



DEEP THEMATIC PAPER 2

Ending extreme poverty amidst fragility, conflict, and violence

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About DEEP

Our mission is to build evidence, insights, and solutions that help end extreme poverty globally.

We aim to contribute to new global and national data and evidence that governments, decision-makers, citizens and researchers can use to improve people's lives and support the world's poorest people in their efforts to escape extreme poverty.

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Questions:

- **How is fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) expected to affect efforts to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030?**
- **What are the leading outstanding gaps in evidence on how to reduce extreme poverty in FCV situations?**

Summary

Fragile contexts experience a range of political, security, environmental, social, economic and human capital constraints, and are typically characterised by limited government authority, legitimacy, and capacity (OECD, 2020; Carmen et al., 2009). Some of these drivers can hamper poverty reduction, which renders it instrumental in acknowledging and responding to poverty differently within fragile, conflict-affected, and violent settings (FCVS). Indeed, interventions that seek to reduce poverty may not always be appropriate for or effective in FCVS, given that many of the structural conditions necessary for stability and pro-poor service delivery are absent or inadequate. Moreover, where they do not adequately engage with conflict dimensions and foundational principles of working in fragile contexts, interventions may lead to unintended consequences that could generate or fuel conflict (Diwakar et al., 2020).

This paper examines how FCV has affected efforts to reduce extreme poverty today and in the lead-up to 2030. Its primary objectives are to provide a high-level summary of the latest, well-evidenced, research on measures to address extreme poverty amidst FCV and to identify priority areas where further research could contribute value. It is a non-systematic review of the leading drivers between poverty and FCV, the current body of evidence on measures to address these drivers and well-documented evidence gaps. The report draws on peer-reviewed academic research and grey literature from leading institutions and thinkers. This paper aims to identify evidence and literature gaps that might be filled by the Data and Evidence to End Extreme Poverty (DEEP) project, with a focus on DEEP priority countries, while also introducing principles for the prioritization of research on policies and programmes with the potential to promote extreme poverty reduction in FCVS more generally.

How FCV is expected to affect efforts to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030

There are direct and indirect pathways operating at multiple levels and across sectors through which FCV affects extreme poverty. We focus our attention on the channel through which FCV affects extreme poverty, though acknowledge the presence of a mutually reinforcing relationship between FCV and poverty.

- **State policies and finances:** FCVS may experience a constrained policy environment due to weak government authority, capacity, and legitimacy. This may lead to 'parallel' governance structures by armed groups (Bahiss et al., 2020). Alongside political fragility, a weak macroeconomic environment can also limit poverty reduction in FCVS by the destabilising balance of payments, reducing financial flows and investments, and diverting state resources away from social spending (IMF, 2022; Ferf et al., 2014; World Bank, 2017). Aid can mitigate some of these effects but remains an inadequate substitute amidst weak state capacity.

- **Community institutions and norms:** Local systems and services central to individual and household well-being could be damaged or destroyed during FCV. Local labour markets can become depressed or distorted during conflict (Amodio et al., 2017), and social norms and networks may become stressed. Conflict may be associated with a reversion to traditional values (Justino, 2012) which could disadvantage progress towards gender equality, or it could instead render women more economically active, though this may not translate into poverty reduction if activities are in low-paid, precarious work (Nemat et al., 2022; Yadav, 2020).
- **Households and individuals:** Conflict could result in refugees, and internal or forcibly displaced groups, who generally face a range of multi-dimensional deprivations. It could also reconfigure household expenditures through loss of assets and income, erosive coping, and result in limited human capital investments (Swee et al., 2019). Women and children, older people, and persons with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable, as well as groups facing intersecting inequalities (Priddy, 2019; Diwakar, 2023a).

These channels and the magnitude of their impacts on extreme poverty differ by country. Indices of state fragility and the literature on FCV and poverty point to certain countries that stand out for prioritising better evidence about how FCV can constrain poverty reduction.

- **Strong evidence:** Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mozambique feature on a majority of the main international indices of state fragility and are relatively better evidenced in terms of fragility and poverty drivers.
- **Medium evidence:** Despite Myanmar's prevalence of all fragility indices, there are few links made explicitly to poverty in the literature, though there is growing evidence base on political fragility since the coup and spike in the displacement of the Rohingya population. Madagascar also experiences considerable data gaps.
- **Weak evidence:** In Bangladesh and Tanzania, the focus has been less on violence and more on disasters as components of state fragility (except for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, farmer-herder conflicts in Tanzania, and some coverage of election-related violence in both countries). India is recognized for certain dimensions of fragility (e.g. disasters, conflicts) though is not typically considered a fragile state.

Leading policy areas and gaps in evidence on how to reduce extreme poverty amidst FCV

Humanitarian-development-peace nexus

- **Operationalisation:** Until recently, there has been little evidence on operationalising the nexus (Hinds, 2015). There are, however, some flexible approaches in development with shock-responsive components that incorporate a nexus framing related to poverty reduction, notably Ethiopia's PSNP. Even so, joint disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding, and conflict-prevention outcomes remain under-explored (Peters et al., 2020).
- **Peacebuilding:** There is limited work on connecting a focus of peacebuilding to development objectives, and few approaches that consider political economy analysis in

the design of interventions (OECD, 2022b). Women tend to be included in donor interventions in FCVS largely as passive participants, rather than as active agents contributing to peacebuilding (OECD, 2017).

Economic development:

- **Labour market programs:** Lessons from the literature on job creation interventions in FCVS suggest that projects should be politically aware, address structural barriers to women's decision-making, and provide adequate financial and complementary resources to link to longer-term market solutions (Blattman and Ralston, 2015; Brück et al., 2021; OECD, 2017; Mallet and Pain, 2017). However, programs that address structural barriers have been weak or absent.
- **Macroeconomic and business climate:** A distributional focus on public finance management is needed to finance more public investments and provide basic services (IMF, 2022). Business environment reforms remain constrained due to institutional capacity and elite capture, pointing again to the important yet under-researched role of power dynamics (Luiz et al., 2019; McKechnie et al., 2018).

Social Inclusion and human capital:

- **Inclusive education:** A focus on early childhood care and education, school feeding, girls' education, and support for transitions to the labour market or self-employment can enable children in poor households to access education in FCVS (Shepherd et al., 2021). Supply-side measures are also needed, such as improving infrastructure, resources and quality, teacher training, and addressing distributional effects (Shepherd et al., 2021; Perezniето et al., 2017). Yet research on the quality of education in FCVS is under-evidenced in part due to limited data.
- **Health systems:** There is promise in interventions that focus on multi-sectoral approaches to break cycles of poverty, for example by incorporating economic components into public health interventions (Bwirire et al., 2022). The literature on social health insurance in FCVS is limited, though some studies suggest that this can be a strategy where insurance systems are already established (Spiegel, 2018).
- **Social protection:** In FCVS, there is nascent literature on the use of social protection to understand what works, for whom and why (Brück et al., 2019). Social protection on its own may have limited effects and needs to be linked with other interventions (Shepherd et al., 2021), which requires further understanding of the combinations and sequences that are likely to be effective under different conditions.

