

Introduction to the Resource Pack

Over the last decade there has been a growing realisation that humanitarian assistance sometimes feeds conflict rather than alleviates it, and that development aid sometimes exacerbates tensions. This has led to the development of tools to understand the relationship between programming and conflict.

This Resource Pack seeks to document current practice, available frameworks and lessons learned. At its heart is the concept of “conflict sensitivity” – the notion of systematically taking into account both the positive and negative impact of interventions, in terms of conflict or peace dynamics, on the contexts in which they are undertaken, and, conversely, the impact of these contexts on the interventions (see **Chapter 1** for definitions).

The first edition of the Resource Pack is the result of extensive consultations on conflict sensitivity undertaken in Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka by a consortium of Southern and Northern NGOs, during 2002-2003. Input has been received in the form of:

- extensive mapping of conflict sensitive practice in these three countries among development, humanitarian and peace building actors
- discussions with representatives from government, civil society and donors both on the proposed structure and content of the Resource Pack
- further feedback on various drafts of the Pack.

Similar processes were undertaken beyond these three countries with the headquarters of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding organisations, and experts in the field of conflict prevention.

The project has made great efforts to reach out and raise awareness on conflict sensitivity, as well as to record indigenous and international practice. Through this work and the partnerships it has engendered, the project has provided a bridge between North and South, involving southern agencies not as mere recipients of conflict sensitive knowledge, but as shapers of the conflict sensitivity agenda.

The partner organisations are grateful for the feedback they have received, and invite further comments on the current edition. A subsequent edition is envisaged incorporating lessons learned and further applications of conflict-sensitive approaches. Additional resources such as a trainers guide to supplement this Resource Pack will also be produced. More information on the project progress and activities in Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka can be found at: www.pcia.fewer.org.

1. Understanding conflict

Central to this Resource Pack and the concept of conflict sensitivity is the definition of *conflict*.

Conflict is an ambiguous concept that takes on different meanings for different groups and in different contexts. In particular, conflict tends to be understood as a negative phenomenon, synonymous with violence. Within the framework of the Resource Pack, a broader and more positive approach to understanding conflict has been adopted: it regards conflict as a natural multidimensional phenomenon that is typically indicative of change within society. In this sense, the issue of prevention will focus primarily on the prevention of *violent conflict*, or the need to strengthen structures, processes and mechanisms within society that enable the peaceful and constructive management of differences.

Conflict occurs when two or more parties believe that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes or take action that damages other parties’ ability to pursue their interests. It becomes violent when parties no longer seek to attain their goals peacefully, but resort instead to violence in one form or another.

Violent conflicts are thus not inevitable, nor do they happen overnight; conflict is a dynamic process, which may take differing forms and run through various stages of escalation and de-escalation, resulting from the complex combination and overlap of the various causes of conflict (see **Chapter 2**). The Resource Pack is concerned with the spectrum of conflict intensity from structural violence to violent conflict (see Box 1).

BOX 1

The spectrum of conflict intensity

Conflict is a complex term that is often used interchangeably with ‘violence’. The Resource Pack approach understands conflict as a “multi-dimensional social phenomena¹” essential to social change, and transformation. Conflict may be *violent* or *latent*; the latter is often referred to as *structural violence*.

Violent conflict is used to describe acts of open hostility. In conflict theory it is but one stage of a dynamic conflict cycle, which may proceed from a situation of tensions, escalation, crisis phase (manifestations of violence), possibly resulting

in a stalemate or de-escalation. A de-escalation may lead to a settlement/resolution and reconstruction/reconciliation, or alternatively to an unstable peace.

Latent conflict is used to describe situations of tensions, which may escalate into violence. One form of latent conflict is *structural violence*, defined by Galtung to describe situations where unequal, unjust and unrepresentative structures prevent humans from realising their full potential, thus extending the definition of violence beyond direct physical harm to the organization of society².

Note: **Chapter 2** builds on this spectrum of conflict intensity and describes the various causes of conflict.

2. About the Resource Pack

The Resource Pack is designed for governments, donors and civil society (local and international) involved in development, humanitarian assistance and peace building. It does not assume that the reader has extensive knowledge of conflict transformation nor is it an academic discussion of conflict and related concepts.

Its primary concern is to provide an understanding of current practice, available frameworks and lessons learned in relation to conflict sensitivity. It is a broad umbrella capturing different approaches such as ‘Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment’ (PCIA) and ‘Do No Harm’, as well as less-known organic approaches developed by practitioners in the South. In this sense, it does not offer new tools but rather presents broad recommendations on conflict-sensitive practice that organisations will need to further adapt in the light of their operating context, their needs, and their operational structures.

The Resource Pack is organised in separate stand-alone units and does not need to be read from cover to cover. It is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: An Introduction to conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding provides an operational definition of conflict sensitivity and related principles. It situates conflict sensitivity within the current debates in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and peace building.

Chapter 2: Conflict analysis describes what is in effect the central component of conflict sensitivity. Building on a compendium of tools and the lessons learned from their application, the chapter presents key elements of conflict analysis, and guidance on how to undertake it.

Chapter 3: Applying conflict sensitivity at project and programme level defines the project cycle, linking the conflict analysis to each constituent step of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It describes how to undertake each step in a conflict-sensitive fashion, and the major challenges faced in doing so.

Chapter 4: Integrating conflict sensitivity into sectoral approaches defines sector-wide approaches and presents a framework for integrating conflict sensitivity into the programming cycle.

Chapter 5: Institutional capacity building for conflict sensitivity recommends processes and strategies for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in implementing organisations and their partners.

3. Acknowledgements

The Resource Pack is drawn from diverse sources, including organisations that participated in our workshops and mapping process and commented on the various drafts in Kenya, Uganda, Sri Lanka and beyond. We are hugely indebted to these sources for their energy, input and enthusiasm. We are also grateful for the guidance and support provided by the Steering Committee and the project donors: **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**, **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**, **The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Minbuza)**, **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)** and **Styrelsen för Internationellt Utvecklingssamarbete (SIDA)**.

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4. Glossary

Actors	Individuals, groups and institutions who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to conflict; and / or • are affected by conflict (in a positive or negative manner); and/or • are engaged in dealing with conflict.
Advocacy	Third party entreaties to external decision makers and power brokers.
Advocacy campaigns	Campaigns that raise awareness about particular issues (eg landmines) or conditions, and aim to bring about policy changes ³ .
Beneficiaries	Participants in and recipients of interventions by the national or international community. (A controversial term that some practitioners find objectionable).
Capacities	Actors’ potential to affect the context, positively or negatively. Potential can be defined in terms of resources, access, social networks and constituencies, other support and alliances, etc.
Causes (3 types)	Factors which contribute to people’s grievances. Causes may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Structural</i>: pervasive factors that have become built into the policies, structures and fabric of a society and which may create the pre-conditions for violent conflict • <i>Proximate</i>: factors contributing to a climate conducive to violent conflict or its further escalation • <i>Triggers</i>: single key acts, events, or their anticipation that will set off or escalate violent conflict.
Civil Society	A domain parallel to, but separate from the state and the market, in which citizens freely group together according to their own interests. It can include for example non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, religious bodies, professional associations, trade unions, student groups, cultural societies, etc ⁴ .
Conflict	The result of parties disagreeing eg about the distribution of material or symbolic resources and acting on the basis of these perceived incompatibilities ⁵ .
Conflict (Violent)	Resort to psychological or physical force to resolve a disagreement.
Conflict Prevention	Actions, policies, procedures or institutions intended to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle political disputes, or to avoid the recurrence of violent conflict ⁶ .
Conflict sensitivity	This means the ability of your organisation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the context in which you operate; • understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and • act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

	<i>Note: the word 'context' is used rather than 'conflict' to make the point that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. 'Conflict' is sometimes erroneously confused with macro-political violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor).</i>
Context	The operating environment, which ranges from the micro to the macro level (eg community, district / province, region(s), country, neighbouring countries). For the purposes of this Resource Pack, context means a geographic or social environment where conflict exists (see the Introduction for a description of the various elements in the conflict spectrum) and is comprised of actors, causes, profile and dynamics.
Development	Long-term efforts aimed at bringing improvements in the economic, political and social status, environmental stability and the quality of life of all segments of the population ⁷ .
Donor	An institution that provides grants and other forms of financial contribution or assistance in kind to organisations such as governments, and civil society (local and international). A donor may be a bilateral agency (eg CIDA in Canada), a multilateral agency (e.g. the World Bank or the UN) or a philanthropic organisation (e.g. foundations) ⁸ . Some NGOs and INGOs periodically assume a donor-like role.
Dynamics	The interaction between the conflict profile, the actors, and causes.
Evaluation	A one-off assessment that typically takes place at the end of a project, although it can also be undertaken as a mid-project review. On the basis of systematically applied objective criteria, it seeks to assess an on-going or completed project, its design, implementation and overall results in relation to its stated goals and objectives.
Evaluation (conflict sensitive)	This incorporates a detailed understanding of the operating context in terms of historical, actual or potential conflict into traditional evaluation activities and processes. Conflict sensitive evaluations are used to understand the overall impact a given intervention has had on this context, and the context on the intervention. These evaluations can then be used to adjust subsequent phases of an ongoing initiative, or gain lessons for future initiatives.
Fungibility	Refers to the fact that donor funding of a project that government would have undertaken anyway (even if donor funding were not available) has the effect of freeing government resources to be used for other purposes (eg military) ⁹ .
Goals	Actors' long term objectives.
Government	The machinery or system of rules that exercises public authority over a given territory. Governments operate at various levels – eg national, regional, provincial, district. Governments seek to determine and implement public policy, to defend the country and maintain order, and to provide public services. They are responsible for raising revenue and managing public expenditure. <i>Note: Where the formal machinery of government has broken down, authority may be exercised by others (eg local warlords) who assume the role of the governing power.</i>
Humanitarian Assistance	Activities designed to rapidly reduce human suffering in emergency situations, especially when provided by outside agencies to supplement local efforts ¹⁰ .
Impacts – Negative / Positive	These describe an interaction in terms of its contribution to exacerbating or mitigating violence or the potential for violence.
Implementation	The process of realising objectives by enacting the activities designed in the planning process – the operationalisation of the proposal. Implementation involves regular progress reviews to enable plans to be adjusted if necessary.
Implementation (Conflict Sensitive)	Conflict-sensitive implementation involves close scrutiny of the operational context through regularly updating the conflict analysis, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the context.
Indicators (conflict)	Specify what to measure in order to monitor and evaluate the evolution of conflict factors and dynamics that impact a given context.
Indicators (interaction)	Specify what to measure in order to monitor and evaluate the interaction between a project or intervention and conflict factors and dynamics.

Indicators (project / intervention)	Specify what to measure in order to monitor and evaluate the performance of policies, projects and programmes ¹¹ .
Interaction	This refers to the two-way relationship between an intervention and the context in which it is situated, ie the impact of the intervention on the context and the impact of the context on the intervention.
Interests	The underlying motivations of the actors.
Intervention	This refers to a range of activities, falling within one or other of the categories listed in Chapter 1 Box 1 . An intervention can be very small (eg helping villagers build wells) or very large (eg a peace process or setting up a new government structure). It may be at project level (see Chapter 3) or at sectoral level (see Chapter 4).
Management (project / programme)	Management involves supervising the entire process of implementation and making operational decisions. Good management requires the ability to see the bigger picture: how all the elements of the intervention, its operational context and the interaction between the two, fit together.
Monitoring	The regular process of examining a project's actual outputs and impacts. Carried out during the implementation phase, monitoring seeks to provide the project team with current information that will allow them to assess progress in meeting project objectives, and to adjust implementation activities if necessary. Additionally, monitoring generates data that can be used for evaluation purposes.
Monitoring (conflict sensitive)	Conflict-sensitive monitoring incorporates an understanding of conflict actors, profile, causes and dynamics into traditional monitoring processes and activities, with the intention of better understanding the context and the intervention, as well as the interaction between the two. Conflict-sensitive monitoring is used to inform adjustments and changes to project or programme activities so that the intervention has the optimum impact on conflict dynamics.
Partnership environment	The relationships between different stakeholders who are working together.
Peacebuilding	Measures designed to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of mediating conflict, and to strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the necessary conditions for sustained peace ¹² .
Planning	The process through which certain problems are identified, their causal linkages analysed, and effective solutions developed. The result of this process is often embodied in a programme designed with predefined objectives, activities, implementation process and verifiable indicators of progress.
Planning – Conflict sensitive	Conflict-sensitive planning incorporates the conflict analysis (the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of a conflict situation) into traditional planning. The intention is to have a constructive impact on the context to avoid further deterioration and promote more peaceful and effective solutions.
Positions	Refer to the actors' stances on key and emerging issues in a given context.
Profile	A brief characterisation of the context within which the intervention will be situated.
Programme	A proposed plan with a medium to long-term horizon and possibly without a defined end, often incorporating strategic objectives, multiple projects and activities ¹³ .
Project	A set of time-bound activities typically contributing to a larger programmatic objective, which are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated in relation to issue(s) that they seek to address ¹⁴ .
Project Cycle	Provides a systematic framework for the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes ¹⁵ .
Region	A geo-politically defined area at the sub-national level (eg an area comprising several districts). Also used to refer to a collection of contiguous countries (eg the Eastern region of Africa).
Relationships	The interactions between actors at various levels, and their perception of these interactions.
Rights-based Approach	A conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. Essentially, it integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development ¹⁶ .

Scenarios	Provide an assessment of what will happen next in a given context according to a specific timeframe.
Sector	A part or division (eg of the national economy: private sector, public sector, education sector). In the context of Sectoral or Sector-wide approaches, a core government function, which is related to a particular ministry and spending programme (eg health, education and roads) ¹⁷ .
Spoilers	Individuals and organisations that believe peace threatens their power, worldview and interests, and who seek to undermine attempts to achieve it ¹⁸ .
Triangulation	The verification of each piece of information with at least two corroborative or complementary sources, to obtain data that eventually “matches up”.

5.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries
APFO	Africa Peace Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CECORE	Center for Conflict Resolution
CHA	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCA	Common Country Assessment framework
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EU	European Union
FEWER	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response
GTZ	Ministry of Technical Cooperation (Germany)
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Horn of Africa countries)
INGO	International NGO
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Nigeria)
LICUS	Low Income Countries Under Stress
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCA	Strategic Conflict Assessment
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

6. Endnotes

¹International Alert, *Resource Pack for Conflict Transformation*, London: March 2003 section 2:3.

²International Alert, 2003: 5.

³Adapted from Alex P. Schmid, “Thesaurus and Glossary of Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Terms” (Abridged Version), Synthesis Foundation / FEWER, May 1998.

⁴Adapted from Stephen Jones and Gareth Williams, “A Common Language for Managing Official Development Assistance: A Glossary of ODA Terms”, Oxford Policy Management, 2002.

⁵International Alert, 2003: section 2:3.

⁶Schmid, 1998.

⁷Adapted from Payson Conflict Study Group, “A Glossary on Violent Conflict: Terms and concepts used in conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution in the context of disaster relief and sustainable development”, 4th Edition, Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer, Tulane University, May 2001: 24.

⁸Adapted from National Philanthropic Trust, “Glossary” www.nptrust.org/.

⁹Jones, 2002:9.

¹⁰Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins, *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World politics and the dilemmas of help*. Boulder, Co: Westview, 1996: 219. Alex P. Schmid, “Thesaurus And Glossary of Early Warning And Conflict Prevention Terms (Abridged Version), FEWER, May 1998: 15.

¹¹Jones, 2002.

¹²Adapted from International Alert, 2003.

¹³Adapted from Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, “Glossary of Terms” www.osi.hu.

¹⁴Adapted from www.osi.hu and Polaris Grant, “Glossary” www.polarisgrants.org.

¹⁵Jones, 2002:4.

¹⁶<http://www.unhcr.ch/development/approaches-04.html>

¹⁷Jones, 2002: 12.

¹⁸Adapted from Payson Conflict Study Group, 2001: 68.

An introduction to conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding

Purpose of chapter

This chapter explains

- what is meant by conflict sensitivity
- who needs to have it, and when
- how to place conflict sensitivity within development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding, and current debates within these fields

Who should read it

All those with responsibility for, or interest in, development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding, in areas at risk of or affected by violent conflict.

Why they should read it

To understand the relevance of conflict sensitivity within the framework of their work, even where it may appear foreign to their fields of intervention.

To help them situate conflict sensitivity within their policies and operations.

To enable them to see that conflict sensitivity is not necessarily a new approach, or an additional component to their work.

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 3. Humanitarian assistance and conflict
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 5. Peacebuilding and conflict
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1. Introduction to key concepts

1.1 Some definitions

Conflict sensitivity

This means the ability of your organisation to:

- understand the context in which you operate;
- understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and
- act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

Note: the word ‘context’ is used rather than ‘conflict’ to make the point that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. ‘Conflict’ is sometimes erroneously confused with macro-political violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor).

Context

This refers to the operating environment, which ranges from the micro to the macro level (eg community, district / province, region(s), country, neighbouring countries). For the purposes of this Resource Pack, context means a geographic or social environment where conflict exists (see the **Introduction** for a description of the various elements in the conflict spectrum) and is comprised of actors, causes, profile and dynamics.

Government

The machinery or system of rules that exercises public authority over a given territory. Governments operate at various levels – national, regional, provincial, district, etc. Governments seek to determine and implement public policy, to defend the country and maintain order, and to provide public services. They are responsible for raising revenue and managing public expenditure.

Note: Where the formal machinery of government has broken down, authority may be exercised by others (eg local warlords) who assume the role of the governing power.

Donor

An institution that provides grants and other forms of financial contribution (or assistance in kind) to organisations such as governments or to civil society (local and international). A donor may be a bilateral agency (eg DFID in the UK), a multilateral agency (eg the World Bank or the UN), a philanthropic organisation (eg a foundation), or an INGO providing funding for a local partner.¹

Civil society

A domain parallel to, but separate from the state and the market, in which citizens freely group together according to their own interests. It encompasses a self-initiated and voluntary sector of formally associated individuals who pursue non-profit purposes in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations, religious bodies, professional associations, trade unions, student groups, cultural societies, etc.²

Intervention

This refers to a range of activities, falling within one or other of the categories listed in Box 1. An intervention can be very small (eg helping villagers build wells) or very large (eg a peace process or setting up a new government structure). It may be at project level (see **Chapter 3**) or at sectoral level (see **Chapter 4**).

BOX 1

Types of intervention

Development

Long-term efforts aimed at bringing improvements in the economic, political and social status, environmental stability and quality of life of the population especially the poor and disadvantaged.

Humanitarian assistance

Activities designed to rapidly reduce human suffering in emergency situations, especially when local authorities are unable or unwilling to provide relief.³

Peacebuilding

Measures designed to consolidate peaceful relations and strengthen viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of mediating conflict, as well as strengthen other mechanisms that will either create or support the creation of necessary conditions for sustained peace.⁴

Interaction

This refers to the two-way relationship between an intervention and the context in which it is situated, ie the impact of the intervention on the context and the impact of the context on the intervention.

Negative / positive impacts

These describe the above interaction, in terms of its contribution to exacerbating or mitigating violence or the potential for violence.

1.2 Operationalising conflict sensitivity

Conflict analysis (explained in detail in **Chapter 2**) is the central component of conflict-sensitive practice. It provides the foundation to inform conflict sensitive programming, in particular in terms of an understanding of the interaction between the intervention and the context. The approach is summarised in Table 1.

The following sequence represents the key stages of understanding the interaction between a project and a given context. The sequence is composed of three elements:

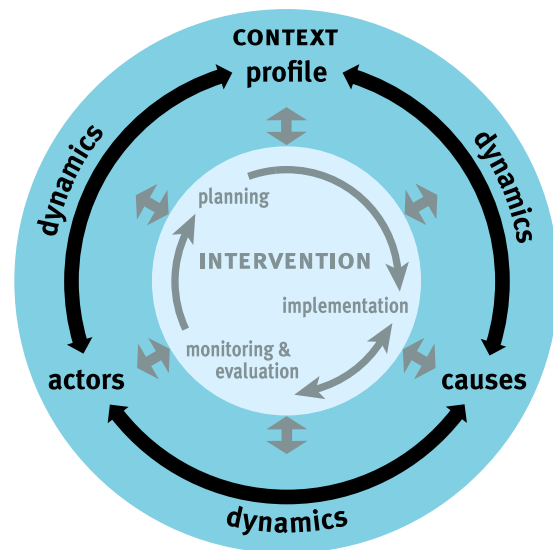


Diagram 1 The outer circle represents a conflict analysis of the pre-existing context, organised as profile, actors, causes and their dynamic interaction (see **Chapter 2**)

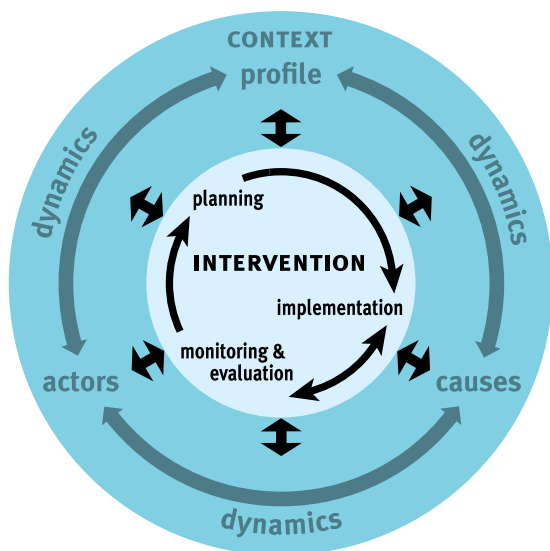


Diagram 2 The inner project circle represents the project cycle of the proposed intervention, organised as planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation components (see Chapter 3)

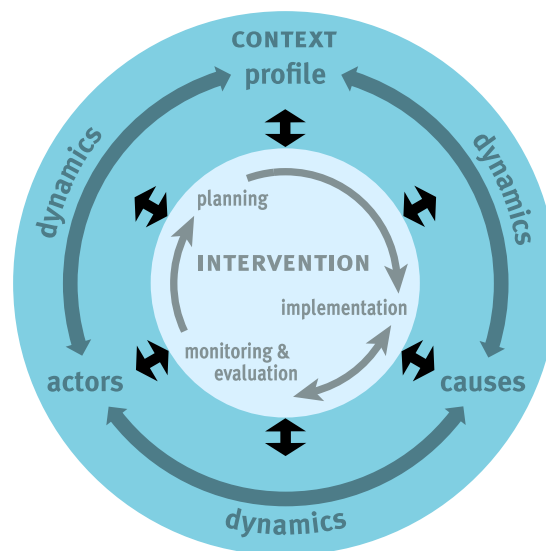


Diagram 3 The large arrows represent the assessment of the interaction between the context, and the project (see Chapter 3)

TABLE 1
The “What” and “How” of conflict sensitivity

What to do	How to do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the context in which you operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a conflict analysis, and update it regularly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link the conflict analysis with the programming cycle of your intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate your intervention in a conflict-sensitive fashion (including redesign when necessary)

Guiding principles

The principles below relate to the process of implementing a conflict-sensitive approach. They may require further qualification, depending on the context.

- Participatory process
- Inclusiveness of actors, issues and perceptions
- Impartiality in relation to actors and issues
- Transparency
- Respect for people’s ownership of the conflict and their suffering
- Accountability for one’s own actions
- Partnership and co-ordination
- Complementarity and coherence
- Timeliness.

Assumptions for those wanting to apply conflict sensitivity

These relate to institutional pre-requisites for conflict sensitivity.

- Willingness and ability to implement conflict sensitivity
- Openness to continuous learning and institutional adaptability to reflect conflict sensitivity
- Ability to deal with uncertainty, as there is no one-fits-all recipe for conflict sensitivity
- Honesty and humility in recognising the extent or limitation of the impact of interventions
- Recognition of the complexity and interdependence of the wider system in which institutions operate.

1.3 Time and resource implications

Integrating conflict sensitivity into development means thinking differently about programming, and adopting a new institutional mind-set. At the outset this may require more resources (both human and financial). Over time, as conflict sensitive practice becomes embedded within the framework, structures and processes of organisations, these resource requirements will decrease. They are in any case not large compared with the potential costs of failing to be sensitive to conflict issues:

- wasting resources on trouble-shooting and fire-fighting
- unsustainable programming
- forced project closure or withdrawal to a safe area
- inability to implement activities or entire projects
- endangering staff and beneficiaries.

Further, an intervention which is not conflict sensitive – even if it meets its objectives in other respects (eg constructing X kilometres of road) – can lead to renewed or exacerbated conflict, which costs human lives and suffering and causes material, institutional and economic damage (see Box 2 and **next section**).

BOX 2

Humanitarian aid gone wrong

The classic example of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding work gone wrong is the case of the Rwanda genocide in 1994.

