al., 2013; Titeca and de Herdt, 2011). Attempts at major reforms also risk creating significant instability, given the fragility of the settlement and the role that revenue raised through school fees plays in maintaining local political settlements for elites in certain areas (Titeca et al., 2013).

Current donor strategies in the DRC are characterised by significant financing of the education sector, yet, unsurprisingly, are combined with a reluctance to fund long-term projects due to concerns over the weaknesses of the education system and state oversight (Bender, 2010). Accordingly, there has been a focus on filling gaps through non-state actors and autonomous school programmes, as well as working with state initiatives and partners. This engagement with non-state actors provides a model for action in other predatory states that can help fulfil the right to education and maintain regional stability. However, it is challenging to see how significant and sustainable improvements can be made until a more stable and inclusive political settlement emerges.

3.2 Economic and education finance context

A common theme across all case studies is the importance of strong economic growth driving increased government revenues, and so enabling higher public spending on education.[13] It is notable that the way in which revenues were channelled varies across the cases, but again without a clear match with settlement types. For example, improvements in domestic revenue-raising capacity are cited as an important factor in the Kenyan case and are also present in Ghana, alongside HIPC debt relief. In contrast, significant increases in education spending in Indonesia were financed by the removal of fuel subsidies in the mid-2000s, redistributing revenue away from big business interests that had generally benefitted from the subsidies.

The role that development assistance has played in enabling education progress also lacks a clearly differentiated pattern across the three political settlement groups. Aid was a key element of education finance in Ethiopia (developmental), Cambodia (mixed hybrid) and Benin (spoils-driven hybrid). In contrast, aid played almost no role in Chile (developmental) and was a relatively minor element of education financing in Indonesia (mixed hybrid). Ghana (mixed hybrid) also shows strong domestic financing of education and a reduction in the importance of aid overall. However, support to the education sector from the Fast Track Initiative (now the Global Partnership for Education, GPE), the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) was also an important element of the financing mix. Similar patterns can be seen in the Kenyan and Mongolian cases (spoils-driven hybrid), where, despite overall aid not being a major element of total education financing, the role of aid targeted at particular programmes and at particular points in time is noted as an important part of the progress story. This trend is pronounced in the spoils-driven hybrid states, but is also observed in Indonesia to some extent with donors providing finance particularly for programme pilots as part of a broader strategy to encourage evidence-based policy-making.

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[13] The main exception to this is Benin, where growth in GDP per capita was unimpressive during the period of progress. However, debt cancellation under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and strong domestic revenue-raising capacity appears to have enabled increases in public education spending in this case.

These findings suggest that external financial assistance may facilitate education progress regardless of the nature of the political settlement, but that it can take a variety of forms – whether general or targeted support – depending on the precise circumstances of the state. Non-finance assistance may also be a promising approach in some cases based on this evidence – for example, efforts to improve revenue-raising capacity where governments have a clear policy of increasing education spending, or – drawing on the Indonesia case – helping to encourage and facilitate redistributive reforms.

3.3 Actors involved in driving and blocking progress

The actors involved in driving and blocking progress show clear contrasts across the three political settlement groups and largely align with the expectations of political settlements theory.

In the two developmental states – Chile and Ethiopia – national governments were the key drivers of progress, with limited donor influence and a strong degree of consensus and consistency in approach. In neither country do we find challenges with implementation linked to policy incoherence or conflicting incentives within the state. In Chile, the main drivers of reforms were the ruling Concertation coalition (in the 1990s and early 2000s) and the Ministry of Education, with donors playing only a minimal role in providing technical advice. There was an emphasis on the creation of a political consensus, involving political parties (both within and outside the coalition), social movements, academia and teachers unions. This resulted in a gradual but sustained reform agenda with a common aim of improving learning outcomes.[14] Opposition from teachers' unions was successfully mitigated, in part by the gradual introduction of reforms alongside substantial investments in teacher wages and incentives. In Ethiopia, donors played a substantial role in the financing of education and the provision of technical advice on particular policy areas. Despite this, control of policy direction and implementation remained firmly with the Government of Ethiopia,[15] which accepted funds and advice where it aligned with their priorities and rejected them otherwise.