Finally, given the complex relationship between FCV and poverty, a flexible portfolio approach that responds to different sources of impoverishment is needed in FCVS. This could consider a conflict dynamics perspective (Diwakar, 2023a; Corral et al., 2020). Projects within portfolios could be organisation-specific, area-specific, cross-donor, and/or cross-institutional, making efforts where possible to flexibly open up the space for discussion around reforms with the government.

Background

Conceptualising fragility

There is no set definition of fragility in the international development sector, which poses a challenge to its analysis.

“Fragility has become a catch-all concept encompassing fragile states, weak states, failed states, collapsing or decaying states, conflict-affected countries, post-conflict countries, brittle states, and states with limited legitimacy, authority, capacity, governance, security, and socioeconomic and human development.” (Signe, 2019)

At its core, however, there is recognition that fragility often is characterised by limitations partly or fully in 1) state capacity to provide basic social services, 2) state legitimacy, rule of law, and political participation, and 3) state authority marked by an absence of the provision of basic security (Carment et al., 2009; Stewart and Brown, 2009; Call, 2010). Many also relate fragility to the human condition, where the presence of fragility amplifies human vulnerability and reduces resilience (OECD, 2020). Even so, these components reflect a variety of characterisations, drivers and contexts, which lends the concept of fragility well suited to existing on a spectrum.

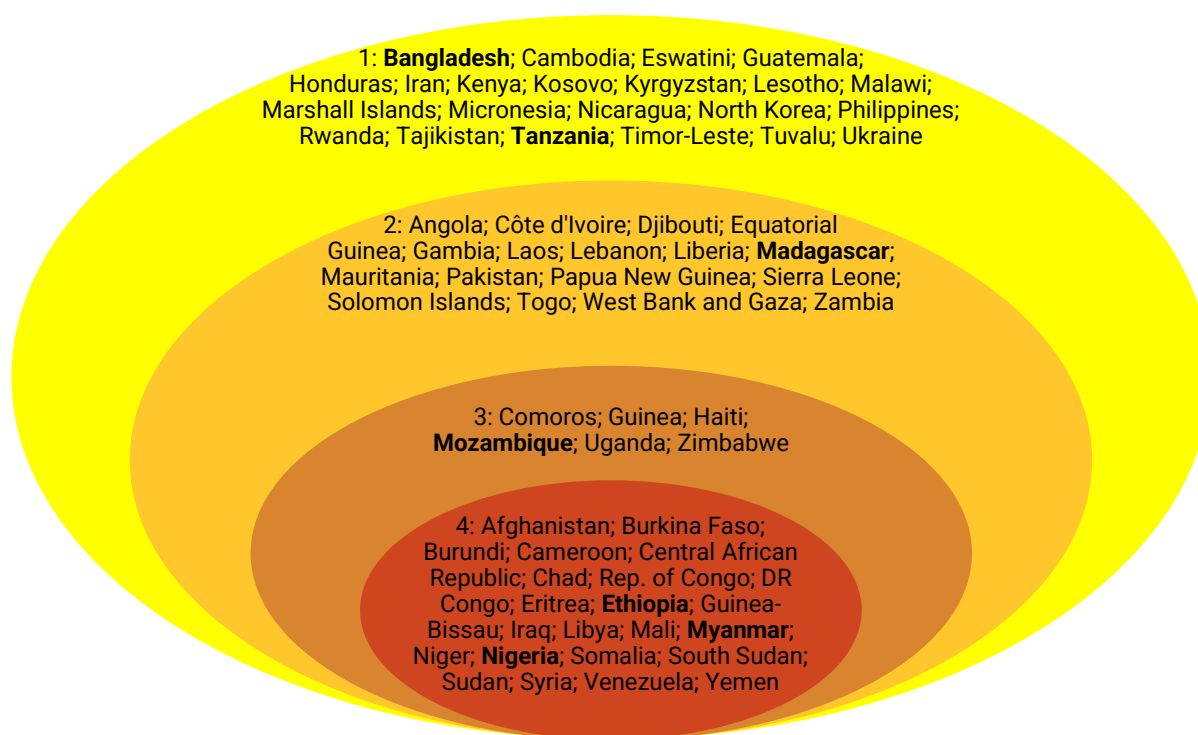
Challenges of FCV are mutually reinforcing, though with complex relationships. For example, displacement can be a cause and consequence of fragility. In addition, there is use in distinguishing between fragility, conflict and violence, as many fragile states have a high risk of violence but may not be currently conflict-affected, while others may be fragile due to factors other than conflict. Relatedly, fragility per se does not equate with armed conflict or violence. However, there is recognition that fragility can lead to negative outcomes, including violence and poverty, but also that fragility itself can reflect high levels of exclusion (OECD, 2020).

Finally, there are a range of thresholds and constituent components of FCV. The thresholds used to define ‘conflict-affectedness’ for example are sometimes based on the number of deaths or conflict events. Violence can also refer to intentional homicides in the context of FCV, though other forms such as violence against children and sexual and gender-based violence are also included in this definition (World Bank, 2019). Box 1 lists common indices related to fragility, while Figure 1 outlines overlaps between prominent international indices of fragility, pointing to the variation in its conceptualisation and country identification.

Box 1: International indices of state fragility

Classification/ source	Description of key components of fragility	N. of fragile countries
Classification of fragility and conflict situations 2023 (World Bank, 2022a)	Fragile countries have one or more weak institutional and policy environments; or the presence of a UN peacekeeping operation; or a flight across borders of 2,000+ per 100,000 population; and those not in medium- or high-intensity conflict, as these countries are stated to have gone beyond fragility. Countries in high-intensity conflict: conflict deaths above 250 (ACLED) and 150 (UCDP); and several conflict deaths relative to the population above 10 per 100,000. Medium-intensity conflict adopts lower thresholds.	36 (fragile or conflict-affected)
States of Fragility 2020 (OECD, 2020)	Fragility is measured on a spectrum of intensity across economic, environmental, political, security and societal dimensions, with a sixth human capital dimension forthcoming in 2022. Based on this, it classifies countries as fragile or extremely fragile.	57 (fragile or extremely fragile)
Fragile States Index 2022 (FFP, 2022)	Captures human rights and demographic pressures, state of the economy, governance and conflict. Based on indicators on these components, identifies countries as corresponding to either sustainable, stable, warning, or alert levels.	29 ('alert' level), 88 ('warning')
State Fragility Index 2018 (CSP, 2018)	Countries are scored on their effectiveness and legitimacy in four dimensions: security, political, economic and social. Countries are identified as having little or no fragility, low, moderate, serious, high, or extreme.	44 (serious, high, or extreme risk)

In addition to the above indices, there are others covering specific aspects of fragility or conflict, such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index which is focused on governance, political transformation, and economic transformation; the political stability and absence of violence/terrorism index within the World Governance Indicators that is focused on political factors and armed conflict; the EU INFORM Risk index which captures hazard and exposure, vulnerability, and lack of coping capacity; the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment which covers economic management, structural policies, social inclusion/ equity policies, and public sector management and institutions; and the Global Peace Index which measures the state of peace across societal safety and security, extent of conflict, and the degree of militarisation.