“By and large, relief agencies had only a very limited understanding of the structures of Rwandese society and very little account had been taken of the views of the beneficiaries in the design and implementation of programmes. ... [During] the first weeks of the refugee crisis ... traditional structures of authority had been used to organize food distribution and very high levels of diversion had occurred and vulnerable groups often received very little. ... Attempts to rectify these failings were met with sometimes violent resistance.”⁵

Even if the food distribution had been more effective, the high levels of insecurity and violence within the refugee camps and the negative impact the camps had on the surrounding populations would have precluded this intervention from being considered a success.

2.

Development and conflict

Conflict sensitivity in development assistance can serve not only to decrease levels of violent conflict or the potential for violent conflict, but also to increase the effectiveness of the assistance. Development assistance without conflict sensitivity can inadvertently encourage conflict, and end up doing more harm than good.

BOX 3

Links between conflict and development

Key findings

- Conflict and violence increase poverty. Poverty is frequently the result of structural violence.
- Conflicts usually emerge as a result of concrete grievances, but individual economic interests (‘war economy’) gain influence during their course. These economic interests are usually major obstacles to making peace.
- Development (generally intended to impact poverty) can help prevent violent conflict, yet sometimes contributes to it.

Key recommendations for conflict-sensitive development

- Address conflict and its causes in order to tackle poverty (conflict analysis, conflict sensitive planning)
- Address the economic dynamics (eg inequality, war economy) fuelling violent conflict (conflict analysis, conflict sensitive planning)
- Identify approaches that will address the potentially conflict-generating impact of development (conflict sensitive project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Since the main objective of development is to eliminate poverty, this section focuses primarily on the interaction between poverty and conflict, and seeks to demonstrate how politically informed poverty reduction and conflict prevention policies can effectively reinforce each other.

Violent conflicts lead to poverty, particularly where protracted and associated with the collapse of state institutions. Beyond their direct consequences (eg military and civilian deaths, displacement and disablement of populations), conflicts have long-term political, economic, environmental and social costs. These include:

- erosion of political institutions
- reduced state capacity to provide basic social services
- destruction of production base
- capital flight

- loss of food production (conflict-related annual agricultural production losses are estimated at 12% across Africa throughout the 1990s⁶)
- destruction or depletion of natural resources
- disruption of social networks.

2.1 Human security and human rights

Pro-poor development has a number of facets. Human security and human rights are key aspects with links to conflict.

BOX 4

Human security

As defined by the United Nations in the mid 1990s, human security embraces the twin objectives of “freedom from fear” (referring to the threat of violence, crime, and war) and “freedom from want” (referring to economic, health, environmental and other threats to people’s well-being).⁷

In a more radical interpretation, individual human security is defined as superseding the security of the state. Such an approach can legitimise military “humanitarian” intervention where the state is unwilling or unable to guarantee the security of its citizens.⁸

A human security approach takes a holistic view of poor people’s needs, increasing the efficacy of development initiatives. Conflict puts both the twin objectives in jeopardy, and by definition the approach demands conflict sensitivity.

BOX 5

A human rights-based approach

This approach explicitly links economic, social and cultural development to the achievement of political and civil rights. It can provide a useful conceptual framework for conflict-sensitive development. Particularly relevant elements of the approach include:

- *holistic approach to poverty*: human rights provide a holistic framework for analysing a given poverty situation, which takes account of political factors, insecurity and conflict. Based on the indivisibility of rights, it helps develop strategies that address the economic, political and security dimensions of poverty in a comprehensive manner
- *conflict and rights*: rights-based development is particularly concerned with poverty that results from inequality and a denial of rights by powerful groups, since this contradicts the principle of universal rights. In violent conflicts, the rights of ordinary people are systematically infringed by the warring parties as well as by all those taking advantage of the conflict to promote their own economic and political interests. The rights-based response aims at enabling people to achieve their rights. This is likely to undermine the power structure on which

conflict has been built. On the face of it that should reduce conflict, but there is the risk that it will provoke elites to fight back to retain the power structure that supports them, with the opposite effect. It is thus clear that a rights-based approach needs to be conflict sensitive *participation and accountability*: a rights-based approach demands that *all* development actors act accountably and encourage participation. Accountability, participation, inclusion and supporting local capacities also represent preconditions for the peaceful management of conflicts. Enhancement of these qualities in the development context should help strengthen society’s capacity to deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner.

2.2 Political economy of conflict

Conflict can benefit certain sectors of society, thus creating vested interests in perpetuating conflict and impeding peace. The political economy of conflict is thus an important consideration in implementing conflict sensitivity.

Many conflicts are understood to have their origin in an unaddressed “grievance”, for example ethnic or religious discrimination, horizontally unequal distribution of resources and dramatic increases in unemployment. Researchers⁹ have recently begun to emphasise the role of “greed” in conflicts, and draw attention to the benefits that accrue from participation in conflict – employment in armed forces, access to scarce resources, power. Rarely is the political economy of conflict clearly delineated as simply “greed” or “grievance”; often, one can observe a shift over time from “grievance” to “greed”.¹⁰ For example insurgents need funds for food and supplies, which they often have to raise by illegal commercial activity or “taxes” (eg ransoms from kidnappings); this fundraising can cease being a means to an end and become an end in itself. Many observers argue that in Colombia, for instance, warring factions are now less concerned with addressing outstanding grievances than with controlling the illicit narcotics trade.

Over time, violent conflict encourages the emergence of a war economy dominated by politicians, commanders and fighters, whose interests are to generate new forms of profit, power and protection¹¹. Key activities include the taxation of legitimate and illicit economic activities, asset stripping and looting, and the economic blockade of dissenting areas.

At the same time, a shadow economy emerges to make high profits at the margin of the conflict. Political and other entrepreneurs benefit from the general insecurity and lack of rule of law to extract precious natural resources, to trade in illicit goods (eg drugs), and to smuggle high value commodities.

The results of all this are concentrations of power and wealth, the destruction of economic assets, and impoverishment of vulnerable groups. Without conflict sensitivity, international assistance can make matters worse by adding to the vested interests who benefit from prolonging the war: for example local leaders, who usually come to control, and profit from, at least part of the conflict-related relief; and otherwise unemployable educated youth, offered well-paid jobs by development agencies. The economic structures created by conflict are among the most powerful blockages to making peace.

Development agencies, then, need to factor the political economy of conflict into their strategies and approaches to ensure they do not fuel existing conflicts through boosting war economies. Because over time there is a propensity for conflict to shift from “grievance” to “greed”, all parties including development agencies need to focus on the early treatment of grievances. Addressing the political economy early and effectively is key to ensuring conflict sensitivity.

Chapter 3 Module 1 on planning provides some specific suggestions for how to approach this work.

2.3 Inequality and discrimination as sources of conflict

Poverty, together with economic and human security factors, plays an important role in development agendas.

There is a widespread assumption that poverty is a source of violence, despite there being no direct causal relationship between the two. Although today most violent conflicts take place in poor countries, they do not necessarily occur in the poorest of them, nor are all poor countries involved in conflict. Research has shown that poverty and particularly extreme inequalities between rich and poor become sources of conflict where they are linked to the real or perceived oppression of certain groups (eg social, religious, ethnic).

The state can be an instrument of discrimination and private enrichment in the hands of a powerful elite and its followers, or it can mediate between different interest groups through inclusive political processes and the redistribution of resources. External factors such as world market prices, indebtedness and aid conditionality affect the state’s ability to fulfil this role as much as internal political dynamics. Civil society can complement, but should not by-pass and weaken the state in its function as mediator.

Addressing unequal and discriminatory root causes of poverty both horizontally (across social, religious and ethnic groups) and vertically (grassroots, civil society and government) is vital to ensuring both development goals and conflict sensitivity.

2.4 The impact of external assistance on poverty and conflict

The impact of external development assistance on the dynamics of poverty and conflict is often ambiguous.

Development assistance can contribute to stability when states use it to address human security needs, the political economy of conflict, and inequality and discrimination, and also for debt servicing and paying the state bureaucracy. However, development assistance can also exacerbate conflict, for example, through supporting corruption or helping to perpetuate an unjust status quo or by putting too much emphasis on debt servicing. Additionally, conditionalities attached to development assistance (eg structural adjustment policies) can increase tensions, particularly where, without compensatory measures, they require lay-offs in the public sector and cuts in state subsidies for basic consumer goods.

The first principle for aid policy makers – as set out in the OECD-DAC Guidelines on “Helping Prevent Violent Conflict”¹² – is “to do no harm and to guard against unwittingly aggravating existing or potential conflicts”, as well as effectively addressing the underlying causes of poverty and conflict. Effectively ensuring that development assistance does no harm will improve the impact of assistance on poverty mitigation. It clearly demands conflict sensitivity.

When conflict sensitive aspects of development assistance (such as promoting human security, and addressing the political economy of conflict, and addressing the sources of inequality and discrimination) are taken into account, development assistance can help mitigate violent conflict. Because conflict and poverty are inextricably linked, decreasing violent conflict will also serve to address many of the underlying causes of chronic poverty. Making development assistance sensitive to conflict should improve its overall impact on development goals and objectives as well as on decreasing violence.

3.

Humanitarian assistance and conflict

BOX 6

How humanitarian assistance can exacerbate conflict

Key findings

- Humanitarian assistance is at risk of becoming an instrument of war – at the local level through the manipulation of aid resources by warlords, at the global level through its instrumentalisation for partisan political interests.
- In some particularly complex situations, external interventions are limited to humanitarian assistance. In the absence of concurrent sustained development or peacebuilding interventions, the potentially negative impact of such humanitarian assistance is far greater – heightening the need for conflict sensitivity.
- Many humanitarian agencies are increasingly aware of the risks of their interventions exacerbating conflict and some have been developing methodologies and mechanisms for addressing this.

Key recommendation for conflict sensitive humanitarian assistance

- Conflict sensitivity can help humanitarian organisations deal with the challenges of politicisation. It involves: politically informed neutrality, a conflict prevention perspective (Do Some Good, Do No Harm), coherence and complementarity (see **Chapters 2 and 5**).
- Due to the often urgent nature of humanitarian assistance interventions, a solid institutional framework for conflict sensitivity at all stages of the intervention cycle needs to be established in order to formulate contingency plans and respond rapidly to changing circumstances.

During the post-Cold War period the nature of violent conflict changed as the number of wars within states overtook the number of wars between states, and during the first half of the 1990s the prevalence and intractability of violent intrastate conflicts rose quite dramatically.¹⁴ In this environment of new and protracted intra-state wars, humanitarian principles became difficult to uphold. Where states lack legitimacy, the civil population is a deliberate target of violence, and the perpetrators are often indistinguishable from the wider population. Additionally, evidence emerged that humanitarian aid can unintentionally contribute to conflict. Aid deliveries sometimes precipitate raiding (eg Mozambique), food is diverted to feed combatants, while high diversion rates and violence against humanitarian workers precipitate the

use of security and transport contractors whose interests lie in maintaining violence (eg Somalia).

Conflict sensitivity has an important role in ensuring that humanitarian assistance fulfils its humanitarian objectives and does not inadvertently fuel conflict.

3.1 The politicisation of humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian actors face an increasing politicisation of their work. There is concern among some humanitarians – what some have called the “*neutrality elevated*” school¹⁵ – that humanitarian assistance is becoming the policy instrument of choice in situations where Western governments do not wish to engage politically, but morally feel compelled to act. Some even suggest that relief has become the continuation of politics by other means¹⁶. In places such as Sudan and Burundi, humanitarian assistance has come to replace development aid due to a lack of sustainable commitment by the international community – an approach that is typical for long-term, low-intensity conflicts in non-strategic areas of the global south. The “War on Terrorism” is another manifestation of the increasingly political operating environment for humanitarian agencies. One particularly compelling recent example of this was the attempt to win Afghans’ “hearts and minds” through food drops and the deployment of special military units in civilian clothes for bridge building and digging wells. For some agencies, humanitarian assistance contracts offered by USAID in Iraq facilitate war, and so bidding on the contracts would have represented an unacceptable compromise of their organisational principles and values. The main risk of politicised humanitarian assistance lies in fuelling war economies and undermining local coping strategies particularly where the assistance is provided over years and even decades.

Recently there have been a number of attempts – what some have termed the “*neutrality abandoned*” school¹⁷ – to place conditionality on humanitarian assistance in an effort to modify the political behaviour of a regime or armed group. Examples include the attempt by the US government to tie food aid to political concessions during the 1995 famine in North Korea; the selective provision of aid to opposition-held areas in Serbia (1999); and withholding assistance funds to Sierra Leone (1997) and Afghanistan (1998-2001). Given the universal character of humanitarian assistance, these experiments were highly controversial and proved largely ineffective. There is a growing consensus within the donor community to abstain from such efforts.

What some have called the “*third-way humanitarianism*” school¹⁸ argues for a stronger role of humanitarian aid in peacebuilding and addressing the root causes of violent conflict. This approach argues that aid agencies should

avoid taking sides on the politicisation of humanitarian assistance, and instead make strategic use of their resources to contribute to conflict reduction and peacebuilding.

Depending on one's perspective then, conflict sensitivity is either key to ensuring humanitarian aid efficacy in an increasingly political operating environment (the “*neutrality elevated*” and “*neutrality abandoned*” schools) or synonymous with it (the “*third way humanitarianism*” school).

3.2 Conflict-sensitive humanitarian assistance

The significant challenges to the principles and practice of humanitarian agencies outlined above have triggered an intensive search for new approaches to the delivery of humanitarian aid. Initially, these new approaches focussed on “minimalist” and “maximalist” positions¹⁹. The former asked for a return to the original humanitarian principles, while the latter argued for a broadening of the humanitarian mandate. As a consequence of this debate, the Sphere handbook was revised to include a suggestion that understanding the nature and source of conflict helps to ensure that aid is distributed in an impartial way and reduces or avoids negative impact. (see Box 7, and **Chapter 2** on conflict analysis)

BOX 7

The Sphere Project

The Sphere Project was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. A two-year process of inter-agency collaboration saw Sphere frame a Humanitarian Charter and identify Minimum Standards to be attained in disaster assistance, in each of five key sectors (water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter, and health services). The Charter and the Minimum Standards are contained in the Sphere Project Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response

http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook_index.htm

A conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian assistance, then, recognises the political nature of assistance and incorporates a contextual understanding through the following elements:

- *politically informed neutrality*: given widespread attempts to manipulate aid for political purposes, a recognition by agencies that neutrality requires an in-depth understanding of the global and local conflict environment
- *conflict prevention perspective (Do Some Good)*: an understanding of underlying tensions and latent

conflict to help agencies respond to these more effectively

- *Do No Harm*: an attempt by agencies to monitor the intended and unintended impact of their work to avoid contributing to instability and violence
- *coherence and complementarity*: development of structures that allow agencies with different mandates (humanitarian, development, peacebuilding) to complement each other's work. This may involve joint assessments and planning. (conflict analysis, planning).

4. Conflict-sensitive partnerships

This section examines the new forms of partnership emerging in international co-operation – between Southern and Northern governments, and between governments, civil society and the private sector – regarding their responsiveness to violent conflict. The main development cooperation agreements are described in Box 8.

BOX 8

Development co-operation agreements

World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

Poverty Reduction Strategies have become the main framework for co-ordinating donor assistance to the poorest countries. Initiated in 1999 by the World Bank in response to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, PRSPs are a pre-condition for accessing debt relief and new IMF and World Bank credits. They are expected to be nationally owned through comprehensive stakeholder consultation. They comprise an in-depth poverty analysis, an indication of priority areas for action, an indication of financing requirements, an implementation plan, and impact indicators to measure performance. Bilateral donors increasingly orientate their aid towards PRSP priorities. Of the 52 countries engaged in the process as of August 2003, the World Bank considered 25 as conflict-affected, while many others had social and economic conditions that put them at risk of conflicts escalating into large-scale violence. The Bank, in collaboration with other partners, has embarked on a working programme aimed at ensuring effective poverty reduction in conflict-affected countries.²⁰

EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement

The EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement is a comprehensive trade and aid engagement between 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) signed in 2000, which involves an aid package of €15.2 billion for the years 2000-2005. Cotonou emphasises the political dimension of the EU-ACP partnership and institutionalise civil society consultation on key policy issues. Article 11 of the Agreement outlines the partners' commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding and provides the legal basis for using European Development Fund money for this purpose.

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

With the NEPAD initiative led by South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt and Algeria, formally launched in 2001, African leaders agreed to deepen co-operation among themselves and with donors to combat poverty and promote development on the African continent. NEPAD also aims to enhance economic and political governance through peer review mechanisms comparable to those of the OECD. This will help create the conditions for enhanced partnership with donor governments, which are offered in a framework of mutual accountability. NEPAD includes a "Peace and Security Initiative" aimed at promoting long-term conditions for development and security (by addressing the underlying causes of conflict) and strengthening African peace and security institutions (eg sub-regional organisations). As a programme of the African Union (AU), NEPAD is also envisaged to complement and strengthen the AU's peace and security initiatives.

4.1 The problem of "poor performers"

It has become common donor practice to link high levels of partnership and assistance to economic and political performance criteria. This has resulted in higher aid flows to so-called high potential areas, and the neglect of "poor performers" – countries whose governments lack the capacity and often the will to implement pro-poor policies. Many of these "poor performers" are involved in or recovering from armed conflict.

The poor performers, or LICUS (low-income countries under stress) countries, have been the subject of a number of studies (eg World Bank work on LICUS countries, OECD/DAC work on "difficult partnerships"). In the light of the Millennium Development Goals²¹, it is argued that poor government performance cannot justify withholding aid from the millions of poor people who live in these countries. It has been noted that LICUS countries have a proclivity to become failed states and terrorist havens, causing instability throughout their respective regions and beyond. From a global security point of view, renewing development co-operation with these countries could become part of a civilian strategy to reduce conflict at a global level.

5. Peacebuilding and conflict

Peacebuilding organisations may find it particularly difficult to acknowledge the need to be conflict sensitive. This may be for a number of reasons, but mainly because their mandate to build peace leads them to assume that their activities are bound to contribute to the creation of peaceful environments. This assumption may lead to a non-systematic analysis of the context in which the organisations operate; a lack of planning when implementing peace-building projects; an uncoordinated or non-integrated approach to peacebuilding; as well as dubious claims of success based on assumptions about peacebuilding project achievements that are premised on questionable cause-and-effect scenarios.

BOX 9

How peacebuilding can aggravate conflict

Key findings

- Peacebuilding interventions, as development and humanitarian interventions, can inadvertently exacerbate conflict.
- International intervention in peacebuilding does not always achieve full complementarity with local efforts for peace, particularly when a limited number of local actors have been consulted or involved.
- Conflict-sensitive peacebuilding is better peacebuilding.
- Promoting a co-ordinated effort is a key principle of successful peacebuilding initiatives.

Key recommendations for conflict-sensitive peacebuilding

- Peacebuilding organisations will be most effective when they link their planning directly and explicitly to a comprehensive conflict analysis.
- To avoid working at cross-purposes, local, national and international peacebuilding actors should work together to gain a clearer understanding of their respective roles (**planning, implementation**).

While it may be difficult for peacebuilding organisations, just as with humanitarian and development agencies, to accept that they can exacerbate conflict, there is strong evidence that they can do so. For instance, raising expectations about the resolution of outstanding grievances can trigger or accelerate conflict when those expectations are disappointed – as they often are when there are vested interests in maintaining the status quo or where there are not enough resources in the short term to

implement agreements adequately. There is also growing evidence that international agencies providing non-sensitive support to local peacebuilding organisations can create a “peace market”, which contributes little to peacebuilding as the organisations’ main focus is on gaining access to the generously resourced peacebuilding funds of the international community.

Nor are peacebuilding organisations at any level immune from the prejudices, party politics, or systems of patronage that fuel conflict. Just as with humanitarian and development agencies, it is of the utmost importance that peacebuilding organisations also take responsibility for their potential impact by adopting conflict sensitive approaches.

5.1 Conflict-sensitive aspects of peacebuilding

Peacebuilding organisations that want to conflict-sensitise their operations can borrow extensively from the considerations outlined in the sections on Development and Humanitarian Assistance. In addition, peacebuilders will need to consider in their programming the multiple levels inherent in effective peacebuilding, as well as the role of local and international actors and issues.

5.2 Multi-level aspects of peacebuilding

As peacebuilding organisations multiply and move towards engaging at the local level, a number of challenges emerge. External engagement stifles local leadership, further complicating complex local power relations, and can even create resentment by imposing its own processes. In this sense, too much and misconceived conflict management may actually aggravate the situation. Experience has also shown that while peacebuilding actors are particularly effective at their own level, their leverage at other levels is limited. Village elders, for example, may wield sufficient authority and sanction-power to restrain youthful cattle thieves from carrying out their attacks, but their influence on government policies promoting resettlement to their areas and thus exacerbating land conflicts may be low. National level interest groups and parliamentarians, possibly in coalition with international NGOs, may be better placed to affect such decisions. It is thus crucial for external organisations to work towards a better understanding of the local actors and processes involved in peacebuilding, to support their strengths while complementing areas of weakness. (See **Chapter 2**, Conflict analysis)

5.3 Local and national aspects of peacebuilding

More could be done to use local knowledge about the nature of conflicts and peacebuilding at national level. First of all, it can be helpful to realise that many of these conflicts reflect a long local history of poor governance and state accumulation, such as looting, rent-seeking (eg collection of fees by government officials for services the government normally offers free or at a lower price than that being charged by the officials) or illegitimate trade. Understanding, in its local context, the economic and political rationale of elites engaging in conflict can be an important prerequisite for defining remedial strategies at the national level.

When discussing local forms of peacebuilding, the question of “traditional conflicts” often arises. In the East African context, for example, cattle rustling sometimes spirals into violent conflict. It is frequently mentioned as a traditional conflict, as it is supposedly carried out following age-old tribal traditions. Although such conflicts may adopt a traditional guise, it is extremely important to recognise that today they are often fuelled by dynamics linked to the nation state and the national and even global economy. As an example, research carried out by the programme team suggests that delivering food for people, but not food for their animals, is an ill-conceived response to food crises, and can fuel cattle rustling to replace dying or dead animals.

Traditional forms of justice and reconciliation are also critical in post-conflict situations, when large numbers of perpetrators of violence, including child soldiers, need to be made to face up to their deeds and to be reintegrated into their communities. Para-legal institutions and healing rituals can sometimes offer ex-combatants opportunities to repent and become valuable members of the community again. It would be naïve, however, to assume that local processes alone can bring about peace when the main issues have not yet been resolved at the national level. The main role of local level initiatives consists in providing a grassroots dimension to a successful multi-level peace process – so they must have a voluntary, not state-imposed character. To prevent further conflict in the long term, local principles of dispute settlement, justice and conflict resolution need stronger institutionalisation. This institutionalisation requires pluralistic and well-integrated justice systems and national constitutions that combine traditional values with international human rights standards (such as non-discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnicity). The *Report of the All-African Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation* (Addis Ababa, November 1999) set out some principles for Africa (see Box10).

BOX 10

African principles of conflict resolution and reconciliation

Underlying principle

To prevent latent conflict escalating into violence, through open dialogue and consensus decision-making, and, where required, to reconcile all parties and to re-establish non-exploitative relations or re-incorporate offenders into the community and to maintain social harmony.

Process

- Investigate the total context and all roots to a conflict or offence;
- Build consensus around expected outcomes that will emerge from any public discussion of the conflict/offence and the attitudes of the parties towards a resolution;
- Public admission of responsibility and expression of remorse/repentance for negative actions, including sharing of the responsibility by the family/group/clan;
- Determination of damage and redressing the victim/aggrieved party by way of reparation, including compensation, whether symbolic or proportional;
- Public act of reconciliation entered into by all parties which is binding on the parties with the sanction on breaches being exclusion from society;
- Importance of mediation and third-party principle;
- Use of expressive arts - poetry, song, dance, dramatic representations.

Some theorists argue that, compared to international organisations, “traditional authorities” have better knowledge of the local situation, are more legitimate, and better equipped to carry out the necessary consultations. However, one still needs to ensure that they are legitimate and not working to further their own aims – eg Somalia’s clan structures which have sometimes been a cause for conflict and sometimes for peace. While peacebuilding relies on the primacy of those people living through the conflict, internal and external actors can usefully complement each other’s different capacities and perspectives. For example international agencies, as outsiders, can act as facilitators or engage in protection. And as noted in **section 5.2**, local peacebuilding actors, while particularly effective at their own level, may lack leverage in other areas where it is needed.

5.4 Comprehensive analysis, planning and conflict

Although peacebuilding organisations, just as with development and humanitarian organisations, can inadvertently increase conflict, peacebuilders often fail to recognise the need to adopt conflict sensitive approaches.

Co-ordination between local and national organisations, and between those at the national and international level, on conflict analyses and joint programme and project implementation, can help ensure that peacebuilding operations do not inflame existing tensions. Likewise, a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the strengths and limitations of local or traditional peacebuilding capacities can also serve to conflict-sensitise operations.