In the three mixed hybrid states – Cambodia, Ghana and Indonesia – we find coalitions of actors within the national government that pushed strongly for education reforms, often in concert with donors and development partners. All three cases also feature policy incoherence related to patronage politics at the sub-national level or lower levels of administration – undermining the effectiveness of reforms, particularly in terms of education quality. Indonesia stands out, however, as being the only mixed hybrid case study in which there was strong and open political contestation of the reforms, focusing on attempts to improve teacher quality and accountability that were not observed in either Cambodia or Ghana.

Cambodia had the narrowest reform coalition of the three countries, with high-level commitment and impetus for reforms coming mainly from the Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, Tol Lah, working closely with development partners and increasingly taking the lead alongside other high-ranking officials within the Ministry of Education. In Ghana, the national government was a major actor and there was a broad pro-education coalition, with both of the main political parties supporting reduced school fees, improved access and increases in education funding.[16] Indonesia presents a more complicated picture, with a range of actors focused on promoting and contesting different aspects of education reforms. The President and candidates for the presidency pushed for expanded education financing and improvements in access through reductions in user fees. Alongside this, the Ministry of Education promoted teacher reforms aimed at improving learning outcomes. Elements of these reforms were both promoted and strongly contested by political parties in the People's Consultative Assembly, with strong mobilisation from the teachers unions being particularly influential. The compromise reforms emerging from these negotiations demonstrate a degree of policy incoherence, but an equally important source is – again – strong patronage networks at the sub-national level, enabled in part by decentralisation.

Donors played a supporting and guiding role in all three cases, although their level of involvement varied. Development partners worked closely with reformers in Cambodia, but had a minimal role in formally shaping policy in Indonesia – instead providing some finance and pursuing a research and evaluation strategy to encourage evidence-based approaches. In contrast, Ghana seems to have shaped its education policies partly in order to fit with international norms. The country's '2003 Education

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[14] In the late 2000s social movements – particularly the growth of the student movement – began to challenge the consensus around education and call for action to reduce inequities and dismantle the market-based aspects of the system. These calls have begun to be absorbed into the political mainstream – with the current President, Michelle Bachelet, having been elected on an explicit platform of education reform.

[15] Challenges from teachers unions were not noted and opposition parties played only a minor role – raising education quality issues. This may be due to the strength of the state and dominance of the ruling EPRDF.

[16] It should be noted that this broad agreement conceals a range of policy disagreements between the two main parties, particularly regarding how best to focus education investment (see Oduro et al., 2014).

Table 3: Summary of significant actors driving and blocking education progress

Political settlement group	Significant Actors	
	Driving progress	**Blocking progress/contesting reforms**
Developmental	National Government *(Chile*, Ethiopia)* Ministry of Education *(Chile*)*	Teachers Unions *(Chile* – consensus reached)* Opposition political parties *(Chile* – consensus reached)*
Mixed hybrid	National Government *(Ghana*)* President *(Indonesia*)* Ministry of Education *(Cambodia, Indonesia*)* Donor agencies *(Cambodia, Ghana*)*	Opposition political parties *(Indonesia* – reforms compromised)* Teachers Unions *(Indonesia* – reforms compromised)* Patronage networks in sub-national government *(Cambodia, Ghana*, Indonesia*)*
Spoils-driven hybrid	President *(Kenya)* Members of Parliament *(Kenya)* National Government *(Mongolia)* Donor agencies (Consistent – *Benin)* (Intermittent – *Kenya, Mongolia)*	Teachers' Unions *(Benin)*

*Note:*Case studies focusing on progress in learning outcomes.*

Strategic Plan' was designed in line with the UNESCO Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agreements, and this assisted Ghana in securing financial resources from the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (now GPE), and budget support from donors such as DFID and the World Bank.