Figure 1: Fragile states based on the number of international lists on which they appear

Notes: For FSI, we rely only on the countries classified under 'alert' levels. DEEP countries are in bold (India excluded as it doesn't appear in these fragility indices). Source: identification based on fragility indices by WB (2023), CSP (2018), OECD (2020), and FFP (2022).

Poverty estimates in FCVS

With these definitional variations in mind, there is understandably also variation in estimates of people living in poverty in FCVS. More broadly, however, if we identify countries as fragile who have appeared on most international fragility indices today, poverty has been reducing in FCVS at a slower rate compared to other low- and middle-income countries, though with wide heterogeneity where poverty in some cases was reducing slowly (e.g. Rwanda), reversing (e.g. South Sudan, Uganda), or making good progress though from high baselines (e.g. Chad, Niger) (Diwakar et al., 2020).

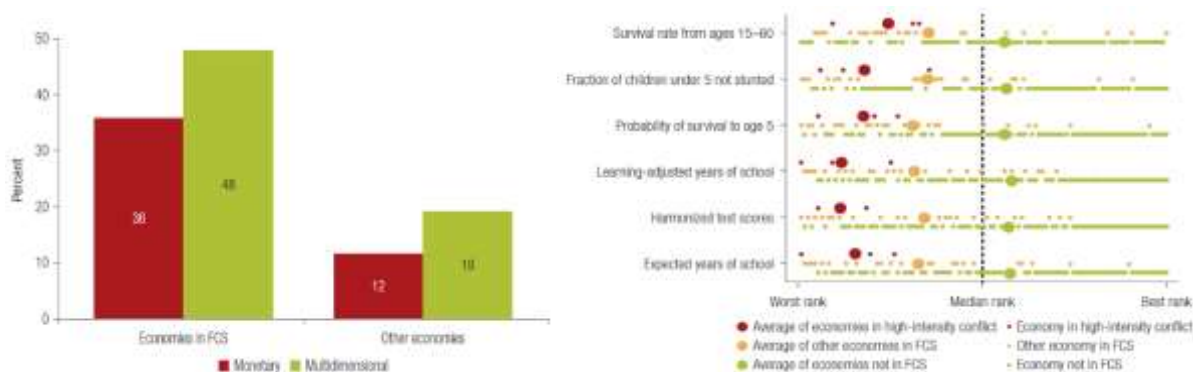
Moreover, if we adopt the World Bank definition, 48% of people in poverty lived in FCVS prior to COVID-19, with poverty rates highest in FCVS and/or countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Corral et al., 2020). Finally, different definitions also lead to a range of projections, with some estimates suggesting between two-thirds up to 85% of people in extreme poverty could be living in FCVS by 2030 (Samman et al., 2018; Corral et al., 2020), with Nigeria, Madagascar and Tanzania (of DEEP countries) amongst the top 10 countries with the highest number of extreme poor projected in 2030 (World Data Lab, 2022).

All of this so far concerns the country level; there are equally FCVS we might identify subnationally, as we examine later amongst DEEP countries (Table 2). Analysis of fragility

and especially conflict over the last two decades has increasingly focused on this subnational level, due largely to: the recognition that the majority of conflict today is increasingly intra-state (von Einsiedel et al., 2017), better microdata available on conflict, and relatedly the ability to more effectively examine variations and effects of conflict (Diwakar et al., 2017). Even so, huge data deprivation exists in FCVS, due to the absence of international poverty estimates in these countries, outdated estimates, and scattered data for displaced people (World Bank, 2018). Together, data deprivation, when defined as the absence of an international poverty estimate within two years of 2015, was estimated to affect seven out of 10 people living in FCVS (Corral et al., 2020).

In addition, FCVS also tends to have higher rates of multidimensional poverty (Figure 3, left), marked by deprivations for example in health and education (Figure 3, right). For example, people in FCVS are more likely to experience reduced height-for-age z-scores, higher child mortality rates, higher prevalence of being underweight, persistent severe hunger, and increased mental ill health that can persist years after a conflict has ended (Minoiu and Shemyakina, 2014; Akresh et al., 2018; Bratti et al., 2016). They also generally experience lower education outcomes (Diwakar, 2023b; Bundervoet and Fransen, 2018; Pivovarova and Swee, 2015; Bertoni et al., 2019), with gender-differentiated effects depending on a range of factors such as household wealth, age of the child, order of birth, and type of violence (Diwakar, 2023a). These impacts persist over time, leading to lower productivity and earnings and limiting intergenerational socioeconomic mobility (Corral et al., 2020; Galdo, 2013).

Figure 3: Multidimensional poverty rate (left) and human capital deprivations (right) in FCVS



Source: Corral et al., 2020

Violent conflict and poverty dynamics in FCVS

This section focuses on the relationship between violent conflict and poverty dynamics.¹ In this relationship, direct and indirect effects need to be distinguished, as well as the population groups they affect, including those facing intersecting inequalities. This is detailed in Section 3.

Some research points to a vicious cycle of “weak governance, poverty and violence” that could drive poverty traps (Lockhart and Vincent, 2013). An investigation of conflict and poverty dynamics in India, Nigeria and Uganda found that there was a larger share of households in persistent poverty and experiencing impoverishment in areas with high rates of conflict (typically about the mean) compared to areas without conflict within the countries, largely on account of key challenges specific to conflict-affected areas (Figure 4) (Diwakar et al., 2017). During Mozambique’s civil war, poor households were often driven to risky coping responses that increased their state of vulnerability (Brück, 2004). For a summary of this ‘conflict dynamics’ challenge, see Diwakar (2023).

Figure 4: Key challenges affecting wellbeing in conflict-affected areas

Shocks	Displacement	Fragility	Security	Decentralisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiencing multiple shocks and living in conflict-prone areas have mutually reinforcing effects on wellbeing dynamics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displacement is associated with higher food insecurity and thus with implications for longer-term impacts on wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments and other stakeholders may be unwilling to invest or support longer-term institutional change on account of increased risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The perception of safety is associated with higher asset wealth, but it may be challenging to identify/ prioritise safety improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict is prevalent also at subnational levels yet policies may be national in coverage and thus without adequate contextualisation.

Source: visualisation based on results from Diwakar et al., 2017

Even so, though there is an understanding that violent conflict can cause chronic poverty and the chronic poor may suffer disproportionately from FCVS, the relationship between violent conflict and chronic poverty is sometimes contradictory (Justino, 2006; Diwakar, 2018). Indeed, there is more general evidence to dispel the myth that “conflict is a problem of poverty and the poor” when wealthier people sometimes have relatively more to lose from violent conflict (Verwimp et al., 2019). For example, in Rwanda, land-rich non-poor households fared badly during violent conflict due to the destruction of homes and loss of land, while land-poor and income-poor households in some cases were able to move out of poverty (Justino and Verwimp, 2013). In India, children in households that had become

¹ There is another strand of literature examining how people contribute to conflict and the motivations to join including in contexts of high poverty and inequality; however, our focus is on understanding consequences of conflict on poverty in FCVS.