Careful planning, based on a comprehensive analysis of the conflict context and actors, will help ensure that peacebuilding operations are conflict-sensitive and thereby more likely to build peace. Co-ordination between international, national and local organisations will minimise opportunities for overlap, missed opportunities and competition. In addition to minimising inadvertent negative impacts on conflict, addressing the considerations outlined above will also serve to augment positive impacts of peacebuilding.

6. Endnotes

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²Adapted from Stephen Jones and Gareth Williams, “A Common Language for Managing Official Development Assistance: A Glossary of ODA Terms”, Oxford Policy Management, 2002.

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⁶Department for International Development, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Ministry of Defense, “The Causes of Conflict in Africa: Consultation document,” London: Cabinet Sub-Committee on Conflict Prevention in Africa, 2001.

⁷Commission on Human Security <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/>

⁸Bajpai, Kanti. “The Idea of a Human Security Audit”, Kroc Institute Report #19, Autumn 2000 <http://www.nd.edu/~krocinst/report/lead.html>

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¹¹Keen, D., “The economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars,” Adelphi Paper No 319. Oxford: Oxford University Press and International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998.

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¹⁶John Seaman, "Malnutrition in Emergencies: How can we do better and where do the responsibilities lie?" in *Disasters* 23:4, December 1999: 306.

¹⁷Leader: 7 and 27.

¹⁸Leader: 7 and 27.

¹⁹Goodhand, 2001.

²⁰<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/>

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²¹<http://www.developmentgoals.org/>

Annex 1

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Conflict analysis

Purpose of chapter

This chapter explains:

- what conflict analysis is and why it matters
- how to undertake an analysis

Who should read it

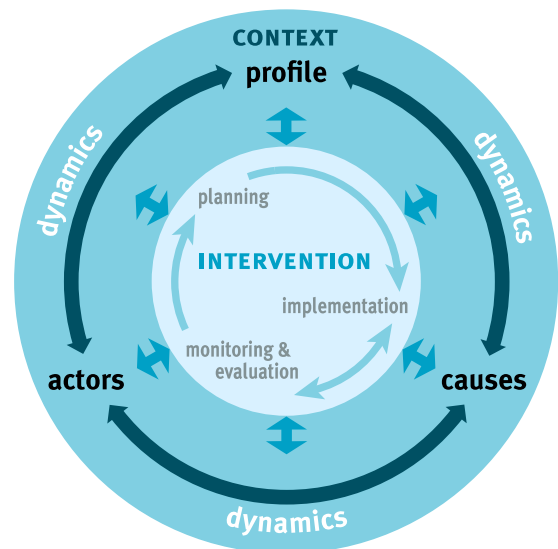
The chapter is aimed at practitioners in governments, civil society (local and international) and donor organisations concerned with development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. The chapter may also be of interest to others (eg in the private sector, the diplomatic field, etc).

Why they should read it

Because conflict analysis is the foundation of conflict sensitivity and without a good understanding of the context in which interventions are situated, organisations that support or directly implement them may unintentionally help to fuel violent conflict or to exacerbate existing tensions. Conflict analysis helps organisations towards a better understanding of the context in which they work, and a conflict sensitive approach.

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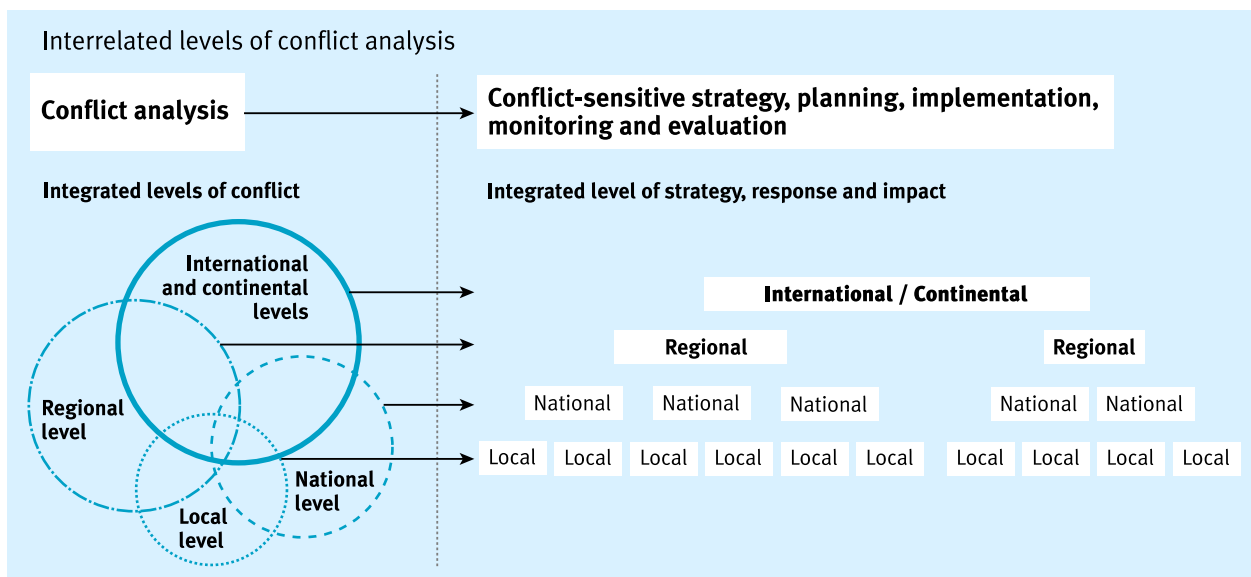
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1. What is conflict analysis and why is it important?

Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict (see **Section 2**). It helps development, humanitarian and peacebuilding organisations to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that context.

Conflict analysis can be carried out at various levels (eg local, regional, national, etc) and seeks to establish the linkages between these levels (see Fig 1). Identifying the appropriate focus for the conflict analysis is crucial: the issues and dynamics at the national level may be different from those at the grassroots. But while linking the level of conflict analysis (eg community, district, region or national) with the level of intervention (eg project, sector, policy), it is also important to establish systematic linkages with other interrelated levels of conflict dynamics. These linkages are important, as all of these different levels impact on each other.



For example, when operating at the project level, it is important to understand the context at the level at which the project is operating (eg local level), so the focus of the analysis should be at that level; but the analysis should also take account of the linkages with other levels (eg regional and national). And similarly when operating at the regional, sector or national levels.

As discussed in **Chapter 1**, conflict sensitivity is about:

- understanding the *context* in which you operate
- understanding the *interaction* between *your intervention* and *the context*
- *acting* upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid *negative impacts* and maximise *positive impacts*.

Conflict analysis is thus a central component of conflict-sensitive practice, as it provides the foundation to inform conflict sensitive programming, in particular in terms of an understanding of the interaction between the intervention and the context. This applies to all forms of intervention – development, humanitarian, peacebuilding – and to all levels – project, programme, and sectoral.

In other words, conflict analysis will help:

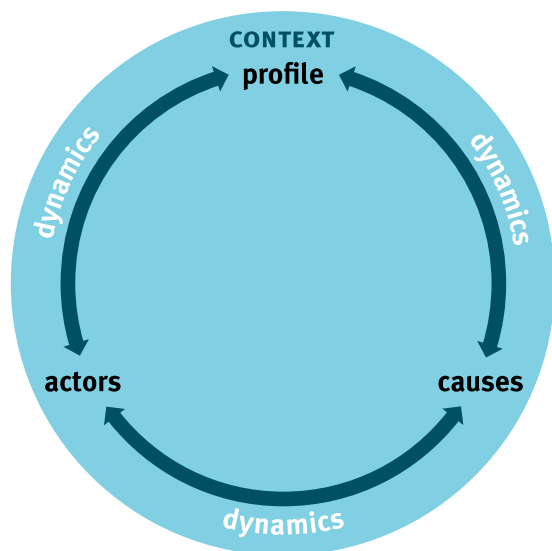
- to define new interventions and to conflict-sensitise both new and pre-defined interventions (eg selection of areas of operation, beneficiaries, partners, staff, time frame). (Planning stage)
- to monitor the interaction between the context and the intervention and inform project set-up and day-to-day decision-making. (Implementation stage)
- to measure the interaction of the interventions and the conflict dynamics in which they are situated. (Monitoring and evaluation stage)

2. Key elements of conflict analysis

This section synthesises the key elements of conflict analysis as they emerge from the various conflict analysis tools documented in **Annex 1**. Looking at each of these elements will help to develop a comprehensive picture of the context in which you operate. Depending on your specific interest, however, you may want to emphasise particular aspects of key importance. For example, if the emphasis is on the identification of project partners and beneficiaries, a good understanding of conflict actors and how potential partners and beneficiaries relate to them will be the primary requirement. (See **Box 2** in this chapter).

Generally, “good enough” thinking is required. This means accepting that the analysis can never be exhaustive, nor provide absolute certainty. Conflict dynamics are simply too complex and volatile for any single conflict analysis process to do them justice. Nevertheless, you should trust your findings, even though some aspects may remain unclear. Do not be discouraged; some analysis, no matter how imperfect, is better than no analysis at all.

The following diagram highlights the common key features of conflict analysis, which will contribute to understanding the interaction between the context and future/current interventions (see Chapters **3** and **4** for the project and sectoral (sector wide) levels respectively). The common features are the conflict profile, actors, causes and dynamics. Each is further described below.



2.1 Profile

A conflict profile provides a brief characterisation of the context within which the intervention will be situated.

BOX 1

Key questions for a conflict profile

What is the political, economic, and socio-cultural context?

eg physical geography, population make-up, recent history, political and economic structure, social composition, environment, geo-strategic position.

What are emergent political, economic, ecological, and social issues?

eg elections, reform processes, decentralisation, new infrastructure, disruption of social networks, mistrust, return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), military and civilian deaths, presence of armed forces, mined areas, HIV/AIDS.

What specific conflict prone/affected areas can be situated within this context?

eg, areas of influence of specific actors, frontlines around the location of natural resources, important infrastructure and lines of communication, pockets of socially marginalised or excluded populations.

Is there a history of conflict?

eg critical events, mediation efforts, external intervention.

Note: this list is not exhaustive and the examples may differ according to the context

2.2 Causes of conflict

In order to understand a given context it is fundamental to identify potential and existing conflict causes, as well as possible factors contributing to peace. Conflict causes can be defined as those factors which contribute to people's grievances; and can be further described as:

- *structural causes* – pervasive factors that have become built into the policies, structures and fabric of a society and may create the pre-conditions for violent conflict
- *proximate causes* – factors contributing to a climate conducive to violent conflict or its further escalation, sometimes apparently symptomatic of a deeper problem
- *triggers* – single key acts, events, or their anticipation that will set off or escalate violent conflict.

Protracted conflicts also tend to generate *new causes* (eg weapons circulation, war economy, culture of violence), which help to prolong them further.

As the main causes and factors contributing to conflict and to peace are identified, it is important to acknowledge that conflicts are multi-dimensional and multi-causal phenomena – that there is no single cause of conflict. It is also essential to establish linkages and synergies between causes and factors, in order to identify potential areas for intervention and further prioritise them. Some of the tools in **Annex 1** – eg Clingendael / Fund for Peace, RTC – offer methods to assess the relative importance of different factors. Many tools developed for conflict analysis also categorise conflict causes or issues by governance, economics, security and socio-cultural factors.

BOX 2

Key questions for an analysis of conflict causes

What are structural causes of conflict?

eg illegitimate government, lack of political participation, lack of equal economic and social opportunities, inequitable access to natural resources, poor governance.

What issues can be considered as proximate causes of conflict?

eg uncontrolled security sector, light weapons proliferation, human rights abuses, destabilising role of neighbouring countries, role of diasporas.

What triggers can contribute to the outbreak / further escalation of conflict?

eg elections, arrest / assassination of key leader or political figure, drought, sudden collapse of local currency, military coup, rapid change in unemployment, flood, increased price/scarcity of basic commodities, capital flight.

What new factors contribute to prolonging conflict dynamics?

eg radicalisation of conflict parties, establishment of paramilitaries, development of a war economy, increased human rights violations, weapons availability, development of a culture of fear.

What factors can contribute to peace?

eg communication channels between opposing parties, demobilisation process, reform programmes, civil society commitment to peace, anti-discrimination policies.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and the examples may differ according to the context.

2.3 Actors

People are central when thinking about conflict analysis. The Resource Pack uses the term “actors” to refer to all those engaged in or being affected by conflict. This includes individuals, groups and institutions contributing to conflict or being affected by it in a positive or negative manner, as well as those engaged in dealing with conflict. Actors differ as to their goals and interests, their positions, capacities to realise their interests, and relationships with other actors (see Box 3).

BOX 3

Interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships

- **Interests:** the underlying motivations of the actors (concerns, goals, hopes and fears).
- **Goals:** the strategies that actors use to pursue their interests.
- **Positions:** the solution presented by actors on key and emerging issues in a given context, irrespective of the interests and goals of others.
- **Capacities:** the actors’ potential to affect the context, positively or negatively. Potential can be defined in terms of resources, access, social networks and constituencies, other support and alliances, etc.
- **Relationships:** the interactions between actors at various levels, and their perception of these interactions.

Some approaches distinguish actors according to the level at which they are active (*grassroots, middle level, top level*). In particular, conflict transformation theory attaches great importance to middle level leaders, as they may assume a catalytic role through their linkages both to the top and the grassroots. In any case, it is important to consider the relationships between actors / groups at various levels and how they affect the conflict dynamics.

Particular attention should be paid to *spoilers*, ie specific groups with an interest in the maintenance of the negative status quo. If not adequately addressed within the framework of preventive strategies, they may become an obstacle to peace initiatives.

Similarly, it is important to identify existing *institutional capacities for peace*, in order to further define entry points to address causes of violent conflict. Capacities for peace typically refer to institutions, organisations, mechanisms and procedures in a society for dealing with conflict and differences of interest. In particular, such actors need to be assessed in relation to their capacity for conflict management, their legitimacy, the likelihood of their engagement, and the possible roles they can adopt.

BOX 4

Key questions for an actor analysis

Who are the main actors?

eg national government, security sector (military, police), local (military) leaders and armed groups, private sector/business (local, national, trans-national), donor agencies and foreign embassies, multilateral organisations, regional organisations (eg African Union), religious or political networks (local, national, global), independent mediators, civil society (local, national, international), peace groups, trade unions, political parties, neighbouring states, traditional authorities, diaspora groups, refugees / IDPs, all children, women and men living in a given context. (Do not forget to include your own organisation!)

What are their main interests, goals, positions, capacities, and relationships?

eg religious values, political ideologies, need for land, interest in political participation, economic resources, constituencies, access to information, political ties, global networks.

What institutional capacities for peace can be identified?

eg civil society, informal approaches to conflict resolution, traditional authorities, political institutions (eg head of state, parliament), judiciary, regional (eg African Union, IGAD, ASEAN) and multilateral bodies (eg International Court of Justice).

What actors can be identified as spoilers? Why?

eg groups benefiting from war economy (combatants, arms/drug dealers, etc), smugglers, “non conflict sensitive” organisations (see Chapter 1).

Note: This list is not exhaustive and the examples may differ according to the context.

2.4 Dynamics

Conflict dynamics can be described as the resulting interaction between the conflict profile, the actors, and causes. Understanding conflict dynamics will help identify windows of opportunity, in particular through the use of scenario building, which aims to assess different possible developments and think through appropriate responses.

Scenarios basically provide an assessment of what may happen next in a given context according to a specific timeframe, building on the analysis of conflict profile, causes and actors. It is good practice to prepare three scenarios: (a) best case scenario (ie describing the optimal outcome of the current context); (b) middle case or *status quo* scenario (ie describing the continued evolution of current trends); and (c) worst case scenario (ie describing the worst possible outcome).

If history is the key to understanding conflict dynamics, it may be relevant to use the timeline to identify its main *phases*. Try to explain key events and assess their consequences. Temporal patterns (eg the four-year rotation of presidents or climatic changes) may be important in understanding the conflict dynamics. Undertaking this exercise with different actors and groups can bring out contrasting perspectives.

BOX 5

Key questions for an analysis of conflict Dynamics

What are current conflict trends?

eg escalation or de-escalation, changes in important framework conditions.

What are windows of opportunity?

eg are there positive developments? What factors support them? How can they be strengthened?

What scenarios can be developed from the analysis of the conflict profile, causes and actors?

eg best case, middle case and worst case scenarios.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and the examples may differ according to the context.

2.5 Summary

BOX 6

Key questions for conflict analysis

Profile

What is the political, economic, and socio-cultural context?

What are emergent political, economic and social issues?

What conflict prone/affected areas can be situated within the context?

Is there a history of conflict?

Causes

What are the structural causes of conflict?

What issues can be considered as proximate causes of conflict?

What triggers could contribute to the outbreak/ further escalation of conflict?

What new factors contribute to prolonging conflict dynamics?

What factors can contribute to peace?

Actors

Who are the main actors?

What are their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships?

What capacities for peace can be identified?

What actors can be identified as spoilers? Why? Are they inadvertent or intentional spoilers?

Dynamics

What are current conflict trends?

What are windows of opportunity?

What scenarios can be developed from the analysis of the conflict profile, causes and actors?

3. Working with indicators

In addition to traditional (eg project, sectoral) indicators, conflict sensitive approaches require conflict sensitive indicators to monitor and measure: (a) the context and its changes over time; and (b) the interaction between the context and the intervention. They have three elements:

- *Conflict indicators*

Used to monitor the progression of conflict factors against an appropriate baseline, and to provide targets against which to set contingency planning (see below).

- *Project indicators*

Monitor the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project (see **Chapter 3 Module 1, step 3**).

- *Interaction indicators*

Measure the interaction between the context and the project (see **Chapter 3 Module 1, step 2c**).

Conflict indicators

Conflict analysis provides just a snap-shot of a highly fluid situation. It is therefore important to combine an in-depth analysis with more dynamic and continuous forms of monitoring to provide up-to-date information from which to measure the interaction between the context and the intervention. Indicators are useful in this respect, as they help reduce a complex reality to a few concrete dimensions and represent valuable pointers to monitor change. The conflict

analysis will have looked at the relationship between specific actors, causes and profile, in order to gain an understanding of the conflict dynamics. Indicators can then be developed in order to reflect these relationships and how they evolve over time. It is important to have a mix of perception-based and objective indicators, each of which should reflect qualitative and quantitative elements. Good indicators reflect a variety of perspectives on the context. It is good practice to involve communities and other actors in identifying the indicators; not only should this produce better indicators but it is also an important opportunity to build a common understanding of the context, to ascertain joint priorities and to agree on benchmarks of progress.

Since each conflict is unique, there is no standard list of indicators applicable to all contexts. The following table provides some examples of sample perception-based and objective indicators for the four key elements.

TABLE 1

Sample of conflict analysis indicators

Key element	Example	Sample Indicators (a)objective and (b) perception-based
Profile	Geographic mobilisation around natural resources	(a) What is the price of timber? How has it evolved over time? (b) (In the view of the respondent) How has conflict intensity changed around this particular area?
Causes	Human rights abuses	(a) Has the number of political prisoners risen or fallen? (b) To what extent can you/others openly criticise the government?
Actors	Diaspora	(a) Have overseas remittances increased or decreased? (b) To what extent does the diaspora support or undermine the peace process?
Dynamics	Increased commitment to resolve conflict	(a) Has the frequency of negotiations increased or decreased among conflict parties? (b) Do you believe that party X is committed to the peace process?

Note: the examples in Table 1 relate to each specific key element only (eg sample indicators for profile have no relation to the example or sample indicators for causes).

4. Integrating conflict analysis and other forms of assessment

At all levels, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations use some form of pre-intervention assessment of the context in which they operate in order to identify entry points and plan their work. This is usually called a needs assessment.

Needs assessment frameworks, such as sustainable livelihoods assessments, participatory poverty assessments, participatory rural appraisals, good governance assessments and gender analyses can usefully be complemented by conflict analyses, and vice versa as explained below:

- assumptions about context: livelihood, poverty and governance frameworks assume static situations and therefore provide little guidance on how to deal with changing and fluid contexts. Conflict analysis thus helps to better understand these environments
- focus: livelihood and poverty assessments take the individual household as a starting point, seeking to establish the economic, political, social and cultural factors affecting the lives and livelihoods of its members. This perspective is a valuable addition to the “top-down” view of conflict analysis. In practice, however, these approaches often describe rather than explain poverty and tend to neglect issues of politics and power. There is little scope, for example, for exploring competition and exploitation. There also tends to be a lack of attention to the implications of weak political systems, bad governance and instability for households’ livelihood strategies. Governance assessment frameworks deal with these issues, too, but usually under the assumption of peaceful political competition and willingness to reform. These assumptions might be questioned by a conflict analysis (see **section 2.5**)
- external / internal view: poverty and other participatory forms of assessment help understand people’s individual perspectives and experience. These are often missing from conflict analysis, which tends to place more emphasis on the interests and strategies of organised political actors. Not infrequently, conflict analyses are conducted from an outside perspective.

It is important to recognise the distinct frameworks underlying conflict analysis and other forms of needs assessment. In practice, however, there is a growing effort

and acknowledged need to carry out an integrated research and analytical process that takes account of both perspectives. The following table provides some preliminary entry points for integrating conflict analysis into needs assessments.

TABLE 2

Entry points for integrating conflict analysis into needs assessment

- Beyond describing poverty, focus on its potential causes, examine the impact of power and powerlessness on poverty and establish the sources of power in the particular community.
- Refine the understanding of group membership and group identity and how they affect vulnerability (eg persecution, exploitation).
- Examine how the wider conflict dynamics impact on institutions and relations within the community, understand processes of dominance, alignment and exclusion.
- Link local processes (eg displacement) to political and economic interests and strategies at regional and national levels (eg land appropriation, war economy).

5. Good practice in conflict analysis

The following section addresses key concerns in relation to undertaking conflict analysis, as the conflict-analysis process itself needs to be conflict sensitive. This section offers examples of good practice based on consultations in Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka.

Building capacity for conflict analysis

Conducting conflict analysis requires human and financial resources, which organisations may find hard to afford, especially if conflict sensitivity has not yet become a mainstreamed policy within the organisation (see **Chapter 5**). As a result, this may require systematically and sustainably building the need for conflict analysis into funding applications (for civil society organisations), budgets, planning guidelines, and human and organisational development plans. According to the level of awareness and capacity in your organisation, capacity building for conflict analysis may involve:

- helping staff to better understand the context in which they work. For example, in post-conflict contexts, staff

of international organisations often do not recognise the links between their work and possible violence. Local government or civil society staff, on the other hand, may be too involved at the micro level to see the larger picture

- making sure organisations give conflict analyses and their integration equal priority to other forms of assessment (governance, poverty, needs assessments, etc) (see **Section 4**)
- wherever possible, integrating conflict analyses into established procedures (eg strategic plans, needs assessments, etc), as well as into the contributions of service providers (eg terms of reference for short-term advisors, calls for proposals / tenders, etc). When preparing such processes, it is fundamental to make sufficient time to accommodate conflict analyses
- budgeting for conflict analysis in funding applications and operational budgets. Donors (and the tax payers to whom donors are accountable) may need to be sensitised to the importance of conflict analysis. NGOs often find that donors either (a) assume or even require that conflict analysis be conducted at the project proposal stage, without being aware of its costs for smaller organisations; or (b) do not prioritise conflict analysis at all
- supporting staff in acquiring conflict analysis skills on an ongoing basis, for example through staff development plans
- developing an external network of national and international experts on which to draw for specific tasks.

Who conducts the analysis?

Conflict analysis can be undertaken for various purposes. The purpose will determine the specific process and will help to determine who should conduct the analysis. For example, if the purpose is to promote a participatory and transformative process within a community, the community should play a vital role in the planning, implementation (eg data collection) and assessment of the analysis. If the purpose is to develop a strategy for engagement in a given context, it may be that an internal team from within the organisation developing the strategy should lead the process. Some elements of the analysis may be highly sensitive, and thus may need to be confidential.

Local project staff typically conduct participatory conflict analysis exercises with communities to decide on further project activities. Conflict analysis, in the context of project monitoring by international NGOs, is frequently carried out by national and international staff, sometimes with the support of an external adviser. Donors tend to commission external experts or specialised institutes in their own countries for countrywide conflict analysis studies, while governments may have dedicated departments to deal with specific conflict issues. In any case, it is important to get the right mix of skills and

backgrounds, which can be summarised as follows:

- good conflict analysis skills
- good knowledge of the context and related history
- sensitivity to the local context
- local language skills
- sectoral / technical expertise as required
- sufficient status / credibility to see through recommendations
- good knowledge of the organisations involved
- representation of different perspectives within the context under consideration
- moderation skills, team work, possibly counselling
- facilitation skills.

The quality and relevance of the analysis mainly depends on the people involved. These include the person or team conducting the analysis, on the one hand, and other conflict actors, on the other. Conflict analysis consists of eliciting the views of the different groups and placing them into a larger analytical framework. The quality of the analysis will depend on how faithfully it reflects the views received – views may be distorted or given too much or too little weight during the filtering process, either inadvertently or deliberately. It will also be influenced by how the team is perceived by various actors within the context. For example, if the team is trusted by all actors, they are likely to get more and better information than if they are perceived to be too close to certain parties.