The spoils-driven hybrid group – Benin, Kenya and Mongolia – presents a more mixed picture, with significant contrasts between the different case studies in terms of key domestic actors and the role of donors. Donors played a dominant role in Benin, providing substantial financing and being heavily engaged in setting the direction of policy and the implementation process. The national government, by contrast, was seen as increasingly disengaged. Similarly strong donor influence on education policy was also noted in Mongolia in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, however, the Government of Mongolia began to play a major independent role from the late 1990s – investing in education, rebuilding the system and expanding access. Kenya presents a strong contrast, with domestic actors being the main drivers of progress. The push for fee removal and expanded enrolment at the primary and secondary level were both driven by the President or candidates for the presidency, and originated as election promises. Individual Members of Parliament also played a role in expanding education access at the secondary level, with many using the Constituency Development Funds allocated to their districts for school construction or the provision of bursaries for students. The role of donors in Kenya, and in Mongolia in the 2000s, was fairly marginal. However, in both cases donors provided financial support for certain programmes, focusing particularly on marginalised groups in the case of Mongolia and government-led access-focused programmes in Kenya. Teachers' unions were noted as being a major source of policy incoherence in Benin – being both active and confrontational – but their role was more minimal in the Kenyan and Mongolian case studies.

3.4 Political incentives

The political incentives underlying the reforms documented in the case studies can be divided into two broad categories: (i) the use of education as a route to creating a skilled workforce, as one element of elite coordination around a broad national development project; and (ii) the use of education provision as a mechanism to build and secure support from elite groups and their followers. The prominence of these incentives and the channels they operate through vary across the political settlement groups, however. The creation of a skilled workforce, for example, is a key motivation in the developmental states and plays an important role for some actors in the mixed hybrid states. But it is largely absent in the spoils-driven hybrid states. The use of education provision and policy as a mechanism to secure support feeds into electoral competition across all of the case studies, but with varying responses and impacts. The more coherent developmental and mixed hybrid states are better able to channel this demand and make long-term plans that balance expanded access with education quality, while states with a long history of near universal education see demand focused on quality rather than access.

It is worth reiterating that while the pattern of incentives observed here does fit well with the expectations of the political settlements model, we would expect the influence

Box 4: The role of non-state actors in education provision

Non-state education providers – both private and philanthropic – are found across all of our case studies. A common theme across the case studies is that access for marginalised groups in particular has been expanded in part by NGO actors using innovative and non-formal approaches. This phenomenon is noted in Ethiopia (developmental), Cambodia (mixed hybrid) and Kenya (spoils-driven hybrid). However, the form that these have taken is quite varied, with Ethiopian and Cambodian NGOs appearing to be more aid-financed, while in Kenya these schools are part of a longer tradition of community schooling.

The role of private providers in expanding access to education seems to have varied across the different political settlement groups. In the spoils-driven hybrid settlement group – Benin, Kenya and Mongolia – private schools played a much stronger role in the expansion of education access at various levels. However, while these types of providers played important roles in the education systems of other case studies – including Chile, Ghana and Indonesia – they do not seem to have played a prominent role in driving improvements in education access or quality during the case study period.

The relationship between non-state providers (private, philanthropic and religious) and the state appears to be more strongly conditioned by the settlement. In the case of Chile and Ethiopia (developmental) these actors are well-integrated into the public education system – through the voucher mechanism in Chile and national education plans in Ethiopia. Indonesia (mixed hybrid) also has a well-regulated non-state sector, with significant private provision at the upper secondary and tertiary level and a network of madrassa schools overseen by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In contrast, the NGO sector in Cambodia (mixed hybrid) was initially poorly coordinated, but then gradually improved as a result of the adoption of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). The spoils-driven hybrid settlement group shows a variety of relationships, with weak and donor-led coordination in Benin; a well-developed set of policies and integrated private sector in Mongolia; and significant variation within Kenya in terms of state relationships with various non-state providers.

of the political settlement to vary across contexts and different aspects of education reform. At times there will be a very direct influence, as when a reform is clearly aligned with or opposed to the interests of the dominant coalition. At other times it merely sets the parameters within which actors operate in terms of education policy, and provides some constraints on what can be achieved. These incentives can therefore only provide a partial explanation of the education policies and progress observed.