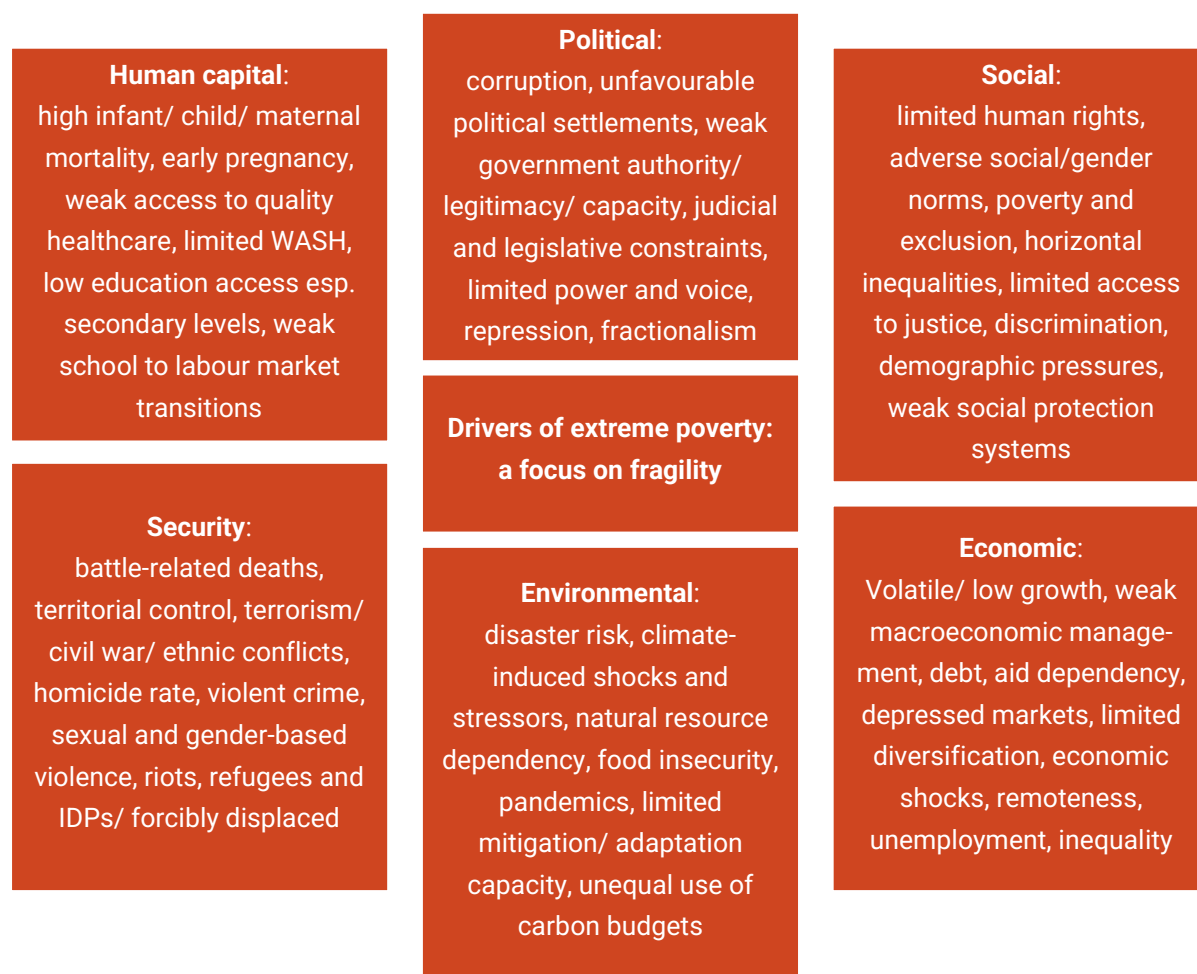
impoverished over time also experienced particularly low education enrolment and years of schooling (Diwakar, 2023b).

Links between FCV and other drivers of extreme poverty

If we consider fragility to be linked to factors that affect human vulnerability and limit their resilience (OECD, 2020), these may bear conceptual equivalence with drivers of extreme poverty. In other words, these dimensions of fragility could also intuitively affect extreme poverty. Figure 5 accordingly structures drivers of extreme poverty according to different dimensions grouped according to OECD's dimensions of fragility.² It is worth noting that dimensions are not mutually exclusive. For example, poverty is listed under the social dimension but is also an economic concern. Similarly, limited access to education for girls (human capital dimension) may be a result of adverse gender norms and poverty (social dimension). There is also a climate-conflict nexus where people in conflict-prone areas may be more likely to report experiencing climate-related shocks, and where climate shocks can drive conflict through reduced income loss or commodity price shocks (Corral et al., 2020).

² These dimensions are also comparable to multidimensional frameworks of poverty, such as by Sida (2017) which includes similar dimensions (though subsumes human capital within the economic and social context).

Figure 5: Dimensions of fragility constraining poverty reduction



Source: author's compilation is structured around OECD dimensions and based on the wider literature on fragility and poverty summarised in Section 3

Some of these risks are also increasing over time, such as climate change, conflict, and pandemics, which could not only contribute to higher poverty but also to a higher number of fragile states (World Bank, 2018). Indeed, since the onset of COVID-19, an additional 20 million people are estimated to be living in extreme poverty in FCVS (World Bank, 2022b). This is because the economic impact of the pandemic has been particularly severe in FCVS, and people's incomes are likely to experience a particularly slow recovery to 2019 levels (IMF, 2022).

Channels between FCV and poverty

Again, we focus primarily on the pathways through which FCV may affect poverty while acknowledging that the relationship is bidirectional, dynamic and mutually reinforcing. We draw on the literature on conflict and violence, though some of these pathways apply more generally to other sources of fragility.

State policies and finances

The degree and type of pro-poor policies established can influence the rate of poverty reduction, including in conflict-affected contexts (Shepherd et al., 2019; Shepherd and Diwakar, 2019). In FCVS, given the inequalities that sometimes fuel conflict, policies that attempt to reduce deprivations amongst marginalised groups can help address the twin goals of peacebuilding and poverty reduction. Horizontal inclusion of ethnic groups, and vertical inclusion by empowering marginalised groups, can contribute to more equitable outcomes and poverty reduction (Castillejo, 2014; Dudouet et al., 2016). However, policy implementation may be constrained in FCVS on account of weak state capacity. Moreover, in some cases, ‘parallel’ governance structures and service provision by armed groups can sometimes result, in ambiguous effects on welfare (Bahiss et al., 2022).

The macroeconomic context in FCVS can also impact poverty reduction. Fragility can disrupt trade and financial flows, destabilise countries’ balance of payments, and divert state resources away from socio-economic services towards the ‘war coffers’, often with spillover effects (IMF, 2022; Collier, 1999; World Bank, 2011). Private investments may reduce due to fear or lack of access amidst insecurity (Ferd et al., 2014). For example, the largest foreign investment in Africa, a \$25 billion investment by Total to develop a gas deposit near Cabo Delgado in Mozambique, has been suspended on account of insecurity (Sidley, 2022). In some cases, there may be lower aid due to limited accountability in these contexts, or aid can increase due to need and international support. This was observed in Mozambique which positively impacted economic growth (Orre and Ronning, 2017). More generally, as a result of these drivers, institutional fragility and conflict are typically associated with lower growth and lower poverty reduction (Corral et al., 2020; Mueller, 2016). This can furthermore pose huge costs, where some estimates suggest that economic costs of fragility and conflict can range from 10 to 25% of GDP (IMF, 2022).