Every conflict analysis is highly political, and bias is a constant concern. It may be difficult to be objective, as personal sympathies develop and make it difficult to maintain an unbiased approach. Even a “fly-in” expert will be influenced by his / her values, previous knowledge of the country, the perspectives of his or her employer, and the people s / he is working with. It may therefore be more productive to spell out one’s own position and preconceptions and be clear about the conditions and restrictions under which the conflict analysis takes place. The collective basis of the conflict analysis team may also ensure higher levels of objectivity and impartiality.

Selecting the appropriate framework for conflict analysis

When planning to use a specific framework to support conflict analysis, it is worth considering its strengths and weaknesses.

In general, organisations may find that tools do not necessarily offer new information, particularly if they have already developed strong linkages to institutions and communities in the area under consideration. Their main value lies in guiding the systematic search for this information and providing a framework for analysing it, thus prompting critical questions and offering new perspectives. Tools can also enhance internal

communication about conflict within an organisation, eg between provinces and the capital, or between field offices and headquarters. Similarly, conflict analysis tools can guide consultation with a range of communities and other stakeholders. Finally, international actors appreciate that standardised tools ensure a certain degree of comparability between different conflict analyses.

On the other hand, conflict analysis tools should not be mistaken for a substitute for detailed local knowledge and human judgement nor stifle creative thinking. Tools that offer pre-defined lists of structural causes or indicators may be too general to adequately capture a specific conflict. Tools may also be too comprehensive for an organisation with limited research capacities, or not focussed enough to answer specific questions. For these reasons, organisations will tend to customise existing tools to their own specific needs, objectives and capacities.

BOX 7

Adapting tools for Northern Uganda

In Uganda, a consortium of INGOs and government representatives consensually developed a hybrid conflict analysis tool that best met their needs and at the same time held maximum relevance in the Northern Uganda context. The hybrid tool developed by the consortium uses the profile-actors-context framework outlined in Figure 2 above, with components of tools developed by World Vision, ACORD and Oxfam in Uganda, the Local Capacities for Peace Project (Do No Harm), and various other tools. The consortium then used the tool they had developed to conduct a shared conflict analysis and to collectively build the capacity of their field staff to conduct and update similar analyses in the future. (The capacity building and field research work is still ongoing at the time of writing).

There are some further issues around tools that organisations should consider:

- visual aids (eg graphs) and indicator ratings used in some tools suggest a degree of precision and objectivity that usually does not stand up to reality. Participants in a conflict analysis should therefore be encouraged to reflect on the subjectivity of their assessments
- tools relying on some technical support (eg software) may appear intimidating to some participants. Similarly, extensive lists of indicators tend to make the analysis unmanageable
- in general, aim to create a “safe space” for extensive discussions.

Collecting information for conflict analysis

It is important to gather information from as wide a range of sources as possible and to listen to many different actors, in order to broaden the understanding of the context and to include a wide range of perspectives (see Box 3).

BOX 8

FORED Sri Lanka

FORED undertakes surveys with women in target communities (women are FORED’s main beneficiaries) to understand the socio-economic situation of the community. To gain the trust and confidence of the women, field staff visit the families and spend time with the women in the kitchen, helping them with their tasks. Information gathered in the questionnaire is thus complemented through indirect cross-referencing from these informal “chats”. Information is further triangulated (see Box 9) with knowledgeable community leaders.

Various techniques can be used to gather these perspectives, from surveys and interviews to group discussion and stakeholder consultations (see Box 4). In contexts where groups cannot openly and directly discuss conflict, it may be useful to consider having separate meetings. Meetings and interviews must be conducted in a language in which participants can confidently express their views.

BOX 9

Stakeholder consultations

International and government agencies now routinely use stakeholder meetings to collect information in preparation for certain policy decisions. They typically hold one or a series of workshops in the capital and large district towns, to which representatives of different interest groups (eg local government, private sector, civil society, etc) are invited, to discuss specific issues.

Although an improvement on former practices, this form of stakeholder consultation presents a number of difficulties:

- one-way communication: where “participation” is misunderstood to mean helping to implement political decisions rather than helping to shape them, meetings will be used to announce work plans and expected commitments, rather than to get feedback
- lack of capacity: grassroots representatives often do not fully grasp the context of the meeting or have difficulties in discussing certain issues
- power: people bring their power relations with them into the meeting room, and it is unrealistic to expect low-ranking people to speak up against their superiors/patrons in public. For the same reason, it is difficult to discuss conflict issues
- process fatigue: participants who have repeatedly undergone consultations tend to voice solutions, before going through the step-by-step process that leads to the identification of core issues
- marginalisation: women and other marginalised groups usually lack equal representation. Participants typically over-represent well-educated, relatively wealthy urban elites. Care therefore needs to be taken to include representation from both urban and rural communities as well as poor communities (whether urban or rural).

The information gathered will not all be reliable. Gatekeepers such as local leaders and interpreters may try to influence information. Ordinary people will rarely dare to speak up against them in public or even in private. Information is also largely determined by access. Aid agencies report restrictions of access by the national government, their own governments, or local strongmen, which limit the type of information they are able to gather. In certain contexts, when information is a scarce commodity, it tends to become highly political. There nonetheless exist some research methods, such as triangulation, which aim to reduce some of these limitations (see Box 10).

BOX 10 **Triangulation**

Given the difficulties of obtaining reliable information for undertaking conflict analysis, it is often useful to use a mix of data gathering methods (“triangulation”) – for example a desk study, quantitative surveys, expert interviews, stakeholder consultations, and feedback workshops to present and discuss conclusions.

The aim of triangulation is to verify each piece of information with at least two corroborative or complementary sources, to obtain data that eventually “matches up” and clarifies differing perspectives. (For more information about triangulation, see **Chapter 3, Module 1, section 3.2**).

Conducting the analysis

Conflict analysis requires a great deal of care and sensitivity due to the highly political nature of the information gathered. A participatory process can become transformative by helping participants to define their own conflict – an important step towards addressing it. Because conflict analysis touches on sensitive issues such as power, ownership, and neutrality, however, it can also provoke conflict by bringing sensitive issues to the fore.

For this reason, the conflict analysis itself needs to be carried out in a conflict sensitive manner. It is thus good practice to get stakeholders on board early on and avoid antagonising potential spoilers (see **section 2.3**).

In particular, when undertaking the conflict analysis, it is important to show respect for people’s ownership and feelings, to include a wide range of actors and perspectives, to be transparent about the goals of the process and to link the analysis to demonstrable action. In many contexts, it is fundamental to ensure that staff, partners and communities are not at risk through the analysis process, for example as a result of insensitive questions being asked in public or researchers being sent to insecure areas. In such situations, the commitment to transparency may need to be restricted by the need to ensure security for some sensitive elements of the analysis.

The conflict analysis process can also help foster partnership and co-ordination, while promoting a shared understanding of the context. The joint donor government / civil society conflict assessment in Nigeria (see Box 11) may prove a valuable experience from which to learn.

BOX 11 **Strategic Conflict Assessment in Nigeria: An inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach¹**

In Nigeria, a radically different approach has been taken to conducting a conflict assessment at the strategic level. First, the assessment has been country owned with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) taking the lead. The IPCR is linked directly to the Nigerian Presidency and was established by the Nigerian government in 2000. Second, the assessment has been supported by a multi-donor group consisting of four main donors – DFID, the World Bank, USAID and UNDP. Third, civil society actors have been involved in the process strategically from the outset.

Background and objectives

The inclusive and joint approach to undertaking the Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) was adopted by both the Nigerian government and the supporting donors, in recognition of a number of issues which needed addressing. These were:

- a lack of coherent analysis of the causes and dynamics of conflict in Nigeria
- a lack of coordination in the analysis and responses to conflict by the government, civil society and donors (with civil society focusing mainly on local / micro conflict issues and responses, whilst at a more macro level the government found it difficult to understand the linkages between the different conflicts affecting the country)
- a recognition by donors that if any donor undertook such an assessment unilaterally, or even collectively, without the consent of the Nigerian government, it could result in considerable obstacles and high political risks, due to the sensitive nature of conflict in Nigeria. A joint approach would reap considerable benefits in reducing those risks.

The overall objective of the SCA was to provide an analysis of conflict in Nigeria which looked at all areas of national life and would feed into the strategic, or policy, level in order to inform national and international debates about possible responses and provide specific recommendations to government, the international community, the private sector and civil society. The study also aimed to develop and inform the IPCR’s own work and capacity.

Process and methodology

The process was initiated in May 2002 with an inclusive workshop of stakeholders including the donors, government and a broad range of civil society groups. The objectives of the workshop were to build knowledge of relevant activities being undertaken by different groups (who is doing what and where); to provide a basis for building awareness of the conflict assessment process, providing space for feedback from different stakeholders; and to strengthen the interaction and relationship between the different actors.

The methodology used in the SCA was based on the DFID Conflict Assessment Guidance (see **Annex 1**) but adapted through modifications by the IPCR and field teams (researchers). The SCA was undertaken by teams of IPCR and consultants in two phases:

Phase one involved desk-based research mapping the causes, actors and dynamics of conflict, based on written sources.

Phase two tested the findings of phase one through fieldwork carried out by research teams in all the Nigerian states which endeavoured to involve different stakeholders and interest groups.

Phase two also focused on considering responses and policy options. A team leader collaborated in the writing of a summary report for each phase. The phase two report was also scrutinised in a technical workshop in October 2002 involving a technical panel comprised of experts from the different stakeholder groups (government, donors and civil society).

Outcome and next steps

In terms of future responses, the phase two report provides a detailed agenda for change on the political stage. Recommendations are directed at the different actors, including the federal government, state governments, local governments, civil society, the international community and the IPCR itself. They are divided into recommendations that need immediate, medium term and long-term action (those on which work can start now but where results are not expected for 8-10 years). In particular, the report recommends immediate attention to early warning and conflict prevention in recognition of the lack of Nigerian early warning systems and the absence of systematic provision for preventative responses. The report identifies an over reliance on and limited or even negative effect of military responses.

In order to share the research findings a further stakeholder workshop was held in March 2003 which considered the issue of 'what next' and the roles of different stakeholders in taking the findings forward. The discussion was centred on a number of themes – security sector reform and small arms, early warning and early response, political conflict, social and economic causes, the role of civil society and mainstreaming into donor and government action.

Following from the phase 2 report and stakeholder workshop, a National Action Plan (NAP) has been drafted which outlines a concrete agenda for taking forward the recommendations in the report, including a strategy for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity within government institutions. In terms of progress to date, the SCA process has produced a number of demonstrable steps forward in terms of promoting conflict sensitivity in the Nigerian context. These include:

- steps by the Nigerian government to integrate the findings of the SCA into the PRSP process
- steps taken by donors to review their strategies and approaches on the basis of the analysis
- an increased sense of awareness and empowerment by civil society of the role they can play in pushing the agenda forward.

6. Choosing the right framework for conflict analysis

This section aims to provide guidance on selecting a conflict analysis tool from **Annex 1**, which best corresponds to the needs and capacities of specific organisations. At this point, it is important to note that the tools included in the Resource Pack were selected according to the following criteria:

- sufficient documentation available to describe the tools adequately
- each tool was used by at least one organisation
- the tools cover both micro and macro-level conflict analysis
- the tools represent a wide range of approaches to conflict analysis (especially in terms of targeted audiences and fields of interventions).

Although the project team has gone to some lengths to document the practice and experience of smaller, particularly Southern, organisations (especially in Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka), a brief glance at the list of tools reveals that most have been developed by Northern NGOs and donor agencies. Their perspective on conflict is therefore largely external, thus reflecting the current state of play in the area of formal conflict analysis. In the context of North / South relations, it may therefore be important to enhance cross-fertilisation and shared learning on conflict analysis and the development of conflict analysis tools.

The checklist poses a number of questions that can help organisations think about the type of conflict analysis tool they need. It is not comprehensive and will need to be further adapted to each organisation.

Checklist for selecting a conflict analysis tool**1. Purpose**

- Does the tool provide the information you need for your work?
- Is the proposed process of conflict analysis consistent with your aims?

2. Assumptions

- Do you share the tool's specific understanding of conflict?
- Does this perspective correspond to the mandate and values of your organisation?

3. Methodology

- Does the proposed methodology match the purpose of the analysis?
- Does the proposed methodology agree with the ways of working of your organisation?
- How long does it take to gain results?

4. Resource implications

- What are the resource implications of the selected tool (staff time, travel, seminar costs, facilities, data management)?
- Is your organisation able to allocate the required resources?

5. Availability

- Is the tool available at the time and cost that suit you?
- Can full documentation be accessed?

TABLE 3**Summary of conflict analysis tools listed in Annex 1**

Purpose	Level	Potential users	Assumptions	Methodology	Resources
1. Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) - DFID - DEV*					
Country/regional strategic planning, can also be applied to projects/programmes	Regional, national, local	DFID and partner bilateral / multilateral agencies desk officers	Combine political and economic dimensions; greed/grievance; structures and actors	Combination of desk study and field consultations	Assessment team (5 people). Consultation meetings in-country
2. Benefits / harms handbook - CARE - DEV/HA					
Analysis, impact assessment and project (re)design	Local – mainly project level	NGO project managers, field staff	Focus on rights-based approach	Desk-based and field research and possible workshop consultations	Varies – few hours in emergencies to more detailed workshops / consultations
3. Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) - World Bank - DEV					
Country strategic planning	National, can also be adapted to (sub) regional	Multilateral organisation desk staff / planners	Focus on socio-economic dimensions of conflict	Checklist; Desk studies, workshops, stakeholder consultations, consultants	Full CAF analysis resource intensive (workshops, consultations, consultants); but can be simplified
4. Conflict analysis and response definition - FEWER - PB					
Early warning, country strategic planning	National, local	Diplomats, donor desk officers, NGOs	Focus on conflict dynamics	Ongoing analysis by local civil society organisations	Modest for desk study; more for training or workshops

Purpose	Level	Potential users	Assumptions	Methodology	Resources
5. EC Checklist for root causes of conflict - European Commission - DEV					
Early warning, strategic and programme planning	National, regional	Multi- and bilateral donor desk officers, diplomatic actors	Focus on structural root causes of conflict	Checklist; external research capacity	Limited as mainly desk-based
6. Working with conflict: skills and strategies for action - Responding to conflict - PB					
Conflict analysis, programme planning	Local, national	Local and INGO staff, field and headquarters	Focus on understanding conflicts	Collection of tools for participatory conflict analysis	Limited depending on format (workshop, consultation meetings etc)
7. Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (MSTC): Analysis tools for humanitarian actors - World Vision - DEV / HA					
Conflict analysis, project planning	National, regional	NGO emergency response, development and advocacy staff	Focus on chronic political instability, dovetails with Do No Harm	Collection of tools, flexible application	Variable, depending on use of tools, desk study or consultations
8. Do No Harm / Local capacities for peace project					
Conflict analysis, project monitoring and impact assessment	Local	Donor, NGO (international and local) staff	Focus on dividers and connectors in conflict	Workshop, integration into standard procedures	Limited, for workshop
9. Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework (CPAF) - Clingendael Institute - DEV / F					
Conflict analysis, country strategic planning	National, sectoral	Donor and embassy staff	Focus on indicators of internal conflict and state failure	External research capacity, workshops	Costs of preparing for and holding workshops, can include external consultant involvement
10. Early Warning and Preventive Measures - UN Staff College - ALL					
Early warning, conflict analysis, design	National	UN staff (HQ and field), other donor agencies or NGOs	Focus on human security and human rights framework	Training/workshop setting	Training materials, facilitation, workshop / training costs
11. Conflict assessment framework - USAID - DEV					
Conflict analysis, country and project planning	National	Donor desk officers, implementing partners, other US government officials	Broad scope, synthesis of other tools	Desk study, workshop, follow up integration into programming strategy	For desk study, in country visit and follow-up work.
12. Conflict analysis for project planning and implementation - GTZ - DEV					
Conflict analysis, country and project planning	National, project	Donor, NGO desk officers, project managers	Broad scope, synthesis of other tools	Combination of desk study and empirical research, tools for participatory conflict analysis	Costs of organising workshops and consultation meetings

Purpose	Level	Potential users	Assumptions	Methodology	Resources
13. FAST methodology - Swiss Peace - DEV / FP					
Early warning, risk assessments	National, can be sub-regional	Government ministries, development agencies, NGOs, international organisations	Event data analysis (quantitative and qualitative)	Field information collection, desk-based analysis	Resource intensive for maintaining local information networks and specialist analysis network
14. Conflict diagnostic handbook - CPR / CIDA - PB / DEV					
Conflict and stakeholder assessment	Country, regional	Development practitioners	Devising evidence-based peacebuilding strategies	Mainly workshop setting analysis	Costs of organising and presenting workshop
15. Better Programming Initiative - IFRC - HA					
Conflict assessment, training	Programme; local, national, regional	Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies, delegation and other staff	Focus on aid fostering long-term reconciliation and recovery	Analysis and training	Depending on scope of assessment or length of training
*Field of activity					
DEV Development					
HA Humanitarian Assistance					
PB Peacebuilding					
FP Foreign Policy					

7. Endnotes

¹Programme team research. See also, Federal Government of Nigeria, “Strategic Conflict Assessment Nigeria: Consolidated report”, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, October 2002.

Annex 1: Tools for conflict analysis

1. Strategic Conflict Assessment

Version / Date of issue **January 2002**

Name of organisation **DFID**

Author(s)

Jonathan Goodhand, Tony Vaux, Robert Walker

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis and planning tool (mainly to prepare country/regional strategies, also applicable to individual projects and programmes).

Suggested purposes are to assess:

- risks of negative effects of conflict on programmes
- risks of programmes or policies exacerbating conflict
- opportunities to improve the effectiveness of development interventions in contributing to conflict prevention and reduction.

Intended users

Principally aimed at staff at DFID and partner bilateral and multilateral agencies. The methodology can be used as the basis for regional, national and local level analysis in order to map responses and their impacts to date, and to develop strategies and options for more conflict sensitive policies and programmes.

Levels of application

Regional / country level and local level.

Conceptual assumptions

The Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) methodology is intended as a flexible framework that can be adapted as needed, rather than a standardised approach. The conceptual basis for the SCA is the combined use of the following analytical 'lenses':

- the 'political economy' approach that focuses on the political and social interests of those engaged in conflict, drawing attention to those who may benefit from the continuation of the conflict
- analysis of the causes of conflict in terms of 'greed' (opportunities for accumulation or benefit from conflict) and 'grievance' (negative reactions of those who are disadvantaged)
- combined analysis of structures and actors and how they interact with one another
- identification of the different layers/dimensions of the conflict (international, regional, national and local)
- recognition of the dynamic character of conflicts, which may mean that root causes of violent conflict change and

are reshaped in protracted conflicts.

Main steps and suggested process

The methodology is based on the following three analytical steps:



Within each step, the following areas are investigated:

A. Conflict analysis

1. Structures

Analysis of long-term factors underlying conflict: security, political, economic, social

2. Actors

Analysis of conflict actors: interests, relations, capacities, peace agendas, incentives

3. Dynamics

Analysis of long-term trends of conflict, triggers for increased violence, capacities (institutions, processes) for managing conflict, likely future conflict scenarios

B. Analysis of international responses

1. International actors

- Map interests and policies of international actors: military and security, diplomatic, trade, immigration, development
- Assess level of coherence
- Analyse impacts on conflict dynamics.

2. Development actors

- Map magnitude and focus of development policy/programmes
- Analyse development actors' approaches to conflict: in, on or around?
- Assess capacities to work effectively 'in' and 'on' conflict
- Assess potential to influence conflict and peace dynamics.

3. Interactions between development interventions and conflict

- Assess impact of conflict on development policy and programmes
- Assess impact of development interventions on dynamics of conflict and peace.

C. Developing strategies and options

- Identify possible strategies in terms of:
 1. developing common donor approaches to better respond to conflict
 2. developing conflict sensitive individual donor approaches
 3. adjusting current activities – working 'in' or 'on' conflict, developing new initiatives.

The following process (for a donor country assessment) is suggested:

Desk study

- Review of relevant documents from a variety of sources
- Interviews with key stakeholders in the donor country.

Field work

- Internal consultation with donor staff (development agency, embassy)
- Stakeholder consultation (possibly series of workshops with range of stakeholders within and outside the capital)
- Debriefing workshop with donor staff and small expert group to feed back and discuss results.

Drafting conflict assessment document

Guiding questions / indicators

The tool provides useful examples of sources of conflict and tension, conflict actors, conflict triggers, conflict scenarios, donor policy instruments and possible conflict prevention strategies. The examples refer to specific countries; no general lists are provided.

Required resources

Suggested composition of a country-level conflict assessment team:

- team leader (18 working days)
- international consultant (25 working days, includes preparation of final report)
- two in-country project consultants (10 working days each)
- conflict adviser (10 working days)
- social development adviser (10 working days).

However, this will depend on the context in which the conflict assessment framework will be applied, the end users of the analysis, and their objectives.

Current applications

DFID has applied the conflict assessment methodology to a range of country studies, including Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Sri Lanka and the Caucasus. There has also been a multi-donor assessment in Nigeria, which included DFID, on the basis of the SCA framework.

Lessons learnt

The following methodological and practical lessons have been learned from applying the Strategic Conflict Assessments (SCAs):

- SCAs have improved the quality of analysis across UK government departments and encouraged a more joined-up approach. They have provided a framework within which to assess new proposals and have been useful in designing coherent, strategic interventions.
- there is a need to determine the SCAs' target audiences and purpose in the design phase. A limited audience enables a more critical analysis, whereas a wider audience necessitates more sensitivity and potential watering down. If other relevant ministries are involved and have a serious stake in the outcome of the process, a strongly worded analysis could limit efforts to engage in

subtle diplomatic pressure.

- there is a need to be clear about why and when to conduct SCAs; in particular, they should be timed to coincide with a natural pause or turning point in the programme cycle, or before launching a new programme.
- composition of the team is a crucial element in its success; it is important to encompass expertise from a number of different areas in order to widen and deepen the quality of the analysis. It is also good to have a combination of external and local consultants.
- there is a need to achieve the right balance between contextual analysis and programme design. In this sense, it is important to have as wide an analysis as possible so that the complexity of the conflict could be properly understood before converting it into programme ideas.
- precise recommendations on what action to take next bring added value to SCAs. They also help overcome the feeling that the process could be an extra burden, eg describing exactly what response needs to be taken, who should be responsible for taking it, which NGO to work with, and how much funding would be required.
- it is essential to have active participation of in-country staff to inform the purpose and approach and a staff member dedicated to the follow-up and implementation of recommendations.
- SCAs should be conducted in a timeframe of about six weeks up to two months, depending on the depth and scope of the study. A minimum of two weeks for field research and two weeks for the writing-up process is recommended. Reports should be published immediately after the assessment to guarantee timely relevance.
- the practical application of the SCA depends on the conflict expertise of the users and whether or not they 'ask the right questions'. Less experienced staff may require induction, training and support.

(A different approach was followed in the Strategic Conflict Assessment in Nigeria in that an NGO led the process and support came from 4 different donors (including DFID). The lessons learned from that process are therefore different).

Commentary on the tool

- The tool presents a very comprehensive form of conflict analysis, but with a methodological basis that is designed to be tailored to suit specific contexts and end users.
- Some parts of the analysis outputs may become out of date quickly, and a higher level strategic assessment may not be appropriate as the basis for designing micro-level projects or sectoral interventions without further specific contextual analysis. It would therefore be ideal to complement the conflict assessment methodology with a lighter tool for more continuous monitoring of the programme and conflict situation.
- The tool can be used at any point in the programming cycle and at various points in the conflict cycle in a country (ie pre-conflict, post-conflict etc).

Available reports

The Strategic Conflict Assessment (*Conducting Conflict*

Assessments: Guidance Notes is available on the DFID website, under the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>). Reports on conflict assessments on Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan, as well as a synthesis report on Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Nepal and Sri Lanka are also available on the above website.

A 'lessons learned' report on the Strategic Conflict Assessment in Nigeria (conducted by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Nigerian Presidency, with support from DFID, the World Bank, USAID and UNDP) is available by contacting the address below.

Contact details

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Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department
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2. Benefits / harms handbook

Version / Date of issue **September 2001**

Name of organisation **CARE**

Author(s)

Paul O'Brien

Primary purpose

To help humanitarian and development workers take responsibility for the impact of their work on people's human rights. It offers a set of *simple interrogative tools* that help staff think more deeply and effectively about the impacts of their work, and taking responsibility for both positive and negative impacts. It also provides a framework for monitoring potential negative or unintended impacts, as well as ways to mitigate these.

Intended users

NGO project managers and other field staff and consultants working in the areas of development and humanitarian assistance. The methodology may also be of interest to national government officials and possibly donors.

Levels of application

Project level, although the concepts could be applied at other levels as well.