Developmental states

In both of the developmental states – Chile and Ethiopia – we observe coherent national projects focused on long-term economic transformation that have widespread elite support. In both cases education was viewed as having an important enabling role in building a skilled workforce and policy implementation was facilitated by elites who were able to take a long-term perspective and commit to reforms. Both states also have a coherent and rules-based civil service. The manner in which these reforms, and the national projects, were implemented contrasts across these two developmental states, however. In Ethiopia, the dominance of EPRDF meant that it was in a strong position to implement reforms rapidly and consistently. In Chile, the gradual nature of the democratic transition meant that reforms were implemented incrementally and with an emphasis on ensuring consensus and accommodating opposition to avoid conflict. This then helped to build sustainable support for reforms over long periods.[17]

The role of education in securing support for the government and settlement was also present in both cases, although expressed through different channels. In Ethiopia, the delivery of social services (specifically improved education access) was an important element of state legitimation, used by the ruling EPRDF to consolidate power and its support base by emphasising and fulfilling its image as a revolutionary, pro-poor movement and as the representative of the rural masses. However, continuing to fulfil this role, particularly in reaching all children and expanding secondary access, may result in challenging trade-offs between the desire of the government to expand education and its ability to provide adequate funds. Chile, by contrast, presents a more conventional case of governments and political parties responding to the electoral incentives created by strong and rising public demand for improved education. The focus of these incentives on education quality are as much rooted in the history of education in Chile as the political settlement. Near universal primary and secondary enrolment rates even in the early 1990s meant that education access was not a major issue and the public focus on learning outcomes was also well informed by Chile's rigorous national assessment regime (Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación, SIMCE), as well as to the country's participation in international assessments (TIMSS and PISA). However, the ability of the state to successfully respond to these demands is related in part to the developmental nature of the settlement.

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[17] In more recent years, the policy consensus in Chile has been increasingly challenged since the rise of the student movement in the mid-2000s. Attempts to integrate this new force into the existing education consensus were only partially successful and major student protests re-emerged in both 2008 and 2011, as well as in the run up to the 2013 Presidential election. Education reform has become a major point of contestation between political parties and President Bachelet has aligned herself with elements of the student movement in calling for radical reform of the education system.

Box 5: Incentives observed in developmental states

- Skilled workforce to enable long-term economic development
- State legitimation
- Electoral incentives from rising demand for education (based more on policy programmes and less on patron-client relations).

Mixed hybrid states

In the case of the three mixed hybrid case studies (Cambodia, Ghana and Indonesia) there is a striking mixture of motivations and incentives, creating incentives for education progress, but also contributing to the challenges of policy coherence.

In both Ghana and Indonesia there appears to be a nascent or growing national project around education, with coordinated elites pursuing education reforms towards this end, alongside more spoils-driven actors who may both support reforms and create policy incoherence. In Indonesia, the nascent national project is driven partly by the same desire to build a skilled workforce observed in the developmental state case studies, alongside a historical perception of education provision as being an important duty of the state. This project created the political conditions for the Ministry of Education to pursue teacher reforms, despite the political challenges it would face. In Ghana, there appears to be a shared elite commitment to universal basic education, with the discourse around this emphasising the building of skills and values needed for economic growth. In both cases we also observe the importance of electoral incentives in driving improvements in access and reducing user fees. In Indonesia this was connected to the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, which strengthened middle-class and poorer social sectors; while in Ghana the strengthening of political voice over a decade of multi-party elections has spurred demands for health and education services.