Community infrastructure, institutions and norms

There are a range of meso- or community-level institutional pathways through which FCVS may affect extreme poverty. Local labour markets can become depressed or distorted during conflict (Amodio et al., 2017), not least through destroyed infrastructure like roads connecting people to markets, but also the destruction of labour and both physical and human capital (Serneels and Verpoorten, 2015). At the same time, some research has highlighted the expansion of informal labour markets and illicit economies that may be

central to survival strategies (Mallet and Slater, 2012). The effects on household welfare will depend on the degree of predatory behaviour and the extent to which there are winners and losers, for example amongst those involved in the conflict (Justino, 2011).

Local systems and services central to individual and household well-being could also be damaged or destroyed. For example, violent conflict may destroy healthcare infrastructure and schools, or there may be co-opted during wartime (Muzzal et al., 2021; Levy and Sidel, 2016). There are often subnational variations: for example, the Tigray region of Ethiopia has recently seen the virtual collapse of its healthcare system (Gesese et al., 2022). In terms of outcomes, a child in conflict-affected Cabo Delgado in Mozambique is almost three times as likely to die before the age of five compared to a child in Maputo (Adedokun, 2017).

Personnel operating services may also flee, or there may be fewer women workers due to insecurity. This could affect children, women, and more widely the human capital development of poor and vulnerable households who may lack alternative support structures. Other infrastructure for economic development, such as electricity and transportation, could also be destroyed or its expansion may be constrained. For example, armed clashes in Mozambique between 2013 and 2017 limited the government's ability to expand energy provision and access (Cotton et al., 2019).

Social norms and networks within and between households and communities may also be affected by FCVS. For example, in Madagascar, frequent violent cattle raids have increased mistrust within communities, and between settled communities and guest plateau herders (Goetter, 2016). In terms of gender norms, conflict may also be associated with a reversion to traditional values (Justino, 2012) which could disadvantage progress towards gender equality. However, it could also render women more economically active (Mallet and Slater, 2012; Nemat et al., 2022) and exposed to new opportunities (Yadav, 2020; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbals, 2013). These relationships in turn can affect social relations and cohesion, though with ambiguous negative effects (Justino, 2011) depending on the type of violence, cultural expectations, and other contextual factors.

Households and individuals: displacement, spending, and demographics

There are a range of direct impacts of FCVS on household well-being and poverty. Conflict, for example, can lead to forced displacements, giving rise to refugees and internally displaced people. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of people displaced by conflict doubled (IOM, 2022). In Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, the displaced Rohingya population in camps is observed to experience deprivations in food, health facilities, education and employment access (Islam et al., 2022). In Myanmar, forced migration and displacement have damaged ecologically fragile regions in Rakhine, further aggravating drivers of fragility (Aung et al., 2021). There are intersections to some effects, where women and children may form a majority of refugees and displaced populations (Buvinic et al., 2013). All of this could

also affect the share of income earners in the household and contribute to the intergenerational persistence of deprivation.

Conflict could also reconfigure household expenditures through direct loss of assets and income, or erosive coping responses with long-term negative implications on welfare. Households may experience a loss of cattle, land and other assets during conflict (Verwimp and van Bavel, 2013; Justino and Verwimp, 2013). Economic loss in turn can lead to households shifting away from human capital investments for children (Minoiu and Shemyakina, 2014), with long-term consequences on welfare. Faced with reduced income and expenditures, conflict could also drive some households to early marriages to reduce their dependency burden (Singh et al., 2022). People’s aspirations may also be affected by FCVS, manifesting in a sense of hopelessness that affects productivity and investments in children’s education (Swee et al., 2019; Bernard et al., 2019).

Certain groups may be particularly vulnerable. For example, households headed by women may experience particular constraints emanating from the lack of property rights of the land of deceased parents or husbands, pressures from refugee return, and inadequate legal protection (Brück and Schindler, 2008; Stojetz and Brück, 2023). Women and children, especially in poor households, may also be driven to vulnerable employment, including commercial sex to support household welfare (Formson and Hilhorst, 2016). Women and girls in particular are disproportionately exposed to gender-specific health risks, SGBV, and experience discriminatory norms that limit access to education (OECD, 2022a). Some children may be abducted or recruited into armed conflict, or women and girls may join conflict parties to escape SGBV, poverty, or enhance agency (Yadav, 2020). Older people may also experience a higher risk of abuse, especially when they are unable to flee attacks (HRW, 2022). Persons with disabilities may also bear a disproportionate impact, as they may face targeted killings, inaccessible protection mechanisms and assistance, and may be particularly constrained amidst the destruction of infrastructure (Priddy, 2019). Finally, there are also intersecting inequalities to consider, where for example women with disabilities may be more at risk of sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict (Priddy, 2019).

FCV and poverty in DEEP focus countries

DEEP priority countries generally feature on international indices of state fragility (Table 1). Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Nigeria are present across fragility indices, where Ethiopia is classified in the most serious fragility category according to CSP 2018. All countries except India are considered “fragile” according to OECD’s definition. Though India is not considered fragile in these international indices, when broadening the definition, India does have negative scores based on its political stability and absence of violence, reflecting worse governance. It is also categorised as having high risk and low peace according to its scores on the INFORM Risk Index and Global Peace Index, respectively. Moreover, there are

particular states in India with a higher level of conflict and instability, reflecting subnational dimensions of violence.

Table 1: DEEP country performance in international fragility, governance, and peace indices

Country	Key international fragility indices				Other indices of risk, peace, violence and weak governance				
	WB 23	SFI 18	OECD 20	FSI 22	BTI Gov 22	PSAV 18	INFO RM 22	GPI 22	CPIA 20
Bangladesh	None	Moderate	Fragile	Warning	Moderate	Negative	High	Medium	3.1
Ethiopia	Conflict	Extreme	Fragile	Alert	Weak	N/A	Very high	Low	3.5
India	None	Moderate	None	Warning	Moderate	Negative	High	Low	N/A
Madagascar	None	Serious	Fragile	Warning	Moderate	Negative	High	Low	3.3
Mozambique	Conflict	Moderate	Fragile	Alert	Weak	Negative	Very high	Medium	3.1
Myanmar	Conflict	High	Fragile	Alert	Weak	N/A	High	Low	3.0
Nigeria	Conflict	High	Fragile	Alert	Weak	Negative	Very high	Low	3.2
Tanzania	None	Moderate	Fragile	Warning	Moderate	Negative	High	Medium	3.5
Categories	Conflict; Fragile	Little/no; Low; Moderate; Serious; High; Extreme	Fragile; Extremely fragile	Sustainable; Stable; Warning; Alert	Very good; Good; Moderate; Weak; Failed	Negative to positive values	Very low; low; medium; high; very high	Very low; Low; Medium; High; Very High	Low (1) to high (6) range

Source: Author's presentation of data from fragility indices

Most of the DEEP countries listed in Table 1 also experience conflict and violence. Some examples of the types of violence present in each country over the last decade are listed in Table 2. From this, we observe that riots, demonstrations and election-based violence are common across most DEEP countries. Farmer-pastoral conflicts are also observed especially in West and Eastern African states. Alongside this is a range of violent conflict events and fatalities, especially high in parts of Ethiopia, Mozambique, Myanmar and Nigeria as a share of the population. Again, as mentioned earlier, a large part of the conflicts are subnational, for example, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, Rakhine in Myanmar, or northeast Nigeria.