Conceptual assumptions

1. Human-rights approach

CARE's human rights-based approach to relief and development presupposes that all people are entitled to certain minimum conditions of living with dignity (human rights). Relief and development organisations aim to help people achieve these conditions, thereby acknowledging their human responsibility to do so. This implies they take responsibility for the human rights impact of their work – whether positive or negative. Human rights are therefore the central criteria for analysing the overall impact of a project.

2. Analytical framework

The methodology is based on three categories of human rights and impacts:

- political rights and impacts (eg right to equality and recognition before the law, right to a fair trial, freedom of thought and expression, right to association and political participation)
- security rights and impacts (eg right to life, liberty, security of person, movement, freedom from torture, forced displacement, degrading treatment, sexual assault, arbitrary arrest)
- economic, social and cultural rights and impacts (eg livelihood security, nutrition, food security, water, health, education, clean environment, shelter, participation in one's culture).

Main steps and suggested process

The benefits / harms handbook contains tools for situation analysis (profile tools), impact assessment (impact tools), and project (re)design (decision tools). In particular:

- profile tools help users gain a more comprehensive understanding of the contexts in which they work
- impact tools help users think about the unintended impacts of their work
- decision tools help users work through difficult decisions when there is a real danger of harming people with an intervention.

The handbook assumes that most of the information required to answer the tools' questions is already available from the organisation's field staff. Further information can be gathered from individuals familiar with the local situation, who are invited for consultation. If the organisation has been working in the area for some time already, it is recommended to hold a workshop inviting middle-level and field staff as well as local experts. For assessing a new project, the questions in the tools may be put to the local community in a sensitive way.

Guiding questions / indicators

The profile, impact and decision tools are organised according to the three categories of human rights, namely: political, security and economic, social and cultural rights.

In addition, the profile tool also focuses on rights, responsibilities and underlying causes, in order to help users think about the underlying causes of any human rights problem. To this end, consideration is given to the actions, attitudes and artifices (eg systems and structures) that cause the rights problem.

Required resources

Depends on the required research. A few hours talking through the profile tools with local staff are considered enough in emergency situations. Otherwise, workshops with field staff, decision makers and possibly additional experts are recommended.

Current applications

Projects in East Africa must conduct a benefits / harms analysis before starting implementation. The intention is twofold:

- to conduct such an analysis prior to implementation
- to ensure that the benefits / harms thinking also pervades the project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learnt

It is not possible to design a totally 'harm-free' project upfront, so that equal emphasis needs to be placed on the follow up, in the form of an ongoing benefits / harms analysis during the project implementation, and the identification of ways to mitigate potential negative impacts.

Commentary on the tool

The benefits / harms tools themselves are fairly straightforward to use and capacity can be built quickly. But

it takes organisational commitment to make them work.

Available reports

An electronic copy of the handbook is available on request.

Contact details

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3. Conflict Analysis Framework

Version / Date of issue October 2002
Name of organisation World Bank
Author(s) Per Wam, Shonali Sardesai
Primary purpose Conflict analysis tool
Intended users Desk officers / planners in donor development organisations (World Bank staff).
Levels of application Country level, in preparation of country strategies, poverty reduction strategies, policies and individual programmes. It can also be adapted for use at the (sub) regional level.
Conceptual assumptions The contribution of development organisations, such as the World Bank, to conflict prevention is regarded as threefold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making countries more resilient to the eruption and escalation of violent conflict by strengthening participatory and inclusive social processes and institutions that may help manage conflicts in non-violent ways addressing factors related to conflict and determine their links with poverty - sources (including roots) of conflicts; opportunities for groups to engage in violent activities and the consequences of conflict determining the factors that can be addressed through World Bank assisted strategies, and the modalities through which they can best be managed.
Main steps and suggested process The World Bank's methodology includes two stages, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a <i>screening process</i>, aimed to test whether it is (or not) appropriate to undertake a full conflict analysis in the country under consideration. The screening considers a set of nine indicators of potential violence a <i>full conflict analysis</i> process, on the basis of the Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF). The following steps are recommended for conducting a CAF-based conflict analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reinterpretation of existing information on the conflict situation of a country along the lines of the CAF (brief desk study) workshops with country specialists to cover each of the six CAF categories and analysis of variables along a set of specific dimensions, that will help determine a country's overall position relative to conflict follow-up studies, as needed, on issues identified in the

workshop and monitoring of issues identified as conflict-sensitive

- stakeholder analysis to identify and examine groups who have the ability to affect political and social change, including violence, and the main groups who are likely to be affected by such changes
- country consultation with different stakeholder groups, as needed
- concluding workshops to discuss integration of the above issues into the poverty reduction strategy, country strategy or other country programmes.

CAF can be conducted as a stand-alone analysis or integrated into a more comprehensive macro-social analysis (for more information, see www.worldbank.org/socialanalysisresourcebook).

Guiding questions / indicators

A. Risk screening indicators

Although none of these factors alone is necessary or sufficient to determine the outbreak, escalation or resumption of violent conflict, they have been found to be statistically highly related to conflict.

B. Conflict Analysis Framework

Categories of variables

- Social and ethnic relations*, eg social cleavages, group identity-building, bridging social capital
- Governance and political institutions*, eg stability of political institutions, equity of law
- Human rights and security*, eg human rights status, militarisation of society, role of media
- Economic structure and performance*, eg income disparities, income changes
- Environment and natural resources*, eg availability of and access to natural resources
- External factors*, eg regional conflicts, role of diasporas.

Desk officers are encouraged to use their knowledge of the country to identify those variables which seem most relevant to the conflict in question.

These variables are analysed according to the following **dimensions**:

- History / changes*: how the variable has developed/changed over a relevant time span?
- Dynamics / trends*: what is determining the future path of the variable and how is it likely to develop?
- Public perceptions*: public attitudes and biases regarding the variable
- Politicization*: how the variable is used politically by groups and organizations;
- Organisation*: the extent to which the variable has led to the establishment of interest organisations, and / or influenced political parties and militant organisations
- Link to conflict and intensity*: how the variable contributes to conflict and the current level of intensity
- Link to poverty*: how the variable relates to poverty.

Based on the analysis of variables, desk officers are also

encouraged to examine linkages between variables.

Required resources

- Considerable resources are required to conduct a full CAF, including expert workshops, stakeholder consultations and the deployment of consultants.
- While a full CAF (desk and field work) may require considerable resources, this is not a necessity. It is possible to conduct a CAF via a simpler and less expensive process, including two to three-day workshops, desk studies, etc. It is also possible to adapt CAF to the country context by identifying a few conflict sensitive variables and monitoring them on a regular basis.

Current applications

CAF is being applied to Venezuela, Burundi (in co-operation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)), Rwanda and Somalia.

Lessons learnt

A lessons learnt document on the above applications is being planned for the end of 2003.

Commentary on the tool

N/A

Available Reports

The CAF methodology can be obtained at:
cpr@worldbank.org.

Contact details

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World Bank

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4. Conflict analysis and response definition

Version / Date of issue **April 2001**

Name of organisation **Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Centre for Conflict Research (CCR)**

Author(s)

FEWER (adapted by WANEP)

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis. It provides an analytical and action framework, which will help plan preliminary responses to early warning.

Intended users

Diplomatic and development actors, mainly desk officers and policy makers in foreign policy and development departments. Indigenous and international NGOs engaged in early warning.

Levels of application

Country level, although an adaptation of the methodology to look at local conflicts has also proven useful.

Conceptual assumptions

The methodology is designed as a 'quick tool', which can provide insight into overall trends. It is not meant as a substitute for more sustained conflict analysis, monitoring and consultations.

The key assumption is:

"(a) Conflict trends – (b) peace trends +/- (c) stakeholder trends = overall trends."

Main steps and suggested process

Conflict analysis consists of four broad steps:

1. analysis of conflict indicators (root causes, proximate causes and conflict triggers in the areas of politics/security, economy and socio-culture)
2. analysis of peace indicators (systems, processes and tools sustaining peace in a given society, in the areas of politics/security, economy and socio-culture)
3. stakeholder analysis (agenda/power, needs and actions of stakeholders in areas of politics/security, economy and socio-culture)

In each of these three areas, the analyst is asked to establish linkages and synergies between the indicators/stakeholders identified and build three scenarios (best-case, status-quo, worst-case)

4. summary analysis: using the above formulae, the predominant trends in the areas of conflict and peace indicators as well as among stakeholders are brought together to determine overall conflict trends. Again, three overall scenarios are formulated.

The methodology can be used for a desk study or to facilitate a conflict analysis workshop. Participants mainly draw on their existing knowledge of the conflict, little new research is required.

Guiding questions / indicators

For illustrative purposes, the methodology contains an extensive list of conflict and peace indicators for the Caucasus and the Great Lakes Region, which were generated during FEWER's early warning activities.

Required resources

Modest resources are required for desk study, workshop or trainings based on the methodology.

Current applications

WANEP has been using this methodology internally for their own peace-building work, as well as training with other actors in most countries in West Africa (Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal, Gambia) and ECOWAS. WANEP has developed numerous policy briefs including briefs on Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia. Policy briefs are targeted broadly at various levels, including governments, the UN, ECOWAS, the EU and international NGOs. Their methodology has also been applied in the form of a training of trainers in East Africa.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) also asked WANEP to work on the provision of training on conflict methodologies, based on the FEWER/WANEP/CCR approach and experiences.

Lessons learnt

- Good analysis is appreciated by stakeholders, including policy makers, and allows *track 1* at national level to be influenced in positive ways by *track 2* peace-building and conflict prevention activities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the policy briefs produced by the West Africa Early Warning and Response Network (WARN) impacted on the Makousis and Accra Accords.
- The conflict analysis tool provides a standard tool which facilitates the production of easily-digested policy briefs.
- The tool has served a useful purpose in supporting the engendering of early warning systems in West Africa.
- With the use of this approach, good conflict analysis enabled various assessments at various levels, from community to national levels. In turn, strategic programme planning and intervention processes were well facilitated. These valuable lessons emerged from civil society intervention programmes in Sierra Leone.
- In situations where violence had escalated, facilitating a conflict analysis amongst primary and secondary conflict stakeholders brought about clarity in terms of appreciating outstanding issues and working collaboratively to resolve the issues.
- Many conflicts in West Africa thrive on conflict systems that are located across national borders. Conflict analysis has influenced policy making to appreciate regional approaches to conflict prevention rather than limiting these approaches to what appear to be internal conflicts.

Commentary on the tool

Although primarily designed for country level conflict analysis, the experience of applying the methodology has shown that in countries such as Nigeria and Ghana conflicts are more localised, but with the potential for national destabilisation. The adaptation of the methodology to look at such local level communal conflicts has proved useful.

Available reports

The conflict analysis and response definition approach, as well as related policy briefs are available at www.fewer.org and www.wanep.org.

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5. EC checklist for root causes of conflict

Version / Date of issue **2001**

Name of organisation **European Commission**

Author(s)

European Commission, based on the contribution of the Conflict Prevention Network (CPN).

Primary purpose

Awareness raising / early warning and pro-active agenda setting

Intended users

Decision makers and desk officers in bilateral and multilateral donor organisations. It is most relevant to diplomatic and development actors

Levels of application

Country and regional levels.

Conceptual assumptions

N / A

Main steps and suggested process

The checklist is filled in by European Commission desk officers and delegation staff, on the basis of their general knowledge of the country and other open sources of information. Subsequent statistical analysis allows the addition of other quantitative data (eg UNDP Human Development Index) and the clustering of results according to category.

Guiding questions / indicators

The checklist uses the following root causes of conflict / early warning indicators:

- legitimacy of the state*: are there proper checks and balances in the political system? How inclusive is the political/administrative power? What is the overall level of respect for national authorities? Is corruption widespread?
- rule of law*: how strong is the judicial system? Does unlawful state violence exist? Does civilian power control security forces? Does organised crime undermine the country's stability?
- respect for fundamental rights*: are civil and political freedoms respected? Are religious and cultural rights respected? Are other basic human rights respected?
- civil society and media*: can civil society operate freely and efficiently? How independent and professional are the media?
- relations between communities and dispute-solving mechanisms*: how good are relations between identity groups? Does the state arbitrate over tensions and disputes between communities? Are there uncontrolled flows of migrants/refugees?
- sound economic management*: how robust is the

economy? Is the policy framework conducive to macro-economic stability? How sustainable is the state's environmental policy?

7. *social and regional inequalities*: how are social welfare policies addressed? How are social inequalities tackled? How are regional disparities tackled?

8. *geopolitical situation*: how stable is the region's geopolitical situation? Is the state affected by external threats? Is the state affecting regional stability?

In the original tool, each question is further specified by two to four sub-questions.

Required resources

Mainly desk-based tool, limited resources required.

Current applications

- In preparation for the January 2002 debate on potential conflict issues, conflict assessments were carried out by Commission desk officers and EC delegations for more than 120 countries, on the basis of the indicators. The objectives were:
 - to increase awareness, within the EU decision making forums, of the problems of those countries/regions with the highest assessed risk of an outbreak, continuation or re-emergence of conflict
 - to heighten efforts to ensure that EU policies (and in particular EC ones) contribute to conflict prevention/resolution.

Countries receiving highest scores were drawn to the attention of the General Affairs Council through a confidential 'watch list'. The watch list is subject to constant revision, on the basis of the above indicators.

- When drafting the political analysis section of the Commission's country and regional strategy papers, risk factors contained in the checklist are systematically reviewed by the Commission's geographical services and, on the basis of the conflict analysis, attention is drawn to conflict prevention focused activities that external aid should target.

Lessons learnt

- Although the checklist is relatively new, generally EC desk officers and delegations are positive about the usefulness of the tool. It is regarded as an important step forward for mainstreaming conflict prevention and addressing structural causes of conflict through EU policies and programmes. In order to streamline the procedure further, a web-based platform is under development.
- In order to further improve the efficiency of the checklist, the following actions are being considered:
 - a review of the appropriateness of the indicators and the clusters, with a view to identifying whether more indicators should be added or whether indicators should be further adapted to specific geographical regions.
 - more specialised training for desk officers and delegations on the root causes checklist – using the checklist requires allocating a rating to each indicator

(from 0-4) and thus involves a certain measure of personal perception. The training would help ensure that the results of the analysis can be assessed consistently and comparatively.

- another possible use for the checklist would be to apply it, in the Commission's interactions with partners (eg EU member states, international organisations, NGOs, etc).

Commentary on the tool

- The checklist exercise needs to be placed in the context of the Communication from the Commission on conflict prevention and the EU programme for the prevention of violent conflicts, which highlighted the need to move the timescale for EU action forward, becoming progressively more pro-active and less reactive. It also promotes the notion that an early identification of risk factors increases the chances of timely and effective action to address the underlying causes of conflict.
- The checklist is only one of the tools that the Commission has at its disposal for monitoring and early warning. Others include regular reporting from Delegations and desk officers on issues related to the economic and political developments in concerned countries, open source information via the Commission's crisis room, and ECHO's disaster monitoring system, known as ICONS (Impeding Crisis Online New System).

Available reports

The checklist for root causes of conflict is available on the EC website (http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cpcm/cp/list.htm).

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6. Working with conflict: skills and strategies for action

Version / Date of issue **2000**

Name of organisation **Responding to Conflict (RTC)**

Authors

Simon Fisher, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, Jawed Ludin, Richard Smith, Steve Williams, Sue Williams

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis and intervention within the framework of conflict transformation (the handbook contains tools for analysis, planning, implementation and impact monitoring)

Intended users

Local and international NGOs, field and headquarters staff, mainly working on peacebuilding. Individual tools can be applied in a wide range of contexts, including development co-operation and humanitarian assistance. It is also used by national governments and donors.

Levels of application

Mainly project level and local conflicts, although it is also applicable to country-level analysis.

Conceptual assumptions

Conflict is complex, dynamic and a part of life. When it is violent it becomes destructive.

Conflict transformation is a holistic and multifaceted process of engaging with conflict. It aims to reduce violence and bring about sustainable justice and peace. It requires work in all spheres, at all levels and with all stakeholders.

The handbook contains an easily accessible introductory section on understanding conflict, which deals with different ways of making sense of conflict and violence, concepts of conflict transformation and the nature of peace processes. A further section is devoted to critical issues in conflict analysis, including power, culture, identity, gender and rights. Generally, the handbook takes a value-based approach to conflict, which is firmly grounded on the principles of active non-violence.

Main steps and suggested process

The handbook contains a series of tools for analysing conflict. The aim is to reach a multi-dimensional analysis of the conflict and find entry points for action. An important aspect is the inclusion of stakeholders in the analytical and decision-making process.

1. Stages of conflict

- Identify stages of conflict
- Predict future patterns
- Select particular episode for further analysis

This tool identifies the different stages, levels and patterns of intensity of a conflict over a specific period of time. It assists in identifying indicators for different stages of

conflict and violence. Stages of conflict can be used to represent different perceptions of a conflict.

2. Timelines

- Clarify local conflict history
- Help people know and accept each other's understandings of history

This step provides graphic plotting of key conflict-related and other events against a particular timescale. It also highlights the different perceptions of the parties in the conflict.

3. Conflict mapping

- Identify actors, issues and relationships
- Identify potential allies and entry points for action

This tool helps visualising relationships between conflict actors (it can also include geographical mapping, mapping of issues or power alignments, mapping of needs and fears). The power relationships become evident through the relative size of actors in the diagram, lines between actors symbolise type of relationship (eg alliance, conflict over particular issue)

4. ABC (Attitudes, Behaviour and Context) Triangle

- Gain insight into motivations of conflict parties and the structures or systems in place that contribute to the conflict
- Identify the key needs of each party
- Find entry points.

For each conflict party, drawing an ABC triangle helps to understand the position from which each party is approaching conflict, the context within which conflict is taking place, and identifies key needs.

5. Onion

- Move beyond public positions of each party
- Prepare for facilitation, mediation or problem solving interventions.

For each conflict party, an 'onion' of three concentric circles is drawn. These represent, from inside to outside, needs ('what we must have'), interests ('what we really want'), and positions ('what we say we want'). It helps identify common ground between groups as basis for further discussions.

6. Conflict tree

- Relates causes and effects to each other, and helps to focus interventions
- Facilitates decision making on work priorities

A tree symbolises the core problem of the conflict (trunk), its underlying causes (roots) and effects (branches). It helps reaching agreement in groups on the core problem to be addressed, and shows the links between the underlying causes and the effects.

7. Force-field analysis (adapted)

- Clarify negative and positive forces that are working for or against the continuation of violent conflict
- Develop strategies for reducing/eliminating the negative and building on positive forces

It helps provide a visual analysis of positive and negative factors influencing a desired change or plan of action.

Positive and negative forces are listed in parallel columns with arrows symbolising their relative strength.

8. Pillars

- Find ways to weaken or remove factors supporting a negative situation.

Upside-down triangle symbolises a (negative) situation, which is upheld by 'pillars' representing the forces maintaining this situation. This step increases understanding of structures sustaining an undesirable situation.

9. Pyramid

- Find right approaches for working at different levels
- Position own work
- Identify potential allies.

Two to three levelled pyramids show stakeholders at different levels of the conflict (eg top, middle, grass roots). It helps identify key actors/leadership and links between levels.

Most tools are best used during a workshop or community meeting, or within a team. Users can select and combine tools according to their specific needs. Most tools are more effective when used with the active involvement of communities and are designed to deepen their understanding of conflict issues. They need to be used with sensitivity to local circumstances.

Guiding questions / indicators

Refer to individual tools.

Required resources

None, except a familiarity with the tools.

Current applications

The RTC approach is used extensively in countries in situations of crisis or in post-settlement peace-building, both by external interveners and by those taking action for change in their own situations. They have been, and are being, applied in a wide variety of contexts, from local government offices in the UK, through international NGOs such as World Vision and Oxfam (West India), to pastoralist communities in North-eastern Kenya.

Lessons learnt

- Using and developing the tools assist people to express their perspectives and understanding of the situation, as all perspectives are seen as valuable. The debate is focused on the issue rather than the individuals. This gives a more complete picture to all involved and clarifies the understanding of all.
- It is important to use some or, indeed, all of the tools together, as a package, in order to gain full and nuanced understanding of complex conflict situations.
- Adaptation of the tools to make them more familiar to participants is helpful – for example in parts of Kenya the Conflict Stages diagram is referred to as the 'camel's hump'.

Commentary on the tool

Analysis is not a one-off activity. Because conflict, violence and peace are dynamic, analysis needs to be regularly updated.

Available reports

Some reports can be obtained on application from Responding to Conflict and from various peace networks globally, such as ACTION for Conflict Transformation, Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA – South and East Africa), Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU – Afghanistan) and West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

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7. Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (MSTC): Analysis tools for humanitarian actors

Version / Date of issue **January 2003**

Name of organisation **World Vision**

Authors

Stephen Jackson with Siobhan Calthrop

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis and planning

Intended users

Initially designed for emergency response staff of international NGOs. It is also useful for staff involved in planning and design of development or advocacy programmes in countries experiencing instability.

Levels of application

Country and regional levels.

Conceptual assumptions

1. 'Turbulent Contexts'

Refers to what the humanitarian sector is calling **Situations of Chronic Political Instability (SCPI)**. This term expands the notion of 'complex humanitarian emergency' to reflect the long-term, cyclical and political nature of many of these contexts. It covers phenomena such as cyclical conflict, violence against civilians, political unrest, extreme polarisation of wealth, natural disasters over a number of years, population displacement, and the need for humanitarian assistance. The emphasis is on the chronic and political nature of these contexts.

2. MSTC Tools

These tools are based on recent research on the economy of war, but do not oppose 'greed' and 'grievance'. Rather, the methodology aims at capturing both the economic agendas in war *and* the social dynamics (eg around class, gender, identity, history, belief systems) leading to violence. The MSTC analysis uses specially designed, practical tools to peel away the political, economic and socio-historic layers of complex conflicts.

MSTC was designed to dovetail with the Do No Harm approach. It provides for detailed contextual information at the meso- and macro-level, on which Do No Harm can then build.

Main steps and suggested process

MSTC analysis provides five tools to answer the following key questions:

1. What **phases** has the context moved through? (Rapid Historical Phase Analysis)
2. What are the **symptoms of instability**? (Symptoms of

Instability Analysis)

3. What kinds of **actors** are at play in the growing instability? (Actor Characteristics Analysis)

4. What struggles over **resources and power** have played a role in the growing instability? (Political Economy of Instability Analysis)

5. What **resentment and stereotypes** have played a role in the growing instability? (Inter-group Relationship Analysis)

There are two further tools, one to synthesise the analysis (SCPI Mapping) and the other to outline possible future scenarios (Scenario and Sensitivity Analysis).

Other tools are also available in the annex, including the iceberg method inspired by the UN Early Warning and Preventive Measures methodology (see *Survey of conflict causes as explained in tool 10*) that can be used to complement the 'Symptoms of Instability Analysis', in order to identify the structural causes that lie behind the immediate causes identified within the MSTC process.

Guiding questions / indicators

Refer to individual tools

Required resources

Variable, as modules can be combined in different ways.

Current applications

- It has recently been applied by World Vision Sudan and will be undertaken in Kosovo and Uganda (planned for July / August 2003). There are also plans to use these tools, combined with other tried and tested tools, for an inter-agency analysis of Iraq.
- Key World Vision humanitarian, policy and programme staff have been exposed to it.

Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt are yet to be gathered, as it is still early in the test stage. It is nonetheless planned that key practitioners involved in the test runs will be brought together by the end of 2004 for the review and revision of the tools.

However, key lessons learnt so far include:

- the need for flexibility in the choice of tools used
- the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in the dissemination of findings
- the usefulness of the tools for strategic planning in general
- the need to consider simplifying the tools.

Commentary on the tool

The tool is still in its infancy, and yet to be fully tested, but early indications are that it is very useful for conflict-sensitive programming (emergency or longer-term development) in areas where macro-level analysis has been neglected. It is also useful for the analysis of 'clusters of countries', i.e. regions, where causal factors are cross-border.

Available reports

Reports of MSTC analysis findings for the above countries

are not available owing to sensitivities.

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8. Do No Harm / Local capacities for peace project

Version / Date of issue 2001
Name of organisation Collaborative for Development Action (CDA)
Author Mary Anderson
Primary purpose Micro conflict analysis, project planning and programme quality, and impact assessment of programme on conflict
Intended users Field staff of international or local NGOs, also widespread among donor agencies (headquarters and field offices). It is primarily targeted at humanitarian organisations, but is also applicable to development co-operation and peacebuilding.
Levels of application Project level
Conceptual assumptions Aid is not neutral in the midst of conflict. Aid and how it is administered can cause harm or can strengthen peace capacities in the midst of conflicted communities. All aid programmes involve the transfer of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment. Where people are in conflict, these resources represent power and wealth and they become an element of the conflict. Some people attempt to control and use aid resources to support their side of the conflict and to weaken the other side. If they are successful or if aid staff fail to recognise the impact of their programming decisions, aid can cause harm. However, the transfer of resources and the manner in which staff conduct the programmes can strengthen local capacities for peace, build on connectors that bring communities together, and reduce the divisions and sources of tensions that can lead to destructive conflict. To do no harm and to support local capacities for peace requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> careful analysis of the context of conflict and the aid programme, examining how aid interacts with the conflict, and a willingness to create options and redesign programmes to improve its quality careful reflection on staff conduct and organisational policies so that the ‘implicit ethical messages’ that are sent communicate congruent messages that strengthen local capacities for peace.
Main steps and suggested process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse dividers and sources of tensions between groups: Systems & Institutions; Attitudes & Actions; [Different] Values & Interests; [Different] Experiences; Symbols & Occasions.