The channelling of these electoral incentives has had mixed impacts, however. In both cases it has created a strong willingness to expand education access, but expansion of access and increased funding has also been used to create opportunities for more spoils-driven actors – increasing school construction and teacher hiring, alongside fee reductions and a broadly targeted expansion in social insurance and scholarship mechanisms to maximise mass support. This has been to the exclusion of reforms that would be more likely to improve quality, but would give fewer opportunities for rents and patronage. It is striking that in Ghana, despite analysis suggesting politics is shifting away from patron-client mechanisms and towards programmatic competition, attempts to improve education access and spending have not been accompanied by reforms to improve teacher discipline or deployment. The incentives in these mixed hybrid settlements thus align strongly with initiatives that will increase spending and allow politicians to allocate resources, but do not align well for reforms that could improve quality while requiring sacrifices from important elites or a reduction in rent-seeking opportunities. Conflict over teacher reforms in Indonesia provides a strong example of this. Agreements to raise teacher wages were reached easily, motivated by both a desire to improve education and the opportunity to secure the support of powerful teachers' unions and create new patronage networks. In contrast, measures to implement teacher certification mechanisms were vigorously contested by both politicians and the teachers' unions, as they would have reduced opportunities for political patronage and weakened the influence of teachers' unions – both of which were politically important sources of power and rents.

Cambodia provides a notable contrast to Indonesia and Ghana, with the small elite group that drove education reforms being largely self-motivated and fairly isolated, meaning that their aims cannot be considered part of a genuinely shared national project. The effectiveness of this group is partly related to the fact that the Ministry of Education was relatively insulated from the rent-seeking observed in other ministries, which managed more high-value resources and were largely controlled by the opposite faction from the Ministry of Education (the Cambodian People's Party, CPP) under the power-sharing arrangements. The Ministry of Education thus acted as an island of excellence, despite, and perhaps because of, the relatively low priority given to education.

In all three of the mixed hybrid states we observe policy incoherence caused by the continuing strength of spoils-driven actors at the local or sub-national level. This is closely linked to the continued dependence of the system, and actors within it, on patronage at lower levels of administration that can be used to distribute rents between elites and their clients. Well-intentioned reforms, such as decentralisation in Indonesia, also appear to have exacerbated these issues by passing control over teacher recruitment and discipline to spoils-driven sub-national politicians, further undermining the impact of teacher reforms.

Box 6: Incentives observed in mixed hybrid states

- Skilled workforce to enable long-term economic development
- Electoral incentives from rising demand for education (focused on a mix of patron-client relations and policy programmes)
- Historic perception of education provision as duty of state
- Building and maintenance of patron-client networks within the civil service and society more broadly.

Spoils-driven hybrid states

This political settlement group has an interesting division between Benin and Kenya on the one hand, and Mongolia on the other. Neither Benin nor Kenya appear to have a durable consensus or national project around education, with policy-making instead being driven by short-term priorities with a focus on electoral and patronage politics, alongside considerable policy incoherence. This reflects the broader nature of the settlement, with rent-seeking elites who are uncertain of their ability to secure gains from long-term growth and so cannot credibly commit to policies that allow them opportunities to gain rents or exercise patronage power. Mongolia is therefore something of an outlier, appearing to have long-term prioritisation of education by both government and citizens, as well as sufficient coherence to implement these policies effectively.

The main incentives driving progress in education access in Benin and Kenya are closely related to securing electoral support and short-term rent-seeking, neither of which has proven conducive to improving education quality. In Benin, donors have played a strong role in shaping education policy and have used the leverage of considerable development financing to set priorities. To some extent, therefore, the Government of Benin can be characterised as following the money in its focus on education. An initial elite consensus on rebuilding the education system following the fall of President Kérékou in the early 1990s was short-lived and actors within the system appear to be largely focused on short-term gains and rent-seeking, with limited policy coherence. Teachers' unions have become increasingly militant, high-level leadership is lacking and political interference in decision-making is common at the sub-national level.

In Kenya, by contrast, growing popular demand for education has led to it becoming a major factor in electoral competition and creating incentives for political focus and leadership. User fees became a major political issue in the early 2000s and the implementation of universal free primary education was a key election pledge from Mwai Kibaki that was linked to his election victory over the sitting president in 2003. This was then followed by a similar pledge by then President Kibaki for universal free secondary education around the 2007 election. The motivations for these actions were explicitly political rather than being part of a shared, long-term vision around education. Universal free primary education was implemented two days before the school year began, leaving no time to provide the additional classrooms, teachers or resources needed to adequately meet the needs of a ballooning school population. Parallels can also be seen for individual MPs, who have focused on school construction in their constituencies and providing bursaries to individual students, with little emphasis being placed on holding the government to account for school performance. Kenya, however, also demonstrates the potential for reforms through other channels. Improvements in gender equity are noted as being driven by a combination of bottom-up mobilisation from women's rights groups and top-down efforts from government ministries and global institutions. Overall, however, these examples demonstrate that spoils-driven states may have the incentives and ability to expand education access, but will face challenges in improving education quality.