Table 2: Examples of conflict over the last decade in DEEP countries

Country	Types of conflict over the last decade	\$2.15 poverty estimate
Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cox's Bazaar- but minimal conflict related to the Rohingya crisis, instead more crime (e.g. theft, prostitution) • Political violence (e.g. riots, election violence), attacks on civilians 	13.5% (2016)
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jammu & Kashmir cross-border violence • Political unrest in northeast • Naxal-Maoist insurgency • Demonstrations- e.g. Cow protection, Farm laws, Citizenship Amendment Act, election violence 	27.0% (2015/16)
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tigray conflict- TPLF vs federal government, extended to Amhara and Afar • Anti-government insurgencies across the country • Demonstrations around general elections • Farmer-pastoralist conflicts 	10.0% (2019/20)
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent raids and attacks by Dahalo/ 'bandits'- rural attacks and cattle rustling • Local community mob justice 	80.7% (2012/13)
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islamist militants in north-east Cabo Delgado • Ruling party (FRELIMO) and opposition (RENAMO)- political violence and protests, though decentralisation deal • Election-related riots and protests 	2.0% (2017)
Myanmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military coup and violence, demonstrations, riots, protests • Suppression of peaceful dissent • Political violence in Rakhine and Shan, Rohingya 	64.6% (2014/15)
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast • Communal militia activity in north-central and northwest- e.g. cattle rustling, kidnapping, pillaging • Inter-communal conflict (north-central and northwest)- bandits, Fulani militia in Middle Belt, farmer herder conflicts 	30.9% (2018/19)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islamist-related activity- Al Shabaab militants • Unidentified armed groups- violence vs civilian political targets • Magufuli's presidency- ban on protests/ riots, limited civic space • Farmer-herder conflicts 	45.0% (2018)

Data sources: conflict information from ACLED (2017; 2018a-e; 2022), poverty data based on latest available household survey years from Poverty and Inequality Platform (2023)

Evidence from leading policy and investment areas

A selection of leading policy and investment areas discussed in the literature are outlined below, which vary in their coverage and balance of cross-country compared to country-level evidence. There is also a notable division between the humanitarian and development literature despite a history of attempting to join the discourses in humanitarian-development-peace (“Nexus”) thinking. We structure the results into four key areas that loosely represent dimensions presented in Figure 5: 1) the humanitarian-development peace nexus which includes consideration of the wider context affected by politics, security, and environmental risk spanning the remit of the nexus, 2) economic interventions, 3) social and human capital interventions, and 4) the need for a portfolio approach.

Humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus

Operationalisation of the nexus

The relief to reconstruction continuum, the Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development focus, resilience approaches, conflict-sensitive approaches to development and humanitarian assistance, and the triple HDP nexus today all reflect a similar focus (Macrae, 2001; Barakat and Larson, 2014; Chandler, 2015; Goodhand, 2010; ICVA, 2017). This attempt to provide an integrated approach to reducing vulnerability (including vulnerability to poverty) and enhancing the resilience of populations in crisis contexts. What is novel about the HDP nexus compared to its predecessors is a renewed focus on system change to address interdependent vulnerabilities of people who are placed at the centre of this approach, emphasizing the importance of conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding³, and attempts to integrate gender equality, climate change and other considerations across the nexus (Oxfam, 2019; OECD, 2022b).

Though the nexus is widely covered in the literature, until recently there have been few examples of the operationalisation of the HDP nexus. This is attributed to conceptual, institutional, funding and strategic gaps, and limited capacity for coordination (Hinds, 2015). To address this shortcoming, promotion by international agencies of the “New Way of Working” (NWOW) identifies the need for humanitarian and development actors to work together over multiple years, based on comparative advantages and with local partners, towards collective outcomes to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience (OCHA, 2017; OCHA, 2018). In practice, the focus on localisation has been complicated by challenges in defining the local, especially given the elite capture of local processes, and the ‘hybridisation’ of the local with different levels of engagement (Barakat and Milton, 2020).

³ Peacebuilding “is aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict and therefore encompasses a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms” (UNSC S/PRST/2001/5).

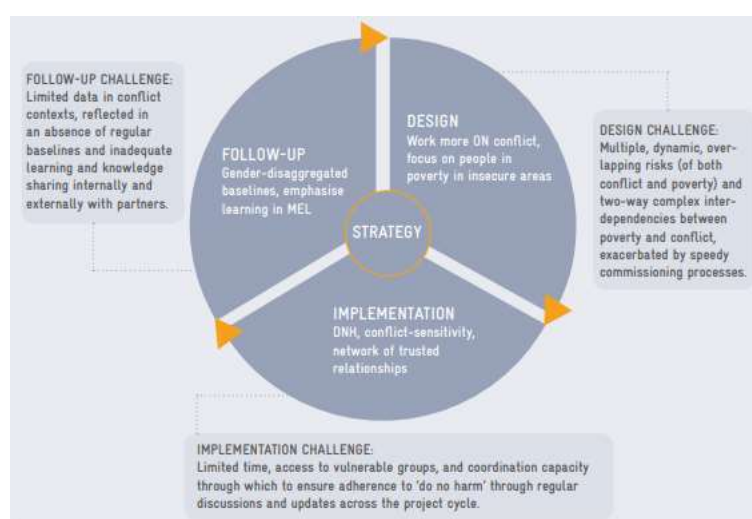
Some accordion approaches in the development sphere incorporate a HDP framing and that relate explicitly to poverty reduction. For example, the Joint Emergency Operation is built around Ethiopia’s PSNP expansion in times of crisis to reach additional programme participants (USAID, 2022). Similarly, Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme was established by DFID in partnership with humanitarian actors and the private sector and aims to reduce the population’s dependence on emergency relief by scaling up transfers during drought (EU, 2018). However, the peacebuilding component remains limited. More generally:

“Whether and how disaster risk management processes can harness opportunities for dealing with climate- and hazard-related disasters in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and whether joint disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding and conflict prevention outcomes are viable, remains under-explored” (Peters et al., 2020)

Peacebuilding approaches

There is a lot more to be done to strengthen the focus of peacebuilding within the HDP nexus and connect it further with development objectives, including poverty eradication. To support the embedding of peacebuilding within the HDP nexus, based on an analysis of a subset of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (including Nigeria amongst DEEP countries), some donors prioritise working both ‘in’ and ‘on’ conflict within poverty reduction interventions (Figure 6). The former involves conflict-sensitive strategies, while the latter considers the promotion of peace and security within or next to poverty-reduction measures more explicitly, such that these measures can address drivers and causes of fragility.