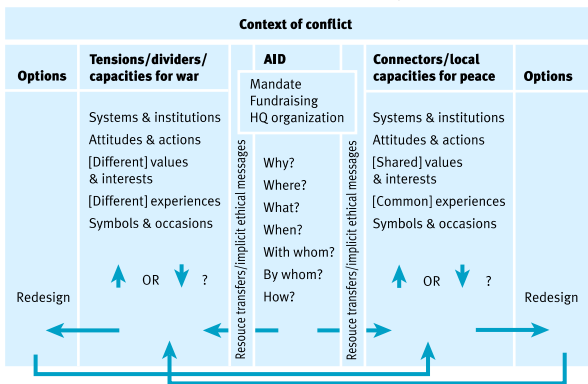
- Analyse **connectors** across subgroups and Local Capacities for Peace: Systems & Institutions; Attitudes & Actions; [Shared] Values & Interests; [Shared] Experiences; Symbols & Occasions.
- Analyse the **aid programme**: mission, mandate, headquarters; describe the local programme in terms of why; where; what; when; with whom; by whom and how.
- Analyse the aid programme’s **impact** on dividers/tensions and connectors / local capacities for peace: is the programme design, its activities, or its personnel increasing or decreasing dividers / tensions? Is it supporting or undercutting connectors / local capacities for peace?
- Consider **options** for programming redesign and re-check the impact on dividers / tensions and connectors / local capacities for peace: how can the programme details be redesigned so it will ‘Do No Harm’ and strengthen local capacities for peace? Ensure the redesign options avoid negative impacts on the dividers or connectors.

The Do No Harm framework is generally used by a group of practitioners familiar with the context and project. In this sense, most data is drawn from the participants. However, there are times when information gaps are identified and data is collected from other sources to improve the quality of the analysis.

It does not include explicit conflict and peace indicators. However, there are many implicit indicators that can be made explicit, through a *community-based process of indicator development*. Such indicators could include a just distribution of resources, creating or strengthening networks of relationships across divisions, strengthening good governance, the use of participatory processes for decision making, supporting traditional or indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and reconciliation, inclusion of diversity of ethnic or religious groups, gender, or youth in programme activities and leadership structures.

Guiding questions / indicators

The Do No Harm Framework for considering the impact of aid on conflict



Required resources
Limited, if conducted in workshop format.

Current applications
The Do No Harm methodology is widely used among

international and increasingly local humanitarian and development organisations. In Germany, for example, a large group of NGOs has committed themselves to mainstreaming Do No Harm within their operations. While engaged in the early development of the tool in collaboration with CDA, World Vision has also moved toward a process of mainstreaming the use of the Do No Harm framework since 2001. To this end, workshops, training of trainers, programme assessments and case studies of the use of the above framework have been undertaken worldwide.

Lessons learnt

- The Do No Harm framework is an approach that is highly compatible with community-based participatory processes and may in fact help strengthen local capacities for peace, in the process of using it.
- The underlying concepts of the Do No Harm framework are relatively easy to grasp (this can be done in a one- to two-day workshop). It is nonetheless a longer process to integrate it into staff perspective in such a way that it becomes a conflict analysis lens for better assessing humanitarian and development work.
- It is descriptive in nature and therefore challenges the users to do their own analysis and apply problem-solving skills to the situation. When used well, it can improve the quality of programming, lowers the risks to staff and community, and lays a solid foundation on which peace-building can take place.
- After extensive application of the Do No Harm approach in a variety of contexts, a number of international NGOs, including World Vision, have found that it is very useful in both emergency and development settings.
- It is primarily focused on the micro situation, so that, if used without consideration of the macro context, it may create a false sense of security for staff.
- It is less suitable for an in-depth analysis of macro-level conflict. Some organisations, such as World Vision, have thus tried to address the above, by combining Do No Harm with other macro conflict analysis tools.

Commentary on the tool

- The Do No Harm framework has proved a very valuable tool for micro conflict analysis, in both relief and development contexts.
- It is also regarded as a flexible tool that can be further adapted to the various needs of the organisations applying the Do No Harm framework. For instance, World Vision found that the use of case study writing and the use of case studies in training help complement the LCPP framework.

Available reports

More information on the Do No Harm approach can be found on CDA's website (<http://www.cdainc.com/lcp/index.php>). Training materials are available in English, French and Spanish. The following publications are particularly useful:

- *Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace – or War*, Mary B. Anderson, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, February 1999.

- *Options for Aid in Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience*, Ed. by Mary B. Anderson, December 2000.

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9. Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework

Version / Date of issue summer 2000
Name of organisation Clingendael Institute
Author(s) Suzanne Versteegen, Luc van de Goor (together with Fund for Peace)
Primary purpose Conflict analysis and early warning, with a view to developing conflict prevention policy strategy.
Intended users Donor desk officers, including embassy staff, it mainly addresses foreign policy and development issues.
Levels of application Country and sectoral levels.
Conceptual assumptions The Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework (CPAF) helps to analyse the conflict or stability sensitivity of countries by assessing the role of a number of specified indicators. The assessment will provide information on indicators that (potentially) have a destabilising effect or can put a country at risk. The use of trend lines per indicator will also emphasise whether certain indicators are areas of persistent difficulty, suggesting that more attention could/should have been devoted to these in the past. The assessment will also bring into focus the volatility of the situation and identify indicators and areas on which to focus from the perspective of limiting risks to the sustainability of peace or stability. Within the framework of the CPAF, Clingendael uses the 'Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse' developed by the Fund for Peace (1998), for the conflict assessment part. This model uses indicators of internal conflict and state failure. In this approach, internal conflict is caused by state failure, not the other way round.
Main steps and suggested process Steps for conflict analysis 1. Trend analysis (Fund for Peace indicators) 2. Analysis of problem areas (ie priority areas for policy response) 3. Conflict analysis paper (to establish response-oriented warnings). Steps for policy analysis 1. Organisation's capacity assessment (eg mandate, operational framework) 2. Toolbox assessment (policy instruments) 3. Policy assessment and lessons learned (of ongoing policies, including ex-ante peace and conflict impact assessment)

4. Assessment of the overall security context (partnerships, coalitions)

5. Strategic policy paper.

In order to improve the aspect of shared analysis and co-operation with local partners, the CPAF works with a workshop format in which all participants (donor desk officers, embassy staff and local partners, both governmental and non-governmental) are guided through the first three steps of the CPAF. The participants assess the situation of a given country as regards the sustainability of peace and stability by applying the Fund for Peace methodology, develop the latest trend line, and assess the range of policy options for addressing the areas that are flagged on the basis of the analysis.

The workshop provides the participants with an opportunity to engage in a dialogue on the assessment of the situation, as well as the policy options.

During the workshop the participants are divided into several groups to assess the twelve indicator trend lines. The findings are discussed in a plenary session with a moderator. Based on this plenary session, the overall trend and problem indicators are established.

In the next step, participants are divided into working groups with particular expertise, in order to focus discussions and to come up with adequate suggestions for addressing the problems that were identified.

The workshop results in a warning dispatch that highlights the potentially destabilising trends, as well as a list of options to address or reverse these trends. The implications for specific donors are discussed in a separate meeting.

Guiding questions / indicators

On the basis of the Fund for Peace's analytical model, top indicators on the national state level form a central part of the conflict trend analysis. These top indicators are:

- mounting demographic pressure
- massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons
- legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance or group paranoia
- chronic and sustained human flight
- uneven economic development along group lines
- sharp and/or severe economic decline
- criminalisation and/or delegitimation of the state
- progressive deterioration of public services
- suspension or arbitrary application of the rule of law and widespread violation of human rights
- security apparatus operates as a 'state within the state'
- rise of factionalised elites
- intervention of other states or external political and/or economic actors.

Each top indicator is further specified by three to six measures, which are linked to 'potential aspects of conflict' and 'problem areas'.

Required resources

The main resources required relate to the organisation of the

workshop and include preparatory research and workshop material development, as well as the costs of travel, accommodation, etc for external participants/consultants.

Current applications

- In 2002 and 2003, the Clingendael Institute has run a number of test cases, in Rwanda and Mozambique, to further refine the tool. Its findings are used for policy purposes, and it is intended to mainstream the completed tool within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Another application is planned for Kenya at the end of 2003.
- In the case of Rwanda, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs already used the CPAF to feed into its work plan for the country. In the planned Kenyan application, the CPAF will be used specifically as a basis for Dutch policy and practice.

Lessons learnt

- Carrying out the CPAF in a workshop format forced participants to be clear about developments and trends, and their potential implications and consequences if not addressed.
- Although participants were generally aware of this, the use of ratings was an added value, as it gave some sense of urgency that allowed for the visualisation of positive or negative trends over time. The ratings were explained by using examples, thus making them more concrete.
- In terms of policy, it became clear that some of the sectoral choices that have been made do not adequately relate to some of the identified trends – from a conflict prevention perspective, this clearly needed improvement. On the other hand, the projects and activities that were carried out and planned in the sectors of choice could be focused on conflict prevention.
- It was also clear that the overall political position of the Netherlands Embassy could be more critical in its political dialogue with the host governments.
- The findings were also shared with other agencies (USAID and DFID) and it was found that they coincided. This provided opportunities for joint approaches.
- In Rwanda, following this initial application, further follow-up is being planned with a view to basing future policies and programmes on the same CPAF analysis.

Commentary on the tool

The tool is currently being used in a field test phase by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It will be adapted to make it more easily applicable in the future. This mainly implies speeding up the analysis and the trend line development. It is considered to be flexible and adaptable and practical in a policy setting. The tool is not addressing the specifics of programmes or activities, but mainly focuses on strategic approaches for donors (overall programme development and policy approaches) from the perspective of conflict prevention. Its continued application for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is under consideration and will be decided upon in 2003.

Available reports

The CPAF report can be downloaded from the Clingendael website (www.clingendael.nl/cru). The reports of the workshops are not available for wider distribution.

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10. Early Warning and Preventive Measures

Version / Date of issue **1999**

Name of organisation **UN System Staff College**

Author(s)

United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC)

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis, early warning and response design

Intended users

It is primarily targeted at United Nations staff (at both HQ and field level), to identify elements for potential preventive action strategies in their respective countries of assignment. It may also be used by national actors and other institutions (donors, civil society, etc) who can adopt the methodology, in order to design and develop national preventive action strategies to address home-grown issues with local solutions.

Levels of application

Country level.

Conceptual assumptions

Human security and human rights provide the conceptual framework for the UN conflict analysis methodology. In particular, human security refers to the safety for individuals and groups from both:

- violent threats, eg violent crime, gross violations of human rights, terrorism, etc
- non-violent threats, eg environmental degradation, illicit drugs, economic crises, infectious diseases, natural disasters.

Main steps and suggested process

1. Situation profile

Establish a shared understanding and broad picture of the country / region under consideration, including geography, history, current events, economy, political system, social structure, external issues, etc.

2. Actors analysis matrix

Identify and assess key actors who can facilitate or undermine peace and stability in a society, in particular from the perspective of:

- their main characteristics
- their interests and underlying needs
- the resources that they currently have and those that they still need or hope to obtain.

3. Survey of conflict causes

Identify possible causes of violent conflict, following two main dimensions:

- categorise possible causes of violent conflict, in terms of their potential threat to various aspects of human security. These include: governance and political stability, social and communal stability, economic and resource stability, personal security, military mobilisation and arms supply, external factors
- further distinguish between proximate and structural causes within each human security category.

Consider human rights as a cross-cutting issue and ensure that it is mainstreamed in all human security categories.

4. Composite analysis

Explore the interaction between the structural causes of conflict in order to assess the resulting conflict dynamics and to identify the core issues which preventive action will need to address.

5. Preventive measures matrix

Identify elements of a preventive action strategy in order to address the core issues highlighted through the conflict analysis. This will be based on the formulation of objectives, the generation of options for preventive action and the identification of recommended measures, through a triage process.

6. Scenario building

Build a two-track scenario reflecting likely developments resulting from the implementation – or lack thereof – of the recommended preventive measures, in order to develop a convincing argument on the need to take preventive action.

The above steps are usually introduced through a five-day training workshop that combines plenary and country working groups.

Guiding questions / indicators

Context specific indicators are developed to measure the impact of the potential preventive action, using the SMART principle (ie Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; Time-bound). No specific list of available indicators is used.

Required resources

- Training materials (card and chart technique);
- Human resources to facilitate the process (eg facilitators);
- Limited financial resources unless external facilitation is required.

Current applications

From 1999 to 2003, 34 training workshops have been conducted at the country and regional level and targeted UN staff, national actors (eg Niger) and civil society (Washington; Bilbao).

Lessons learnt

On the basis of the external evaluation conducted in 2002/2003, key findings and recommendations can be summed up as follows:

- Overall, the Early Warning and Preventive Measures (EWPM) project has achieved a great deal in less than five years. The evaluators found a heightened awareness concerning areas of early warning and conflict prevention

and a determination to make early warning a cross-cutting issue throughout the UN.

- The course content needs to be continuously reviewed, in order to ensure it is in line with new developments emerging in the conflict prevention field.
- The pool of trainers that the United Nations System Staff College currently uses needs to be further expanded.
- Human rights issues need to be integrated better.
- Increased advocacy is needed to reach a larger audience beyond the UN system.

Commentary on the tool

- The EWPM methodology remains time consuming, if all steps are followed in an in-depth fashion.
- It does not require extensive financial resources, as long as no external facilitator is needed.
- It is a flexible methodology that can be adapted to a large variety of audiences beyond the UN system (eg civil society; donor agencies).

Available reports

All reports of the 34 trainings conducted (1999-2003), as well as the recently completed external evaluation, are available on the UN System Staff College website (www.unssc.org).

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11. Conflict assessment framework

Version / Date of issue **7 January 2002**

Name of organisation **USAID, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation**

Author

Sharon Morris

Primary purpose

To integrate conflict sensitivity into the Mission strategy. It is mainly development focused.

Intended users

USAID desk officers, implementing partners, mission staff, US embassy staff and other US government participants.

Levels of application

Country / national, regional and sectoral levels (eg democracy and governance, health, natural resource management)

Conceptual assumptions

The framework aims to pull together the best research available on the causes of conflict and focuses on the way that the different variables interact. It does not aim to make predictions. It also does not explicitly weight variables, although it identifies a few categories of key causes of conflict, namely:

- ethnic and religious divisions
- economic causes of conflict
- environment and conflict
- population, migration and urbanisation
- institutional causes of conflict.

Main steps and suggested process

- Desk study on the country context and the main causes of conflict.
- Discussions with other US agencies (eg State Department, Department of Justice, etc.) on the planned engagement for that country and the planned conflict assessment.
- Assessment team goes to the country for a three to four week visit. This visit generally includes a workshop with the mission staff and partner organisations (ie partner organisations working on conflict, as well as from different sectors). The country visit leads to a conflict mapping, which is being compared to existing programmes to assess whether they addressing the conflict causes.
- The outcome of the assessment is a report with recommendations on how to address the conflict causes through development programmes. The recommendations focus specifically on examining the in-country organisational capacity to address the causes

of conflict that have been identified.

- The mission then takes forward the recommendations (with support from the original assessment team) within their programming strategy.

After the desk study has been conducted, specific sectoral themes generally emerge as key conflict causes (eg competition for access to natural resources) and a multi-sectoral team will be pulled together accordingly. The team will normally consist of no more than five people, including sectoral specialists, who can be either from the head office or in-country consultants (the number of people from head office is usually restricted to one or two people). The team spends about three to four weeks in-country, working with the mission staff.

Guiding questions / indicators

The methodology suggests some broad guiding questions, in order to stimulate thinking on the interaction of different issues and tensions. They centre on the need to first establish the variety of causes that interact and overlap, and then to move into the more detailed analysis of what these causes are and the dynamics between them. This analysis focuses on four categories of the causes of internal conflict and specifies a number of key issues under each category:

1. root causes (greed and grievance): including ethnic and religious divisions; economic causes of conflict; environment and conflict; population, migration and urbanisation; and the interaction between different root causes and conflict
2. causes that facilitate the mobilisation and expansion of violence (access to conflict resources): organisations and collective action; financial and human resources; conflict resources and widespread violence
3. causes at the level of institutional capacity and response: democracy and autocracy; political transitions and partial democracies; weak states, shadow states and state failure; state capacity, political leadership and conflict
4. regional and international causes/forces: globalisation, war economies and transnational networks; bad neighbourhoods.

In addition to the categories and principles outlined above, the idea of ‘windows of vulnerability’ is also introduced, which indicates the moments when particular events (eg elections, riots, assassinations etc) can trigger the outbreak of full-scale violence.

Required resources

The resources required relate to the time spent on the desk study before the in-country visit, the in-country visit itself, and the follow-up support after the visit. In total, the entire process takes around two months.

Current applications

This methodology has been applied in about 18 countries to date in Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, Latin America, Asia / Near East and the NIS. USAID also participated in the multi-donor assessment that was conducted in Nigeria (together with DFID, the World Bank and UNDP).

Lessons learnt

- Workshops were found to be a useful format for the in-country assessment work.
- Using local consultants has been very valuable, but one needs to carefully select them, bearing in mind their own political opinions and affiliations. In some cases, it has been impossible to use local consultants due to such sensitivities or the fact that they may be put at risk through their involvement in the assessment.
- The importance of having a team composed of specialists from different sectors has been proven, so as to broaden it beyond people usually working only on conflict.
- Similarly, integrated, multi-sectoral programming is important in order to effectively address the confluence of the different conflict causes and dynamics.
- The ultimate objective of the assessment is to enable the mission to adjust their programming in order to make a difference to the conflict dynamics in-country. The close involvement and buy-in from the mission staff is therefore critical to ensure that implementation takes place.
- In-country, good co-operation with the US Embassies has proven very useful.
- After producing the assessment report with its recommendations, it is crucial to follow up and ensure that the findings are incorporated into the programme strategies in country.
- It has proved fairly easy to convince mission staff of the link between conflict and their programming, but the challenge has been how to then design and implement more conflict-sensitive programmes. With this in mind, USAID has started developing a menu of options / examples for different types of programmes on different sectors, such as for instance how to design a programme for conflict-sensitive water management or youth engagement.

Commentary on the tool

This methodology has been very successful at establishing the analysis of what conflict causes are and how they link to sector programming. The challenge is now to ensure that this realisation is implemented through appropriate programme design and implementation.

Available reports

The country reports are not available publicly and the conflict assessment framework methodology is not available yet, although it is envisaged that it will eventually be available on the USAID website.

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12. Conflict analysis for project planning and implementation

Version / Date of issue **2002**

Name of organisation **GTZ**

Author(s)

Manuela Leonhardt

Primary purpose

Conflict analysis and planning

Intended users

Desk officers, regional representatives, project managers of donors and international NGOs working in development.

Levels of application

Country and project levels.

Conceptual assumptions

The conflict analysis tool is based on a synthesis of existing tools. It places particular emphasis on participatory approaches to conflict analysis.

Main steps and suggested process

A. Conflict analysis

1. Conflict profile

- What kind of conflict do we deal with? What are its consequences?
- When did it start? How did it develop over the last years? What phase are we in?
- Where does the conflict take place? Territorial issues?

2. Stakeholder analysis

- Who are the parties to the conflict? What are their positions, interests and capacities? Alliances?
- What position do the (intended) beneficiaries have towards the conflict? How does the conflict affect them? What survival strategies have they developed?
- What capacities do the conflict parties have to continue the conflict? Are there capacities for peace?
- What are the conclusions of this analysis for the selection of partners and beneficiaries?

3. Causes of conflict

- Why did the conflict start? What are its root causes (security, political, economic, social, external)?
- What factors contribute to prolonging the conflict?
- What are the main obstacles working against a peaceful solution?

4. Trends and opportunities

- How does the conflict presently develop? What factors encourage violence, what factors contribute to peace?
- Are there peace initiatives? At what level? What have they achieved?

- How can linkages between micro-level activities and macro-level processes be achieved?

B. Project planning

1. Capacity analysis (own organisation and partners)

- Why do we want to work on conflict? What is our mandate? Do partners and beneficiaries wish such an engagement?
- Do we have the necessary skills, knowledge, resources, and networks to work on conflict? How can we build them?
- How would this affect our other activities in the area?

2. Goal analysis

- What are the key entry points for working on the conflict?
- What are the beneficiaries/partners' priorities?
- What are our priorities?
- What is our comparative advantage?

3. Strategy development

- Do we have a coherent strategy to address the priority issues identified above?
- Do we have the minimum political, legal, and security requirements to do this work?
- Do we have sufficient political support (local, national)?
- Is the timing appropriate? Is there a window of opportunity?
- Is the initiative sustainable?

4. Risk assessment

Is there a possibility that the initiative, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally:

- contributes to social and economic polarisation?
- reinforces undemocratic political structures?
- weakens civil society and undermines political participation?
- compromises local mediators or conflict management structures?
- provides opportunities for hate propaganda or censorship?

5. Peace and conflict indicators

To cover the security, political, economic, social, and external dimensions of conflict.

Guiding questions / indicators

Each analytical step contains a set of guiding questions, which help the user to build an understanding of the conflict and prepare conflict-sensitive action. The key guiding questions are:

A. Conflict analysis

1. Conflict profile
2. Stakeholder analysis
3. Causes of conflict
4. Trends and opportunities

B. Project planning

1. Capacity analysis

2. Goal analysis

3. Strategy development

4. Risk assessment

5. Peace and conflict indicators

The manual offers fifteen analytical tools to support the user in working on the guiding questions. The tools are drawn from the participatory rural assessment toolbox, the Responding to Conflict tools as well as from the work of individual conflict specialists. They include:

- conflict profile
- phases of conflict
- timeline
- arena analysis (spatial conflict analysis)
- conflict mapping (actor analysis)
- conflict actors pyramid
- conflict onion (positions, interests, needs analysis)
- conflict tree (similar to problem tree)
- conflict pillars (factors upholding the conflict)
- trend analysis
- conflict scenario
- capacities and vulnerabilities analysis
- institutional analysis
- capacity analysis
- Do No Harm analysis.

Required resources

The required resources relate to the organisation of workshops and consultation meetings. Some desk-based work can also be undertaken, but it is better to organise workshops and consultation meetings on site.

Current applications

GTZ conducted approximately 20 country studies in the Caucasus, Central Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America on the basis of this tool. The tool was also requested by other German development co-operation organisations and used in their work.

Lessons learned

This methodology focused on development co-operation and adopts a participatory approach, which has proven to be a great strength in its application. In order to use this methodology, facilitators require some time investment to become acquainted with the guidelines, as they comprise almost 100 pages.

Commentary on the tool

Experiences of the applications are currently being examined. The tool will be revised on the basis of these experiences up to the end of 2003. Publication of the revised tool is envisaged.

Available reports

The GTZ approach is available at <http://www.gtz.de/crisisprevention/english/>. The following reports were also conducted on the basis of the above

methodology:

- GTZ, Tara Polzer 2002, 'Developing conflict sensitivity: lessons learned from seven country studies' (Draft version)
- GTZ 2002, '**Nepal** Country Study on Conflict Transformation and Peace Building'
- GTZ 2002, 'Peace Development and Crisis Prevention in **Colombia**' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2002, 'Peace Development and Crisis Prevention in **Guatemala**' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2002, 'Conflict Assessment **Afghanistan**' (available in German only)
- GTZ, FES, FriEnt 2002, 'Regional Conflict Assessment **Afghanistan**' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2002, 'Country Study **Zimbabwe**' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2002, '**Tajikistan**: Conflict and Reconstruction' (available in German only)
- GTZ, KfW, DED 2002, 'Analysis of Peace and Conflict Potential in **Yemen**'
- GTZ 2002, 'Peace Promotion and Conflict Transformation in **Sierra Leone and Guinea**'
- GTZ 2001, 'Conflict Analysis **Caucasus**' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2001, '**Chad**: Conflict Management and Peace Development' (available in German only)
- GTZ 2001, 'Prospects of Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management in Mulanje District, **Malawi**' (Southern Region)
- GTZ 2000, 'Crisis Prevention and Conflict Transformation in **Uganda**' (available in German only)

The reports in English available from the same website.

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13. FAST methodology

Version / Date of issue **1999**

Name of organisation **Swisspeace**

Version / Date of issue 1999

Author

Swisspeace, in collaboration with VRA (Virtual Research Associates)

Primary purpose

Risk assessments and early warning

Intended users

Development agencies, especially at desk officer level, Foreign Ministries and international organisations and NGOs.