Mongolia, in contrast, gives the impression of a political consensus around rebuilding the education sector, without significant contradictions between incentives within the state or elites. There are clear political incentives for improving access based on the importance placed on education by the Mongolian electorate, while the emphasis on expanding rural access and highly visible school rehabilitation suggests a need to secure support in these areas. The only main area of policy incoherence appears to be around decentralisation. The ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party is reluctant to devolve substantial authority to local government and there is a tendency for reforms to be signalled to international donors before agreements (e.g. on loans), followed by the government then shifting back to centralised planning. It should be noted that, despite the general impression of policy coherence on education, Mongolia does not seem to have had improvements in learning outcomes alongside its expansion of education access.

Box 7: Incentives observed in Spoils-driven hybrid states

- Electoral incentives from rising demand for education (focused on a mix of patron-client relations and policy programmes)
- Building and maintenance of patron-client networks within the civil service and society more broadly
- Access to development financing.

4. What does this mean for international action and engagement?

While the case studies examined in this report provide only a limited sample and coverage of types of political settlement, the patterns observed across and within them are compelling. They suggest, firstly, that the political settlements framework is a useful way in which to categorise states in order to understand the evolution of their education systems and the political incentives underlying them. Secondly, the details of the cases allow us to put forward a number of hypotheses as to how international action and engagement might effectively engage with education systems and political incentives across these different settlement types. These require further evidencing and experimentation, but do suggest some useful starting points for those actively taking politics into account in attempting to expand and deepen the global reach of education.

Developmental states

Developmental states demonstrate the strongest potential for improving education access and quality due to their ability to coherently plan and implement policies over long periods. The presence of a long-term consensus around a national plan – usually based on economic growth and transformation – creates the incentives and conditions necessary for long-term investments to be made. Education is often prioritised as a crucial element of building a skilled workforce. These states tend to provide leadership on education issues, but may lack the technical skills or financial resources necessary for rapid transformation without donor assistance. Equity of access and quality may remain a major issue, however, particularly for politically unimportant or marginal groups.

Recommendations:

- **Work closely with governments** where their national vision incorporates education and, where it does not, work with pro-education reformers to provide evidence and lobbying as to the benefits of mass education.
- **Provide appropriate technical assistance** and support the development of monitoring and evaluation capacity in order to facilitate the implementation of government-led policy strategies that encompass access, quality and equity dimensions.
- **Provide financial and programme support** through the state where necessary.
- **Advocate for the most marginalised groups** and provide support to non-state actors serving these groups (within state frameworks) where they are neglected.

Mixed hybrid states

Based on the Development Progress case studies, mixed hybrid settlements have the potential to improve both access and education quality. However, the extent of quality achievements is more limited than for developmental states and more strongly conditioned by the precise features of the context. The lack of a strong consensus around a shared national vision, or the presence of a mixture of coordinated and spoils-driven actors, creates mixed incentives for pursuing education reform and challenges for effective policy implementation. The best initial entry point for international action appears to be linking with groups of pro-education actors and providing the support necessary to allow them to form and expand islands of effectiveness.

Recommendations:

- **Identify, link and work with groups of pro-reform actors** across the government, bureaucracy, politicians, business and civil society.
- **Provide technical assistance and financial support** for the building and strengthening of islands of excellence within the education system.
- **Provide evidence, evaluation and convening power** to help build a consensus on education.
- **Identify and exploit key political moments** and incentives that can be leveraged to advocate for a greater focus on education.
- **Provide support to non-state actors** serving marginalised groups and work with the state to build frameworks that can coordinate providers.