Figure 6: Challenges and project strategies for poverty reduction in FCVS



Source: Diwakar et al., 2020

Within nexus approaches, a prioritisation of conflict and political economy analysis in the design of interventions tend to be the exception rather than the rule (OECD, 2022b). Yet political settlements that expand institutional representation can be particularly impactful in

the resolution of conflicts (Jones et al., 2012). However, there are gaps in evidence such as on interventions targeting women as actors of peacebuilding (Lwamba et al., 2022). The development of anti-discrimination or affirmative action measures to reduce horizontal and other inequalities is also sometimes embedded in these efforts. For example, in post-conflict contexts, descriptive representation through quotas and other forms of affirmative action was observed to contribute to increasing the role of women in civil life, and when coupled with political will and policies helped promote gender equality (Debuscher and Ansoms, 2013). However, women have been included in donor interventions primarily as passive participants, rather than active agents contributing to peacebuilding (OECD, 2017).

Economic development

Labour market programmes

The World Bank (2011) has suggested that ‘strengthening legitimate institutions and governance to provide citizen security, justice, and jobs is crucial to break cycles of violence’ (p. 2). However, the link between unemployment and insurgent violence is contested; in many cases, it may be ethnic discrimination in labour markets, or poor and exploitative working conditions that create the conditions for violence (Cramer, 2010). Similarly, the inverted causal chain of a link between employment creation and stability is also weakly evidenced and primarily theoretical (Holmes et al., 2013; Blattman and Ralston, 2015).

Lessons from the literature on job creation interventions in FCVS suggest that projects should promote links to longer-term market solutions, for example through skills development, providing adequate financial and complementary resources, and linking to national priorities in a wider plan for reconstruction, development and rehabilitation (Blattman and Ralston, 2015; Brück et al., 2021). In this process, interventions should engage with markets, not just on the demand side but also around job supply, working conditions, and employee-employer relations (Mallet and Pain, 2017). Amongst these interventions, cash-for-work, as well as cash, capital goods and livestock have strong potential to enhance people’s earning potential (Blattman and Ralston, 2015). Capital can help relieve constraints to the growth of informal enterprises and activities, characterising a majority of livelihoods in FCVS and amongst people in poverty. Some research suggests that skills training alone may have modest impacts or with costs that far exceed benefits, though combined with capital offers the potential in increasing incomes (Blattman and Ralston, 2015).

Labour market interventions in FCVS moreover need to be distinguished from other contexts in terms of the population groups they encompass. A characteristic of FCVS is that many people may be displaced, and displaced populations may experience poor labour market outcomes (Sarzin, 2021). Ex-combatant reintegration programs also need to be considered, and here too an emphasis on capital is likely to have higher returns than a focus on skills

alone (Blattman and Ralston, 2015). Finally, interventions that support women's economic empowerment in FCVS are observed on average to produce positive outcomes such as increasing women's access to resources, use of financial services, and enhancing their representation in politics (Lwamba et al., 2022). However, these programmes have generally failed to address structural barriers to women's control of resources and economic participation (OECD, 2017).

Macroeconomic and business climate

Reforms for macroeconomic stability rely on a range of interventions including strengthening core PFM systems, reinforcing transparency and accountability, developing capacity to regulate the banking sector and improving domestic resource mobilisation to finance more public investments and provide basic services (IMF, 2022; Geda, 2017). A focus on distributional aspects of these interventions has been stressed for FCVS, through activities that help reduce poverty and inequality, such as via spending and infrastructure development related to health, education, and social protection (IMF, 2022; White, 2020). Given that macroeconomic shocks may persist, insurance mechanisms could be a good use of aid by providing short-term liquidity in times of need (LSE et al., 2018).

Business environment reforms (BERs) can also improve the economic climate. These generally focus on reducing transaction costs of doing business, reducing risks, increasing the certainty of government regulation, and reducing entry barriers (Luiz et al., 2019). BERs are perceived to spur the growth of the private sector (Fisher, 2015) and decrease infrastructure gaps, and in doing so promote economic development and poverty reduction in FCVS (White and Fortune, 2015). An analysis of BERs in four FCVS (including Ethiopia among DEEP countries) found that though these have reduced transaction costs, they were affected by institutional capacity and political economy constraints that created inefficiencies and promoted elite capture. Instead, BERs that were most effective had started by establishing security, followed by political commitments and developing the capability to implement reforms (McIntosh and Buckley, 2015; Luiz et al., 2019). Across this focus, prioritising BERs for areas in which people in poverty are typically engaged, such as around smallholders and subsistence farmers, and for the urban poor and women in poverty, are observed to increase human development and spur poverty reduction (Luiz et al., 2019).

Contextual knowledge including the underlying power dynamics is critical across these areas. "Once the economic, market and political context is well understood, it is much easier to define interventions that work with capable officials or willing businesses" (McKechnie et al., 2018). Thinking and working politically in these environments can help secure people-centred outcomes (Mallet and Pain, 2017). Interventions that acknowledge these factors have contributed to successes in private sector development in conflict-affected economies, such as in mobile phone usage in Afghanistan, breweries in Burundi and Kenya, and the

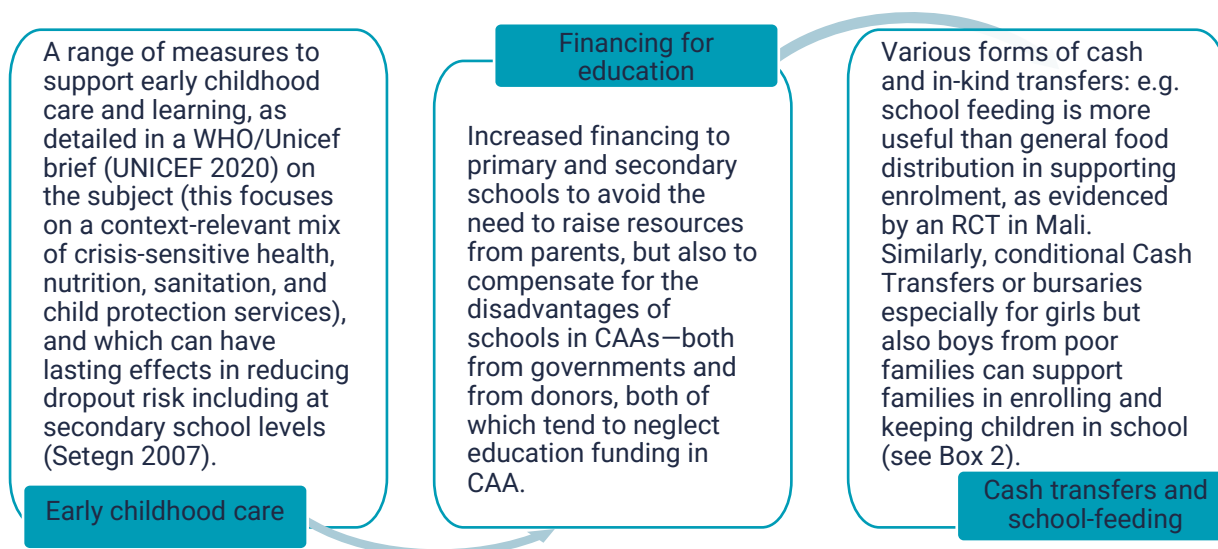
development of the local construction industry in Liberia helping overcome a key binding constraint to economic growth (McKechnie et al., 2018).