Levels of application

FAST provides *country-focused* real-time monitoring of social, economic and political developments, by way of continuous collection of events data, with an emphasis on political stability and instability. The methodology can also be used for regions or sub-regions and be modified for other thematic focuses (eg migration, health, human rights, etc.).

Conceptual assumptions

The objective of FAST is the recognition of impending or potential crisis situations for the purpose of early action and the prevention of violent conflict. FAST aims to enhance the ability of political decision makers to identify critical developments in a timely manner, in order to formulate coherent political strategies to prevent or limit destructive effects of violent conflicts.

FAST uses a comprehensive combination of qualitative and quantitative analytical methods to produce risk assessments. The concept that forms the foundation of the FAST early warning methodology is *event data analysis* – ie the ongoing information collection of daily events and its quantitative analysis. This is supplemented by the qualitative analysis provided by international experts as well as the in-house analysis carried out by the desk officers.

Main steps and suggested process

The conflict analysis is carried out along two principles:

- The qualitative conflict analysis of a given country is conducted by applying the *FAST analytical framework*, which aims to determine root, proximate, and intervening factors that can lead to the outbreak of a violent conflict or shape an existing conflict.

Analytical framework

Root causes

- Background factors that enhance armed conflict
- Necessary but not sufficient causes of armed conflict
- Mostly static – change only slowly over time
- Mostly embedded in historical context
- Examples: Ethnic diversity; Colonial history; Economic situation

Proximate causes

- Factors that can lead (with the root causes) to armed conflict
- Are time-wise closer to the outbreak of armed conflict
- Can change quickly over time
- Mostly embedded in historical context
- Examples are: Government type; increase in poverty

Positive intervening factors

- Decreasing the likelihood of armed conflict
- Example: Seasonal factors

Armed conflict

Negative intervening factors

- Increasing the likelihood of armed conflict
- Example: Arms-trade

- The quantitative analysis follows the logic of event data analysis, meaning the ongoing collection of daily events that are relevant for our focus of increasing/decreasing stability in a country. This data set is then analysed statistically and the results are displayed in graphs. The information collection is carried out by local information networks on the ground in order to have a set of data that is independent from Western newswires but also to gain higher frequency and dispersion throughout the country.

Guiding questions / indicators

The analytical framework looks at root and proximate causes, as well as intervening factors, along a timeline. Thereby, various indicators are identified, following a set of topics, including historic, political / institutional, economic, societal / socio demographic, ecological, and international issues. These indicators, however, have to be applied in a flexible manner and need to be adjusted according to the context.

The indicators that are identified in the analytical framework are used for the ongoing monitoring that is carried out. Besides, these issues correlate with the indicators that are used in the quantitative system used by FAST.

Required resources

Due to the different components of FAST, the amount of human resources that is required is as follows:

- desk officers in Bern (each desk officer covers 2-3 countries)
- local Information networks (3-5 field monitors in each country as well as one country coordinator)
- an expert network to cover all the countries that are monitored by FAST
- statisticians and personnel for quality control.

At present there are 12 employees at the headquarters in Bern.

Current applications

- FAST currently covers 22 countries in Central Asia, South Asia, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. The coverage can be expanded according to clients' needs.
- The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), initiated by IGAD, has adapted the FAST methodology focusing on cross-border, pastoral conflicts in the IGAD member states.

Lessons Learnt

- Real-time monitoring of 186 event types – conflict / cooperation – using event data analysis
- System can be tailored to meet the end-user’s needs
- Combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis
- The analytical framework tool has proven an effective analysis tool that has also been effectively used at several early warning training workshops.

Commentary on the tool

FAST is an early warning tool based on conflict analysis, and not an early response mechanism, as the responses to be taken, on the basis of the forecasting provided by FAST, remain with the end users.

The analytical framework – FAST’s qualitative analysis tool – can easily be applied by other institutions. Besides, FAST has used this tool in several training workshops (held in collaboration with the FEWER network) and has received positive response to its application. The framework allows for a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of a region / country and gives an excellent overview of the causes and the development of a conflictive environment over time, while highlighting positive intervening factors that can be useful for peace-building initiatives.

The complex FAST methodology can be modified and adjusted to different regions and focuses. The set-up and application, however, is cost-intensive due to the different components needed for information collection and quality control, analysis, and report writing. Nevertheless, the advantage of having local networks for information collection and data that is independent from Western newswires clearly outweighs the higher overall costs.

Available Reports

The quarterly risk assessments are published on the FAST website (www.swisspeace.org/fast/)

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14. Conflict diagnostic handbook

Version / Date of issue **January 2003**

Name of Organisation **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)/Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (CPR) Network resource**

Author(s)

FEWER/CIDA

Primary purpose

To facilitate the design of a Conflict Diagnostic Framework that enables planners to make strategic choices, and define entry points for response, by assessing conflict and peace factors and conducting a stakeholder analysis.

Intended users

Development practitioners seeking to mainstream peace and conflict analysis into their long-term development programmes

Levels of application

Country and regional

Conceptual assumptions

The Conflict Diagnostic Framework is based on the assumption that the identification of key indicators / stakeholders, the definition of scenarios / objectives, and the unpacking of strategic issues, together set the stage for a comprehensive (and evidence-based) peace-building strategy.

The framework is not aimed at assessing the impact of a particular project on the peace and conflict dynamics in a society nor to fully cover programme implementation issues.

Main steps and suggested process

For each step there is a table that needs to be completed, that reflects the components of the analysis in each step.

- **Step 1:** Conflict Diagnostic Framework
- **Step 2:** Conflict analysis
- **Step 3:** Peace analysis
- **Step 4:** Stakeholder analysis
- **Step 5:** Scenarios and objectives
- **Step 6:** Strategic issues and choices
- **Step 7:** Peacebuilding recommendations

Guiding questions / indicators

1. Step 1: Conflict Diagnostic Framework

This has a series of assumptions as part of its rationale:

- that conflict indicators, peace indicators and stakeholders need to be identified for conflict analysis
- that trends in key conflict/peace indicators and stakeholders need to be analysed in order to be able to

identify likely scenarios

- that scenarios can be easily translated into objectives, thus rooting peacebuilding objectives in reality
- that, in order to define responses to conflict, the following strategic issues need to be considered: the main conflict indicators and the synergies among them; any gaps in peace-building; and strategic choices to be made by responding institutions.

2. Step 2 & 3: Conflict analysis and peace analysis

The following guiding questions are used for these two steps:

- have you considered indicators at all levels (local, national, international)?
- have you considered indicators that relate to political, economic, social, and security issues?
- have you considered the relative importance of historic, present and future indicators?
- are your indicators reflective only of the current phase of the conflict (pre-conflict, actual conflict, post conflict)? If so, please consider whether other phases are relevant.
- are the indicators you selected important both in terms of facts and perceptions?
- do the indicators selected reflect the concerns of different sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, children, rich etc)?

3. Step 4: Stakeholder analysis

The same guiding questions as above, plus the following:

- peace agendas: what visions of peace do the stakeholders have? What kind of peace do they want? What are the main elements of their peace agendas (land reform, national autonomy)?
- capacities: what capacities do the stakeholders have to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding or to otherwise affect it?
- implications for peacebuilding: strategic conclusions: what implications does this analysis have for pursuing structural stability and peacebuilding?

4. Step 5: Scenarios and objectives

The guiding questions are:

- what are trends in key conflict indicators/synergies, peace indicators, and stakeholder dynamics?
- what is your judgement about best/middle/worst-case scenarios when considering the overall (conflict, peace, stakeholder) picture?
- what optimal and contingency objectives can you draw from the best and worst case (respectively) scenarios?

5. Step 6: Strategic issues and choices

The guiding questions are:

- in view of the full analysis, review identified conflict synergies. Are they complete?
- assess the initiatives of other agencies and the capacity and comparative advantage of one's own agency in the different fields (governance, economic, socio-cultural and security).
- in view of the previous questions, are key peacebuilding gaps adequately defined?

- specifically look at your capacity in different fields (political, economic, social, security) at all levels (local, regional and international). What can be mobilised to impact on conflict synergies and peacebuilding gaps?

6. Step 7: Peacebuilding recommendations

Once the recommendations have been identified, they need to be looked at in terms of:

- the overall peacebuilding objectives
- coherence of the strategy
- who should be involved

Required resources

The framework is designed to be most useful when used in a workshop setting, and so resources would be required to organise a workshop.

Current applications

Three workshops have been held to apply this framework: in Sierra Leone, the Philippines and the DRC.

Lessons learnt

1. Although systematised thinking is required for good conflict analysis and strategy development, the constantly changing nature of conflict is not easily captured in tables and boxes. The use of supplementary devices to enhance understanding (eg conflict trees) is therefore essential.
2. The diagnostic tool is just that - it does not enable good analysis if its users lack a good understanding of the conflict under study, or analytical skills.
3. The tool needs to be adapted for use by different types of actors, eg international development agencies with programmed development interventions, or local NGOs engaging in various activities.
4. In order to ensure high quality analysis and a good strategy, the tool should be applied in a workshop process that brings together key (constructive) stakeholders.

Commentary on the tool

None

Available reports

The Compendium of Operational Tools can also be consulted at www.acdi-cida.gc/peace for operational tools, best practices and lessons learned.

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15. Better Programming Initiative

Version / Date of issue **1998**

Name of organisation **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**

Author

Based on the Do No Harm approach and the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP), adapted by the IFRC

Primary purpose

Impact assessment methodology and training initiative for analysing the positive or negative impact of Red Cross / Red Crescent National Societies' aid programmes on communities recovering from violence or conflict.

Intended users

Red Cross / Red Crescent National Societies and Delegation programming staff and volunteers.

Levels of application

Local, national and regional levels.

Conceptual assumptions

Aid cannot reverse or compensate for the suffering and trauma that has occurred during conflict. It cannot prevent conflict from continuing or restarting, but it can be the first opportunity for war or violence affected communities to experience an alternative to conflict as the sole basis for their relationship with opposing groups.

In the context of post-conflict recovery, where resources are scarce and violence is endemic, the selective allocation of aid can be a powerful reason for disagreement and conflict between those who receive assistance and those who do not. How National Society and Federation programmes use and distribute resources will have an impact (positive or negative; direct or indirect) on the context in which they are working. Even if their approach is totally neutral and impartial, the perception of those who are excluded from assistance may be completely different.

Where aid organisations, particularly local Red Cross and Red Crescent, can make a difference is in the planning and implementation of their own aid programmes. Humanitarian aid can and should promote long-term recovery and reconciliation within and between communities – at a very minimum it should never become a pretext for or cause of conflict or tension between groups.

Main steps and suggested process

1. Analyse the context

- Identify dividers within the categories of systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; values and interests; experiences; and symbols and occasions.
- Identify connectors within the categories of systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; values and interests; experiences; and symbols and occasions.

2. Describe the aid programme

- Describe in details the planned / undertaken activities in terms of why, where, what, when, with whom, by whom and how.

- Analyse important institutional issues such as: mandate/influence in programme implementation; headquarters role/influence in programme implementation; fundraising/influence in programme implementation.

3. Identify the impacts

- Will the planned action reinforce a connector or weaken one? Will it aggravate a tension or lessen one?
- Use some specific questions as guidance, eg
- is our aid provoking theft, thus diverting resources towards the potential conflict?
- is our aid affecting the local markets, thus distorting the local economy?
- are our distributions exacerbating divisions within the population?
- is our aid substituting controlling authorities' responsibilities, thus allowing further resources to be invested in the potential conflict?
- are we, through our aid, legitimising local supporters of the potential conflict or those who want reconciliation?

4. Find alternative options

For each impact identified (positive or negative) as a side effect of the planned programme:

- brainstorm programme options that will decrease negative effects and increase positive ones;
- check the options for their impact on the other connectors and dividers.

5. Repeat the analysis

As often as the context demands, and as often as the project cycle indicates.

Guiding questions / indicators

See the section above

Required resources

Required resources and time will depend on the scope and context of the assessment. A training kit, with different modules, was created to introduce the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) in 90 minutes, one day or three days session. A BPI training of trainers workshop (9 days) was also developed.

Current applications

Initially undertaken in Colombia, Liberia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Kosovo. In order to contribute to the institutionalisation of the BPI methodology within National Societies, the International Federation is training National Society staff and delegates as BPI trainers and integrating this tool within other Federation planning and assessment tools.

National Societies and Federation delegations are using the tool to assess the positive or negative impact of their projects, especially in post-conflict situations and in countries recovering from violence.

Lessons learnt**1. Assessing needs**

Well-planned aid programmes can ease suffering and reduce vulnerability, providing a genuine foundation for recovery. However, experience in all six countries has shown that a thorough needs assessment is not enough unless it is accompanied by an in-depth analysis and understanding of the context, at the level of the intervention.

2. Designing programming

Rehabilitation programming by humanitarian aid organisations, including the International Federation, is increasingly used to support recovery and transition plans which form part of an overall political settlement. Evidence from several of the countries in which the BPI was piloted suggests that, when the Federation supports National Societies engaged in rehabilitation programs linked to political settlements, it needs to examine carefully the conditions under which it will be expected to work. Inevitably, there are groups who may oppose the settlement and the recovery plan that provides aid and resources to their former enemies. The population may also be sensitive to the type of assistance provided and the proportion in which it is allocated.

3. Selecting and accessing beneficiaries

Throughout the BPI testing phase, National Societies and delegation staff found that the most common way in which they may contribute to fuel tension is through the selection beneficiaries, without undertaking a thorough analysis of the needs of all groups affected by the conflict.

Commentary on the tool

Although this methodology initially focused on conflict and post-conflict situations, it has now been recognised that it may also be useful in other contexts. There are also concrete and successful examples of the BPI methodology used to analyse the impact of our National Societies' institutional capacities, as well as the impact of our Disaster Response, Disaster Preparedness and Development projects.

The experience also shows that BPI can be an element of analysis that supports the linkage between aid or relief and longer-term recovery and development. As a planning and impact assessment methodology and training initiative, BPI may also be a capacity-building mechanism.

Available reports

In 2003, the Federation was scheduled to publish '*Aid: Supporting or Undermining Recovery? Lessons from the Better Programming Initiative*', containing the lessons learnt in six countries (Colombia, Liberia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Kosovo).

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Applying conflict sensitivity at project and programme level

Purpose of chapter

The three modules in this chapter explain how to integrate conflict sensitivity into projects and programmes at the following three stages of the project cycle:

- planning
- implementation
- monitoring and evaluation

Who should read it

Practitioners involved in managing projects and programmes at all stages, whether working in the field or at headquarters, and regardless of whether they belong to civil society, government, international NGOs or donors.

Why they should read it

All project interventions impact on and are impacted by the context in which they are situated. In a conflict-prone environment, a lack of conflict sensitivity can result in projects and programmes with unintended negative impacts, or which miss opportunities to contribute to peace. This chapter will help readers to build in conflict sensitivity during all three stages of the project lifecycle and, to the extent possible, anticipate their wider impact so as to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones.

Contents

Introduction

Module 1. Conflict-sensitive planning

Module 2. Conflict-sensitive implementation

Module 3. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

Introduction

Some definitions

Conflict sensitivity

This means an awareness of the causes of historical, actual or potential conflict, and of the likelihood of further conflict and its likely severity; and the capacity to work with all parties to reduce conflict and / or minimise the risk of further conflict. It involves:

- understanding the operational context
- understanding the interaction between an intervention and that context;
- the capacity to act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive ones.

Note: the word 'context' is used rather than 'conflict' to make the point that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. 'Conflict' is sometimes erroneously confused with macro-political violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor).

Interventions

Interventions can be at a variety of levels: project, programme, sectoral (sector wide) and macro. Sectoral (sector wide) and macro levels will be discussed in **Chapter 4**. The primary aim of this chapter (modules 1 to 3) is to integrate conflict sensitivity in projects and programmes throughout the project/programme cycle. See also **Chapter 1**, Box 1.

Programme

A programme is a proposed plan with a medium to long-term horizon and possibly without a defined end, often incorporating strategic objectives, multiple projects and activities¹.

Project

A project is a set of time-bound activities typically contributing to a larger programmatic objective, which are *planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated* in relation to the issue or issues that they seek to address.²

Conflict analysis

Conflict analysis (explained in detail in **Chapter 2**) is central to integrating conflict sensitivity into projects and programmes. The approach is summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1
The “What” and “How” of conflict analysis

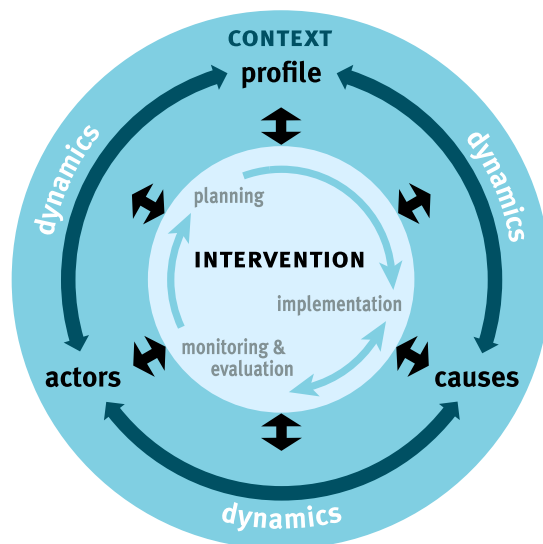
What to do	How to do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the context in which you operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a conflict analysis, and update it regularly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link the conflict analysis with the programming cycle of your intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate your intervention in a conflict sensitive fashion (including redesign when necessary)

The project cycle

This comprises the following key stages:

- planning:** the process whereby problems are identified, their causal linkages analysed, and effective solutions developed. The result of this process may be embodied in a project or programme with predefined objectives, activities, implementation plans and indicators of progress
- implementation:** the process of realising objectives by enacting the activities designed in the planning process; it is the operationalisation of the proposal. Implementation involves regular progress reviews with adjustment of activities if necessary
- monitoring:** the continuous process of examining the delivery of activity outputs to intended beneficiaries. It is carried out during the implementation of the activity, with the intention of immediately correcting any deviation from operational objectives. As such, monitoring reports generate data that can be used in evaluation
- evaluation:** an assessment that takes place at a specific point in time – typically at the end of a project – in which objective procedures are used in a systematic way to judge the effectiveness of an ongoing or completed activity (eg project, programme, policy) its design, implementation and overall results. The evaluation concentrates on the relevance and fulfilment of defined objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards.

These stages of the project cycle are represented in the diagram below, and situated within the conflict analysis (see **Chapter 2** for a more detailed explanation of the diagram).



This chapter is organised according to these key stages in the project / programming cycle. The chapter explains both the key steps that must be taken to integrate conflict sensitivity into each project/programme stage (“what”) and the process of implementing such steps (“how”).

Endnotes

¹Adapted www.osi.hu

²Adapted from Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, “Glossary of Terms” www.osi.hu & Polaris Grant “Glossary” www.polarisgrants.org

Conflict-sensitive planning

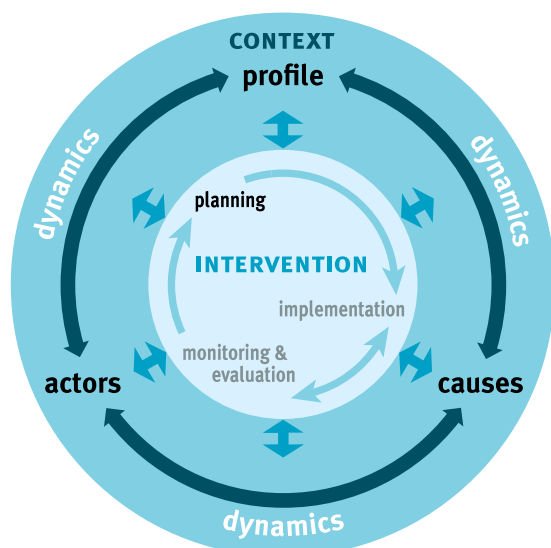
Purpose of module

To help ensure that project / programme planning and implementation is conflict-sensitive, by incorporating conflict analysis into needs assessments and conflict sensitive design and planning. The module will help the reader to:

- identify the wider impact of planned activities on factors relevant to conflict
- ensure conflict is fully understood and linked to the needs assessment process
- ensure the needs assessment process is, in and of itself, sensitive to conflict.

Contents

1. What is conflict-sensitive planning?
2. Incorporating conflict analysis into the planning process
3. Steps for conflict-sensitive planning
4. Challenges
5. Endnotes



1. What is conflict-sensitive planning?

Planning has been defined as the process whereby certain problems are identified, their causal linkages analysed, and effective solutions developed, which can be implemented as a project or programme with objectives, activities and indicators. Conflict-sensitive planning brings in an additional ingredient – conflict analysis of the actors, causes, profile and dynamics in a given context – with the aim of ensuring that the project or programme does not inadvertently increase the likelihood of violent conflict, but rather serves to reduce potential or existing violent conflict.

Conflict-sensitive planning is called for in contexts involving all points along the conflict spectrum (from structural violence to violent conflict), regardless of whether the project or programme is for humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, or development; or whether the intention is to address conflict directly or simply to avoid indirectly exacerbating tensions. (See the **Introduction to the Resource Pack** for more information on the conflict spectrum). Conflict-sensitive planning is built on the elements identified during the conflict analysis in relation to profile, causes, actors and dynamics, and situates project planning within this analysis (see **Chapter 2** for more information on conflict analysis).

Conflict-sensitive planning relates to both interventions that are *defined* through the conflict analysis, and to sensitising *pre-defined* interventions. A careful project strategy, taking account of each of these elements, can be the key to just and peaceful outcomes and more durable solutions. Because every activity is part of the conflict dynamic, whether focussed in, on or around a particular conflict, conflict sensitivity is relevant to projects and programmes that directly address conflict as well as those which seek simply to avoid indirectly exacerbating it. Thus, the conflict analysis needs to be integrated into the overall plan, and updated regularly. The overall plan can then be modified if necessary to reflect changes in the analysis.

Planning in a conflict-sensitive fashion is explored in more detail in **section 3** below. Understanding the context involves taking the context (ie building on the conflict analysis triangle developed in **Chapter 2**), and situating the intervention within it.

2. Incorporating the conflict analysis into the assessment process

There are two ways of doing this: one is to *link* the conflict analysis (see **Chapter 2**) to the needs assessment (see **Chapter 2 section 4**), the other is to *integrate* the conflict analysis and the needs assessment into one tool. The advantages of having a stand-alone conflict analysis (linked) are that it explores the context in considerable depth, is easier to update, and avoids confusion that may be created by using one tool for two different purposes. The advantage of the second (integrated) approach is that it saves time and resources, and makes the processes of project design and conflict analysis more inter-related, as steps in the project design will raise questions regarding the context, which will in turn lead to further questions on project design. Box 1 gives examples of both approaches.

BOX 1

Approaches to incorporating conflict analysis

A. A two-stage process (linked)

Al Quraish, a development organisation in Sri Lanka, use a two-stage process, but invert the stages so that the needs assessment process, a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), precedes the problem (conflict) tree analysis. The initial PRA maps the social welfare of the village, explores in particular the power relations by, for example, examining who benefits from government support, and the quality of people's dwellings. The PRA is then supplemented by a two-day workshop, exploring with villagers the root causes of problems identified, using a problem (conflict) tree. For instance if 'poverty' was the initial reason given for a child dropping out of school, the issue will be probed until a 'problem jungle' emerges, with multiple root reasons – frequent resettlement, destroyed identity documents, orphan status etc.

B. A one-stage process (integrated)

Agencies such as AHIMSA (Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace) and Helvetas in Sri Lanka have found that emphasising stakeholder participation in the needs assessment process and making it as comprehensive as possible has reduced the likelihood of their work causing or exacerbating conflict. However, Helvetas noticed that attitudes and perceptions that affect conflicts were missing from existing appraisal tools. They decided to incorporate small complementary additions from conflict analysis tools into existing PRA methodologies to sensitise them, rather than develop a new assessment tool. A PRA might, for

instance, reveal closer relationships among some actors than others. By incorporating elements of the Attitudes, Behaviours and Context Triangle they could explore *why* some relationships were closer and others more distant. Where relationships are noticeably distant they add a box to the PRA stating why.

Whichever approach is adopted, the golden rule for understanding the dynamics of a problem is to involve all possible actors in the process of synthesising its key components. Stakeholder participation should not end with the identification of problems; stakeholders should also contribute to the analysis of the causes and consequences of the problems. Most agencies with a minimum degree of conflict sensitivity quote participatory processes as key to reducing conflict or even as part of the strategy for a constructive resolution of a conflict. Stakeholder-based analyses can provide a strong conflict transformation function (an optimalist approach to conflict analysis), although they are not in themselves conclusive as the information they provide is perception-based and not triangulated. (See **Chapter 2** Box 10 and **Chapter 3.3** Box 2).