Spoils-driven hybrid states

Spoils-driven hybrid settlements have potential to improve access to education at both the primary and secondary level. However, in the case studies examined here, this has not been matched by an ability to improve or sustain education quality. The lack of a national consensus on education or elites coordinated around a national plan leads to a short-term focus in policy-making, undermining its effectiveness. This is particularly the case when combined with spoils-driven actors at all levels of the system who may act in a manner that undermines effective policy implementation. Nevertheless, engagement by donors and international actors has assisted in expanding education access, both through leveraging donors' financial power and supporting governments where their political priorities are aligned with expanding education access. There is, however, an absence of strong examples of how donors can shift incentives effectively towards a focus on education quality in these settlements. Promising approaches may include attempting to improve the nature of electoral competition around education and working more closely with non-state actors, which appear to be experiencing strong growth in these case studies.

Recommendations:

- **Provide financial support** for expanding education access, particularly when targeted at marginalised groups and accompanied by viable implementation plans.
- **Provide financial and technical support** to islands of excellence within the education system, particularly targeting specific, credible programmes focused on education quality.
- **Work with and support non-state actors** where they have the potential to reach marginalised groups and improve education quality, whilst working with the state to build frameworks that can coordinate these forms of providers.
- **Generate electoral incentives** to focus on learning outcomes by facilitating and supporting information campaigns to highlight issues of education quality.
- **Identify and exploit key political moments** and incentives that can be leveraged to advocate for a greater focus on education, particularly learning outcomes.
- **Leveraging donor influence** alongside strong international financing can create incentives to expand access, but is unlikely to result in meaningful reforms around education quality.

Common theme – education finance

Cross-national analysis of education financing and outcomes has consistently found the correlation between these two variables to be poor.[18] However, it is striking that all eight case studies saw considerable investments in education, financed by a mixture of domestic spending and aid, albeit with highly varied impacts on education access and quality. This suggests that while improved education financing is not sufficient for achieving progress, it may be a necessary enabling condition when resources were low previously.

From the perspective of donors and international organisations it is notable that across the three political settlement groups we see a wide variety of strategies being used to provide additional financing, with few clear patterns aligned to the settlement types. The case studies therefore present a menu of options that could be considered by donors interested in improving the financing environment for education.

Options include:

- **Direct international aid** for education, with modalities fitted to the settlement type.
- **Working with reformers** and providing technical or research support for redistributive reforms (e.g. Indonesia where fuel subsidies were channelled into significant increases in education spending).
- **Support for economic growth** through the promotion of international economic stability and sound domestic macroeconomic policies.
- **Technical support to improve revenue collection** and design appropriate taxation mechanisms for economies that are characterised by a high degree of informality.

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[18] See, for example, Hanushek and Luque (2003).

5. Conclusion

First day back at school in Mongolia. Photo: © Nick Farnhill.

The objective of this report is firstly to demonstrate that the application of political settlements analysis can help to explain patterns of progress in education access and quality, and to identify the political incentives underlying them. This has important implications for the developing field of education systems research, demonstrating that their form and function cannot be understood in isolation from their political context.

Secondly, it demonstrates the benefits of tailoring donor and international agency approaches to education programming to the context of the political settlement in question. The identification of a series of potential entry points for education reform provide clear ideas as to how this might be achieved for the three forms of political settlements analysed here.

Immediate priorities for the future must include a movement from theory into practice. The hypothesised entry points for reform require testing and exploration by those implementing education programmes. This will demonstrate whether these are useful starting points in practice and, if not, provide a growing pool of knowledge as to what strategies are effective in these various forms of political settlement.

In terms of further research on the nexus of political settlements analysis and education there are three major priorities that can be identified:

1. **A broadening and sharpening of the evidence base** to analyse the extent to which the patterns observed across political settlements in these case studies hold in other countries. This will test the robustness of these findings, highlight other potential strategies, and identify in particular where and why incentives have led to increased education access and improved learning for the most marginalised groups.
2. **Analysis of case studies** focusing on predatory settlements and political settlements that face severe resilience challenges. This will allow us to refine approaches to education in emergencies and protracted crises, particularly in terms of engagement with the state.
3. **In depth analysis of the role that education can play** in the formation, reproduction and collapse of political settlements – recognising that education actors themselves can be important elites, that education can play an important role in instigating transformative action and legitimating or discrediting systems of government.

