Unit 3: Politics of Learning

The political economy approach suggests that there are political dynamics to both supporting and hampering successful education reform and a sustained improvement in learning. This unit will focus on the political, social, institutional and historical environment in which education systems are embedded. Understanding the variation in successful adoption and delivery of reforms across countries - and within countries over-time across political regimes - requires a deeper understanding of the power relations among a broad range of interest groups - and priorities, incentives, and decisions of politicians, governments and policy makers.

The students will learn about the frameworks developed to understand the ways in which politics can impact education outcomes and the channels of impact. Political economy studies from different countries will be referenced.

After completing the unit, students should:
- Know how political dynamics impact adoption of reforms, and contribute to the same reforms having varied effects across different regions.
- Know how local stakeholder politics and interests play out - why are some reforms implemented and others blocked by different stakeholders (including teachers, principals, grassroots bureaucrats, students, parents, community leaders).
- Be able to articulate the notion of political will and what that means in terms of the envisioning and achievement of the human development project, and understand the importance of leaders declaring education/learning a priority.
- Understand how politics plays a part in what gets financed.
- Learn about the politics of learning vs the politics of schooling.

Required Readings

https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198835684.001.0001/oso-9780198835684-chapter-1

https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198824053.001.0001/oso-9780198824053

Further reading