Social Inclusion and human capital

Inclusive education

A range of interventions can help mitigate the negative impacts of conflict and fragility on education for children in poor households. In terms of demand for education, key measures include early childhood care and education, school feeding plus measures to support household finances to reduce dropout risk (Figure 7), enhancing the quality of learning, a focus on girls' education, and support for transitions of vulnerable children and young adults from schools into the labour market or self-employment (Shepherd et al., 2021). There has also been a stronger focus in recent years on gender parity in education in conflict-affected contexts, for example through financial and in-kind support, which has improved girls' access to education (INEE, 2021).

Figure 7: Examples of measures to limit dropout risk in FCVS



Source: Shepherd et al., 2021

In FCVS, schools may be damaged or co-opted by conflict parties (Justino, 2016). This draws attention to the supply-side provisions for safety and security that need to be upheld in these contexts (GCPEA, 2020), alongside improving infrastructure, resources and quality, teacher training, and addressing distributional effects (Shepherd et al., 2021). On quality, community-based education and participatory community monitoring may help improve academic achievement (Burde et al., 2015), alongside improved teacher support that includes counselling services (Karamperidou et al., 2020). Sustainable peacebuilding in education is also an approach that can help the quality of learning over the longer term (Novelli et al., 2017). Finally, supply-side interventions to promote gender parity in learning

have also focused on community participation to deliver gender-sensitive education, alternative education models (e.g. accelerated programs or vocational training), and targeted strategies to mitigate school-related GBV, for example through safe means of transport, protective walls around schools, and social norm change (Pereznieto et al., 2017).

Health systems

There has been increasing focus on health systems in FCVS (Woodward et al., 2016; Bertone et al., 2019), reflecting the link between fragility, conflict and ill health, as well as poverty (Bwirire et al., 2022). Given the high share of out-of-pocket payments from households in FCVS that in turn drive impoverishment, some interventions focus on abolishing user fees or providing exemptions, though this is challenging where public funding for health facilities is weak (Bertone et al., 2019). Other interventions centre on multi-sectoral approaches to break cycles of poverty, for example by incorporating economic components into public health interventions (Bwirire et al., 2022). Free care for vulnerable groups including refugees and IDPs is sometimes prioritised in reducing health inequalities, and vulnerable populations' access to these services can be enhanced through community participation. Support for refugees and IDPs though may exist through parallel systems funded externally, where such modalities have put pressure on national health financing (WHO EMRO, 2018).

The literature on social health insurance in FCVS is limited, though some studies suggest that this can be a strategy where insurance systems are already established (Spiegel, 2018). Evidence of other modalities, such as health equity funds and demand-side financing (e.g. vouchers, CCTs) are also limited, though cash transfers more broadly are increasingly adopted in FCVS. Performance-based financing is increasingly common in FCVS, though may have only had partial improvements in quality for some services (Bertone et al., 2019). The basic packages of the health services model are commonly studied and implemented in many FCVS, though coverage remains low (Frost et al., 2016). Moreover, what constitutes this emergency package may vary, and factors like services for mental health, trauma and SGBV are not always included in these packages though remain critical health concerns in FCVS (Bertone et al., 2019; Bwirire et al., 2022). Relatedly, health system interventions in conflict-affected contexts have been largely gender-blind, which limits their role in contributing to more equitable societies (Percival et al., 2018).

Social protection

Social protection is a common tool used to reduce poverty. In FCVS, there is nascent literature on the use of social protection to understand what works, for whom and why. These identify large geographic and sectoral gaps, for example in terms of social and psychological areas of wellbeing (Brück et al., 2019). A systematic review of cash-based approaches in humanitarian and emergency settings found that unconditional cash transfers were effective in increasing household savings and assets, while cash, as well as

food transfer vouchers, improved food security amidst food insecurity and drought (Doocy and Tappis, 2016). However, food distribution on its own can lead to trade-offs in human development; for example, one study in Mali found it to contribute to declines in school attendance over time especially for boys, though the role of school feeding programs conditional on school attendance still was associated with improved attendance (Aurina et al., 2019).

There are also sector-specific benefits of social protection. In education, for example, cash and voucher assistance in FCVS can help households purchase supplies for schools, cover fees and support transport costs, thus preventing dropouts and increasing school attendance (GEC, 2019). However, a range of challenges constrain the effectiveness of social protection as a modality to improve people's well-being, including limited financial sustainability and weak governance and transparency (Andrews et al., 2012). There are also sector- and population-specific challenges such as discrimination of children who are displaced, the lack of documentation to enrol, or limited school capacity to receive displaced children, which means that social protection on its own may have limited effects and so needs to be linked with other interventions (Shepherd et al., 2021).

Social protection has also been used as a peace-building tool. For example, post-conflict Nepal expanded its social protection coverage and targeted conflict-affected regions in this process. However, it did not always benefit the poorest. Even so, there is some evidence to suggest that social protection measures like subsidies and categorical cash benefits can help mitigate political tensions (Ovadiya et al., 2015). Social protection may also play a role in mitigating the risk of conflict. India's NREGA was found to protect households from income shocks due to changing rainfall patterns, and in doing so lower the probability of Naxal violence (Fetzer, 2019). However, the mechanism of impact is unclear, even though this large-scale employment program did impact the intensity of violence.

Flexible portfolio approach

Given the myriad of ways through which FCV could affect poverty and vice versa, a portfolio approach that responds to different sources of impoverishment in FCVS is appropriate. Which aspects of a portfolio approach to prioritise, and by who and when, then becomes a key question, especially in FCVS characterised by weak capacity alongside wider resource constraints. Approaches can be integrated by including different components to address drivers of impoverishment, or there could also be layered projects that benefit similar populations. Such approaches could consider whether areas or states are in chronic conflict, newly experienced conflict, or are in post-conflict recovery periods (Diwakar, 2023a; Corral et al., 2020). Projects within portfolio approaches could be organisation-specific, area-specific, cross-donor, and/or cross-institutional, making efforts where possible to open up the space for discussion around reforms with the government (Diwakar et al., 2020).

The ways in which programs or policies are implemented are also a key consideration in FCVS. Portfolios could be flexible, prioritising adaptive management, with activities that can be implemented simultaneously or sequentially in a longer-term perspective (Diwakar et al., 2020). The focus on adaptive management within FCVS suggests that this can apply to different stages of a project cycle. For example, adaptive management could be integrated into programme design and procurement that incentivises adaptation, and through technical and operational management, with programme staff having competencies in adaptive planning alongside technical skills. Including commercial and financial arrangements for example through agile pots of funding is another way to ensure these processes are adequately resourced (Green, 2019).

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