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Annex 1

Table 4: Summary of Development Progress education case studies

Country	Focus of case study	Political settlement type	Key drivers identified	Remaining challenges highlighted
Benin	Access (primary)	Spoils-driven hybrid	• **Political will** for universal access and **initial systemic reforms.** • Increased **donor resources** to implement reforms. • **Changing popular attitudes** about education.	• **Ensuring supply keeps up** with demand. • Addressing the **low quality of teaching.** • **Engagement at ministry level** • **Demographic pressure** and the **sustainability** of progress • Neglect of **secondary education and skills development.**
Cambodia	Access (primary)	Mixed hybrid	• A **more effective planning structure** led by the Ministry of Education and development partners. • **Increased financing** to improve education access. • NGO- and community-based innovation in education to **reach the marginalised and foster participation.**	• Continued high rates of **repetition and dropout.** • **Lack of** both development partner and government **resources.** • **Low quality** and widely perceived lack of relevance. • **Lack of incentive structures** for accountability and participation. • **Poor working conditions**, pay and opportunities for teachers
Chile	Education quality	Developmental	• Emphasis on **consensus in politics and policy.** • Multiple efforts at **quality reforms.** • **Teacher professionalisation** and conditions. • Investment and targeting of **financial resources.**	• Concerns over **absolute learning levels.** • **Inequities and segmentation by income.** • **Teacher skills** and knowledge • **Maintenance of political consensus.**
Ethiopia	Access (primary)	Developmental	• **Sustained top-level commitment** to poverty reduction. • Increasing the **autonomy of regional and local** government. • Increased **community participation** in education system. • Effective cooperation with **development partners.**	• Large numbers of the **chronically poor and most vulnerable** remain out of school. • **Expansion of secondary schooling needs to keep pace** with rising demand from increased primary. • **Low quality of schooling** remains a substantial problem.
Ghana	Education quality	Mixed hybrid	• **Removal of school fees** • **Capitation grant** of $6 per student per year to all basic public schools (kindergarten through junior secondary school) to replace lost school-fee revenues. • **International funding** and resources.	• **Closing gaps in access to basic services for marginalised groups**, particularly for girls and children in rural areas • **Providing well-trained teachers.** • **Ensuring financial sustainability of policies.**
Indonesia	Education quality	Mixed hybrid	• **Strengthening the teaching force.** • **Curriculum and pedagogy reforms.** • Supporting **decentralisation** and school-based management. • **Increased budget** and **targeted support** to reduce **inequities.**	• **Variable learning levels** • **Persistent equity concerns**, by region and income. • **Financial sustainability** and cost-effectiveness. • **Early childhood care and education access**, equity and quality. • Fragile e**ducation-to-employment transition**.

Table 4: Summary of Development Progress education case studies (continued)

Country	Focus of case study	Political settlement type	Key drivers identified	Remaining challenges highlighted
Kenya	Access (post-primary)	Spoils-driven hybrid	• **Public demand** for increasingly higher levels of education. • **Government policy** as a game-changer (fee abolition). • **Financial resources** accompanying political commitment. • Growth in **community and private-sector** providers.	• **Entrenched inequality** across the system. • Concerns over **education quality.** • Extensive **youth unemployment.** • **Financial constraints and sustainability.**
Mongolia	Access (post-primary)	Spoils-driven hybrid	• **Strong demand and high value** of post-primary education. • **Expanded provision through investment** by the Government of Mongolia. • **Policy reform** and **reaching the unreached.** • External support through **development partners.**	• Addressing **poor learning outcomes.** • Improving **school-to-work transitions.** • Economic growth trends and implications for **public finance.**

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Development Progress is a four-year research project which aims to better understand, measure and communicate progress in development. Building on an initial phase of research across 24 case studies, this second phase continues to examine progress across countries and within sectors, to provide evidence for what's worked and why over the past two decades.

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