3. Key steps to sensitising the planning process

The five key steps for conflict-sensitive planning

- Step 1: Define intervention objective
- Step 2: Define intervention process
- Step 3: Develop indicators
- Step 4: Link project to scenarios and prepare contingency plans
- Step 5: Design project conclusion

3.1 The general approach

Planning a conflict-sensitive intervention requires careful and detailed exploration of the potential impacts, direct and indirect, (a) of the proposed activities on the actors, causes, profile and dynamics relating to conflict or potential conflict within the context, and (b) of the actors, causes, profile and dynamics on the proposed activities.

3.2 Step 1: Define intervention objective

Some organisations will use the conflict analysis to define their intervention, ie they begin with no pre-conceived ideas of what the intervention will be and use the analysis to decide on the objectives, by looking in particular at the scenarios generated by the analysis, and seeking to understand the possible key causes of conflict and how these may develop over time. For instance, if the analysis shows that water scarcity is expected to be a major source of conflict in the near future, improved water supply could be selected as the project objective.

Other organisations will have a pre-determined programme / project, and will use the conflict analysis to plan it in a conflict-sensitive way. For example their mandate may be to construct wells, and they will use the conflict analysis to determine where, when, how and for whom they will do this, usually through a process of prioritisation of causes and goals. Typical questions include:

- which issues (eg water, health care) or aspects of an issue (eg pastoralists competing for scarce access to water) appear to be most important?
- how does this choice relate to the context?

To be sensitive to an existing conflict, each question will have to be related to the conflict analysis (profile, actors, causes and dynamics) to see how the objective can be achieved in a way that will minimise unintended negative impacts on any of these four elements, and maximise positive impacts. This means trying to forecast the impact of the intervention. The scenarios developed in the conflict analysis (see **Chapter 2 section 2.4**) should help. The key is to consider the possible interaction between the proposed intervention and these different future contexts.

Either way, part of the design and strategy will be closely related to the logical framework analysis. Thus the logframe should include not only the overall objectives but also a description of the proposed contribution to improving the conflict situation (see Box 2).

BOX 2

Oxfam's experience in Sri Lanka

Oxfam in Sri Lanka adjusted their logical framework analyses to understand how their projects affected the conflict as well as human rights and livelihoods. They used a problem tree at the needs assessment stage to understand the underlying causes of conflict. They then adapted a logframe by changing 'outputs' to 'outcomes' and reframing objectives and outcomes to relate to the identified causes of conflict, and to show how those causes could be addressed. Indicators for project inputs, activities, output, effect, and impact, were designed to measure the impact of the intervention on the context. Thus the logframe became a tool for conflict sensitive design, monitoring and evaluation.

In order to understand the limitations, and the potential areas where the intervention can have the greatest impact, four further questions need to be asked:

- what is my mandate?
- what is my capacity?
- what are other actors doing in this area?
- what is their capacity? (See next section)

At the planning stage, the framework of 'control' versus 'assist' versus 'influence' can help individual organisations to understand the degree to which they can contribute to changes in any operational context. Organisations need to understand which factors and issues they control, which they can assist, and which they can influence. They need to be honest as to what an intervention can be expected to deliver – raising high expectations and failing to deliver can cause tensions and ultimately lead to conflict. Furthermore, understanding the joint impact of programming and interdependence with other actors will help outline where common approaches with complementary actors are necessary, or alternatively where a new intervention could be counterproductive to existing work.

3.3 Step 2: Define the intervention process

Having defined *what* the project objectives are, the intervention process itself must be designed in a conflict-sensitive fashion. The principles of transparency and accountability require developing a clear set of selection criteria for *who*, *where*, and *when*.

Who: Project beneficiaries, project staff, and operational partners

Experiences with Mary B. Anderson's Do No Harm framework¹ show the importance (and, sometimes, interaction) of carefully designed selection criteria for these three elements. Each of them can influence the causes, actors and dynamics of conflict in a positive or negative way. The identity of the persons or groups (ie their political affiliation, gender, caste, socio-economic profile, etc.) can have an important impact on the conflict. The selection criteria should therefore be directly derived from the conflict analysis and the project objective.

Project beneficiaries

The selection of beneficiaries must relate to both the needs assessment (or other form of assessment) and the conflict analysis:

- is the selection based on need (ie in terms of *equity*)? or should an entire community benefit, irrespective of differences in need (ie selection based on *equality*)?
- how does the selection relate to divisions within a community and what are the implications of that?

An equity-based approach, which by definition cannot favour inclusiveness, would normally require the use of selection criteria to determine who falls within the beneficiary group. This improves the transparency of the intervention. In some situations the community themselves decide who should be the beneficiaries, generating and implementing the selection criteria. Such processes may require carefully built-in safeguards to ensure equitable results – eg so that no one group is able to dominate and exclude other groups.

Project staff

Local and expatriate staff can both bring either benefits or disadvantages. Certain nationalities may be seen as biased because of political tensions between the host country and their country of origin – or may be generally well received if there is a history of friendship. Speaking local languages or dialects can be a key element of conflict sensitivity, but local staff may not always be perceived as neutral. Staffing can be a key element of conflict sensitivity (see Box 3). Situating the proposed intervention within the conflict analysis should reveal such sensitivities.

Success in mediation and intervention in disputes often hinges on the status of the intervener. Sometimes it may be useful to be able to speak the language of local politics; on other occasions someone totally unencumbered by local knowledge may be more effective. Foreigners, particularly in places with a colonial history, are clearly identified as outsiders; their “otherness” may be a severe handicap, or a great advantage, depending on the context. They need to know which.

BOX 3

ZOA – Staffing and conflict sensitivity

ZOA, a Dutch NGO working in Sri Lanka, takes great care when recruiting field staff to choose people who are respected by all communities present, who are senior figures, and who are perceived as neutral. Neutrality can sometimes be enhanced by recruiting someone from a nearby proximate but different area, who is somewhat removed from the situation.

Maintaining close relationships with communities is considered crucial for conflict sensitive planning and implementation, and field staff remain almost constantly in the field. However, a balance must be struck so that field staff do not lose their neutrality by getting too close to the communities.

Operational partners

Developing partnerships is a challenging process and needs to be undertaken with care. Many of the issues should be revealed through the conflict analysis. Of particular concern is the understanding of who the actors are, and what their relationships are with other actors. For

instance, it may be that a potential partner organisation has links to an armed group, or that personnel move regularly between the potential partner and the armed group. In some situations conflict protagonists have gained legitimacy through partnerships with international actors. Such knowledge can be acquired only by a thorough conflict analysis, focussing on the actors.

Equally important are the perceptions project participants have of the potential partners. They may be perceived as biased, insensitive to conflict, or to have links with potential or existing conflict protagonists. Whether or not these perceptions are grounded in reality, they are part of the operational context and should be taken into account in decisions about partnerships.

The capacity of potential partners is also important: what staff do they have? What is their mandate? What is their track record? What are the prospects for capacity building? CARE Sri Lanka have developed a partner assessment tool, leading to a process of partner capacity building (see Box 4). The decision to engage in such capacity development remains context- specific – in some situations an open and honest dialogue with potential partners on their conflict sensitivity could form part of a process of building this sensitivity. In other situations this may not be possible, and a decision may be taken not to engage in capacity development, not to engage with the partner at all, or to engage only in ways that build on what capacity the partner already has.

BOX 4

CARE Sri Lanka

As part of the engagement process with partners, CARE Sri Lanka use an Institutional Development and Organisational Strengthening Analysis (ID/OS), a co-operative assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the partner organisation. This leads to a joint agreement on institutional capacity building. Part of the analysis addresses the partner’s ability to conduct a conflict analysis and to understand their own role in conflict.

Assessment of the capacity of the intervening actors to impact conflict and peace is an essential part of assessing the potential for conflict and peace. Even if an institution has the responsibility for implementing a programme, it may not have the capacity. This is often true for governments or civil society in conflict-prone or -affected countries. International institutions often jump in to fill the gap, but they must be careful not to replace government capacity, creating a parallel system that impedes development of local capacity in the long term. A proactive strategy of capacity building may be the best option, even (in some cases) at the cost of low performance.

Staff concerned with implementation may not understand how the programmes/projects being implemented or

supported impact on conflict and peace. They often see these issues as outside their operating situation, and overlook both their own potential for positive or negative impact, and the capacity of their organisation to make a significant difference. Involvement in the conflict analysis, programme development and monitoring and evaluation will help broaden their horizons, and perceptions.

Where: which geographic area to support

Determining the geographic area of support requires a full reflection of the relationship between the outcomes of the needs assessment process and the conflict analysis. It should also be developed with the input of all sectors of the community.

The selection can have a direct influence on a conflict context, for instance by exacerbating the violation of land rights, by providing (often unintended) support to certain military or economic interests, or by legitimising the political power of some groups or individuals. These are cases where an intervention can inadvertently exacerbate conflict (and even directly endanger the lives of the population) or miss the opportunity to mitigate it.

Remember too that most interventions will not benefit the entire population; there will inevitably be non-beneficiary people or communities located at varying proximity to the beneficiaries. The transparency of beneficiary selection has been addressed above, but it may be necessary to communicate this more widely, or even to broaden the selection, perhaps in coordination with other intervening organisations.

It is important to understand the geographic determination of the beneficiary community – does it fall along lines of division? Could it worsen an existing division – or create a new one? If the intervention specifically seeks to impact conflict, then this focus in itself will determine geographic locations for operation. These questions should all be addressed through the conflict analysis, ensuring that the intervention is targeted at the geographic level (eg national, district, local) appropriate to the context.

When: Timing and length of intervention

In conflict situations, time management is a core resource. Several ‘lessons learned’ documents on conflict-related planning have highlighted the importance of timing in the injection of resources. Again, linking back to the conflict analysis is key.

Two elements of the analysis demand particular attention: conflict triggers and scenarios. Conflict triggers may be time-bound, such as an election or annual cycles of offensives linked to seasonal changes. Understanding triggers is important in deciding when to start and when to exit, and when contemplating any major changes in the intervention. Scenarios (see **Chapter 2 Section 2.4**) should

be related to the proposed project timeline, and assessed for potential windows of opportunity or vulnerabilities. This may involve a reflection on the motivations behind the timeline – is the length of intervention being defined by organisational objectives, resource constraints, or by the needs of the context?

3.4 Step 3: Develop indicators

Conflict-sensitive indicators fall into three principal categories:

- *Conflict indicators*, developed during the conflict analysis stage, are used to monitor the progression of conflict factors against an appropriate baseline, and to provide targets against which to set contingency planning
- *Project indicators* monitor the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project
- *Interaction indicators*, developed during the planning stage by taking the information gathered during the conflict analysis and applying it to the project planning process, are used to monitor and evaluate the interaction between the project and conflict factors by (a) measuring the impact the project is having on conflict (eg restricted access to safe drinking water no longer antagonises ethnic minority); and, obversely, (b) measuring the impact conflict factors are having on the project (eg number of staff approached by militants for financial ‘donations’; rising tensions make inter-group activities difficult to conduct).

Chapter 2 (section 3) provides a description of conflict indicators, and **Chapter 3.3 (step 2(c))** details the development of interaction indicators. Most organisations already employ programme or project indicators as a means of measuring the outputs and impact of their work against a baseline determined at the outset. Given the wealth of information available on project indicators², they are not examined here in any depth. However, as a conflict-sensitive project will have conflict-related outputs and impacts, these will need to be reflected in the project indicators. Project indicators should enable measurement of the various aspects (profiles, actors, causes and dynamics) of the context that may be affected by the project.

Interventions are commonly undertaken in partnership. It will be useful to have indicators that measure the impact of the actions of each partner. This is not simply to attribute credit, or blame, but rather to identify which approaches worked well, which did not work well, and why.

Contribution programming is a way of attributing impact to different actors, and of understanding that no one actor alone is entirely responsible for a given situation. It is also a key concept in the area of conflict where real results are the consequence of the combined actions of different parties (see **Module 3** for further details).

3.5 Step 4: Link project to scenarios and prepare contingency plans

In the absence of careful contingency planning, proactive programme implementers may react with potentially ill-conceived responses when quickly changing contextual environments throw up difficult circumstances. For example, if conflict dynamics rapidly deteriorate, an organisation may make a snap decision to evacuate, possibly leaving national staff at risk and beneficiaries suddenly without support.

Contingency plans define predetermined strategies for reacting to specific changes in the operational context. Put another way, if conflict dynamics deteriorate to a particular point, what actions will be required (see “Event” and “Response” columns in Box 5 below)? How will they be carried out? Who will undertake them? Within what timeframes? Contingency plans are designed using scenarios (see **Chapter 2 section 2.4**) in conjunction with conflict-sensitive indicators that monitor the evolution of a given conflict dynamic (see above).

A natural reaction to increased insecurity and violence is for implementers to move the project to the national

capital or halt operations in the hope that things may soon improve. There is also an unfortunate tendency for contingency plans to focus on expatriate staff and neglect national staff and partners altogether. Conflict-sensitive contingency plans will need to include security for all situations and all people – staff, partners and beneficiaries. A well thought out conflict-sensitive contingency plan will allow for a continued level of engagement in a wide variety of difficult circumstances based on the organisation’s detailed knowledge of the various profiles, causes, actors and dynamics. Should evacuation be required, a conflict-sensitive contingency plan will ensure a level of continued support and safety for staff who are not able to leave the region or country.

Contingency plans will allow for a level of stability and measured responses to difficult circumstances. The plans should allow for a degree of flexibility so that implementers may respond appropriately to circumstances as they arise, based on the detailed knowledge they have gained through the conflict analysis and careful monitoring of conflict-sensitive indicators.

During the latter part of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, CARE developed a Risk Management Matrix to foresee possible events and plan adjustments in the project to mitigate the impact of the conflict dynamics on the project. Table 1 gives an adapted example of the format and the analysis of an actual risk.

TABLE 1
Risk Management Matrix

Event	Probability	Response	Risk Management
<i>Description:</i> Brief description of the event and its consequences on both project and population Level of risk as the seriousness of the consequences: Low/ Medium/ High	<i>Description:</i> Brief description of historical occurrences and of potential reasons or cases in which the event could take place Degree of probability: Unlikely (10%) Possible (20 to 40%), Probable (50% and up)	<i>Description:</i> Reaction from the project to adapt to the new or temporary circumstance	<i>Description:</i> Measures in place for early warning and for immediate response.
<i>Example:</i> Security situation in project areas deteriorates causing displacement, destruction and reduction of socio-economic conditions. Project development strategy can no longer be effective. (Natural disasters in the area could have similar consequences). Risk: Medium/ High	<i>Example:</i> This has happened before (most people have been displaced more than once). In the past, such events have always been temporary – and conditions have recently improved. The situation must be seriously considered for the safety of the staff and project participants. (Natural disasters are possible though not as probable). Possible: 30%	<i>Example:</i> The project refocuses on the secondary group of participants defined in the needs assessment (if in condition to benefit from the longer term development approach). The project implementation schedule is reviewed to allow for some of the staff to be temporarily diverted to the immediate, emergency work with previous participants.	<i>Example:</i> The security situation is reviewed every week to enhance the ability to predict possible changes in the security situation of project areas. Permanent emergency funds have been secured from headquarters in order to maintain responsibility towards donors and provide relief support as well.

3.6 Step 5: Designing the project conclusion - sustainability, structural change and project evolution

Projects and programmes eventually come to an end. To ensure they remain conflict-sensitive throughout the project cycle, the project conclusion must be planned and executed in a sensitive manner. Broadly speaking there are three approaches available: (a) withdrawal at termination of project; (b) extension of project; and (c) following up the project with a new phase. To conflict-sensitise this stage of planning, exit strategies need to be flexible enough to address changes in conflict dynamics, but proactive enough to ensure beneficiaries' expectations are not unduly raised. Decisions should be well thought out, and should respond to dynamics identified through the conflict analysis and subsequent monitoring.

One approach to maintaining the balance between proactive planning and flexibility is to develop a menu of exit strategies that are reviewed throughout project implementation against the updated conflict analysis and regular monitoring. As the end of the intervention nears, the most appropriate exit strategy can be chosen. Early development of a variety of exit strategies will help to ensure that the eventual exit has been well thought out; is effectively communicated (along with other possible strategies and their associated triggers) at every stage of the project to minimise unrealistic expectations by staff and beneficiaries; and responds to the conflict dynamics identified through the updated conflict analysis. While the menu may create some ambiguity, this is a price worth paying to ensure that beneficiaries and others are prepared for the exit when it comes.

For projects that are intended to phase out completely, sustainable solutions need to be conflict sensitive. Most peacebuilding and development projects foresee a strategy of sustainable structures that stay behind to guarantee that the benefits of the intervention will remain in the long term. In order to make sustainability conflict sensitive, exit strategy planning needs to link back to the conflict analysis and scenarios, to see how they interact with these structures. Ensuring the sustainability of remaining structures and processes may require mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in local organisations and teaching conflict analysis skills to local partners.

For projects that intend to extend or adapt into new phases, it will be important to ensure that new interventions take into account any changes in conflict dynamics. Using the contingency plans outlined in **Step 4** will help ensure that future approaches reflect not only the best-case scenarios but also the worst. The project should build on the successes of the previous project.

Whether the exit strategy is planned to be a complete

phase-out or an adaptation into a new intervention, it is vitally important to plan for a proper conclusion of the initial intervention, including a comprehensive evaluation. In some cases the most negative impacts of interventions come not from their implementation, but rather from a poorly designed exit strategy (eg the impacts of an otherwise favourable intervention can be undermined when project staff, partners and suppliers suddenly find that their contracts will not be renewed). A well-planned exit strategy will not only help to seal the success of the initial project and leave a strong foundation for future interventions, but will also reduce the possibility of continuing existing activities – or designing new ones – that cause or exacerbate conflict.

Planning for the next intervention before the current intervention has completed its implementation phase is clearly not without its challenges. Nevertheless, thinking clearly and realistically about an exit strategy in a manner that balances being flexible with being proactive will help ensure the intervention is conflict-sensitive not only in its current phase, but beyond its anticipated lifespan.

4. Challenges

4.1 Relations with central and local authorities

Conflict sensitive planning and identification inevitably raise the question of conditionality. Central and local authorities that interact with the intervention may have policies or approaches that appear insensitive to conflict and risk, undermining the objectives of the intervention. As part of the planning phase, the intervening organisation may feel the need to effect changes in existing policies or practices of authorities to meet the minimal conditions required for a project or programme to succeed. Conflict-related conditions may include, for example, state willingness to support the independence of the justice system, or to pay appropriate salaries for security sector personnel.

To make the implementation of a programme conditional on the partners meeting these terms often requires a political commitment that is beyond the scope of planners. Finding allies and developing commitments from all levels of the intervening organisation will ensure that the issue of conditionality does not remain with planners, but can instead receive the attention and support of the entire organisation. The approach adopted by many organisations is to introduce the issue of initial conditions in the first stages of design, and later reflect the issue in evaluations and policy papers, in an attempt to make the dilemma more visible to political decision makers.

4.2 Information networks

Conflict sensitive programming requires networks to provide information on the context, and the interaction of the intervention with that context. Many organisations have existing information networks, and these may require further expansion to capture the sensitive and context-specific information required to monitor relevant changes and impacts. The principle of transparency may need qualification in this situation, as information sources sometimes require protection, and the information they provide might need to be treated with confidentiality. This is a context-specific question, but clearly sources should not be put at risk. A particularly innovative information network has been created by Al Quraish in Sri Lanka involving “Peace Birds” (see Box 5).

BOX 5

“Peace Birds”

Al Quraish has developed a unique network of ‘Peace Birds’ throughout the three divided communities in which it works. Al Quraish originated as a sports club, although has now transformed into a development actor. The original sports club members, representing all three communities, underwent conflict transformation and conflict analysis training. They now openly act as information conduits, unearthing and providing crucial information at moments of crisis.

4.3 Relations with donors

This planning module has predominantly used an implementing agency’s perspective in describing the various elements involved in conflict-sensitising a planning process. Donors of course do planning too. The following paragraphs address the unique challenges donors face in conflict-sensitising their planning processes, and outline some of the issues governments and NGOs need to consider in interacting with their donors on issues of conflict sensitivity.

Many donors rely on a tender process where the donor plans the project – sometimes down to specific details like how many days one particular type of technical advisor will spend supporting the intervention – and organisations bid by submitting an implementation plan and associated budget.

This planning module has argued that a project plan must be tied to some sort of conflict analysis. If donors do not undertake a conflict analysis, do not tie the project plan to the analysis, but instead design the plan based on an assessment that is then imposed on bidders, then ensuring a conflict-sensitive intervention will be highly problematic.

Further, the time required by most donors to conceive of an initial intervention idea, design it, secure the necessary internal funding, and then proceed through all steps of the bidding process means that any initial assumptions about conflict dynamics are often outdated by the time project implementation finally begins. Even if the initial project planning incorporated key elements of conflict sensitivity and was developed in a timely manner, many tenders necessitate a level of inflexibility that is at odds with conflict sensitivity: forced partnerships, restricted timing, specific location, and detailed specifics about the intervention itself.

Donor-funded projects that do not use a tender process also face challenges related to conflict sensitivity. While DFID (UK) has recently untied its aid, some donors still require that funding favour goods and services from their respective countries. The clearest example of tied aid and its potential for negatively impacting conflict is monetisation. Recipients are offered a product from the donor’s country in lieu of cash. The recipient then sells the commodity in the country in which they operate and uses the revenue to fund an approved project. Monetisation can undermine local production and distribution networks and fuel corruption, patronage and other root causes of conflict.

Whether or not aid is tied, donors that wish to conflict-sensitise their funding relationships could request applicants to include conflict analyses with their proposals in addition to the gender and environmental impact assessments most currently demand. A conflict sensitive end-of-project evaluation should also be required. In both cases, donors should provide the resources required to support these additional components.

More broadly, donors can conflict-sensitise their funding relationships by conducting their own broad conflict analysis and then evaluating projects on the basis of how they fit into the conflict dynamic (in addition to the regular criteria). The conflict assessment required from funding applicants should be seen as complementary to the conflict assessment conducted by the donor agency itself, and cases of contradiction should be seen as opportunities to learn more about the complexity of the conflict dynamic. Box 6 illustrates a tool used by one agency to analyse incoming proposals against the likelihood of their negatively impacting on conflict dynamics (the agency, CARE, is usually considered a generalist international development NGO, but in this case was acting as a donor, being responsible for funding grants and evaluating project proposals submitted by other organisations).

BOX 6
Micro project conflict sensitive selection criteria

Impact on conflict	A	B	C	D
Impacts on other communities	Has included preferences / priorities in project proposal	Considers preferences/ priorities of neighbouring communities	Avoids worsening tensions, or supports connections between communities	Will increase tension with other communities
Effects of resources on perceptions and relationships	Increases mutual dependency and communication between communities	Reduces harmful competition / suspicion / biases	Avoids creating or worsening harmful competition / suspicion / biases	Increases harmful competition / suspicion in communities
Ethical aspects	Models and promotes constructive values*	Reduces ethical problems and opportunities	Avoids harmful behaviour, relationships, and messages	Can lead to provocations, harmful behaviour or messages
Risk of violence	Increases capacity of people and communities to abstain from being involved / exposed to violence	Reduces the vulnerability of people and communities to violence	Avoids placing people and communities at (more) risk from violence	Places people and communities at (more) risk from violence.

* Constructive values might include tolerance, acceptance of differences, inclusiveness etc.

Accepting funding from some donors may imply political support or an affiliation that could jeopardise the implementer’s conflict sensitivity. Both peacebuilding and human rights work are premised on the political independence of the implementing agency. This has boosted the involvement of civil society during the past twenty years, often structured into NGOs, unions and religious groups. The limited number of donors and the multiplication of sophisticated fundraising actors – and thus increased competition for scarce funding resources – have led to the emergence of a real quandary for planning the development of such activities: should implementers remain small but independent, or should they align with public funding priorities and grow?

Some tools, such as the Clingendael Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework (see Chapter 2, Annex 1, item 9), advise using a cost-benefit analysis to define the true cost of a particular objective in conflict prevention in relation to other objectives. Such analytical tools help decision-making not only regarding project activities at the implementation level, but also on wider programmatic issues, such as aligning with external funding objectives, at all levels of an organisation.

Box 7 summarises some of the measures adopted by organisations to secure operational capacity and independence.

BOX 7
Independence strategies

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) refuses strict earmarking: to guarantee its protection mandate, the ICRC refuses funds which are earmarked below the country level. Even though internal reporting is sector and population specific, donor reporting is more generic, and clearly distinguishes levels of confidentiality, even in evaluations.

Amnesty International refuses to accept state funding, and instead relies exclusively on the mobilisation of national chapters for fundraising or planning and implementation of campaigns.

Many international NGOs engage and shape donor policy, often through policy feedback mechanisms designed as project outputs.

5.

Endnotes

¹Mary B. Anderson (ed), “Essays from field experiences”,
Cambridge Mass: CDA, Inc: 2000.

²See, for example, Frances Rubin, *A Basic Guide to Evaluation for
Development Workers*, Oxford: Oxfam, 1995

Conflict-sensitive implementation

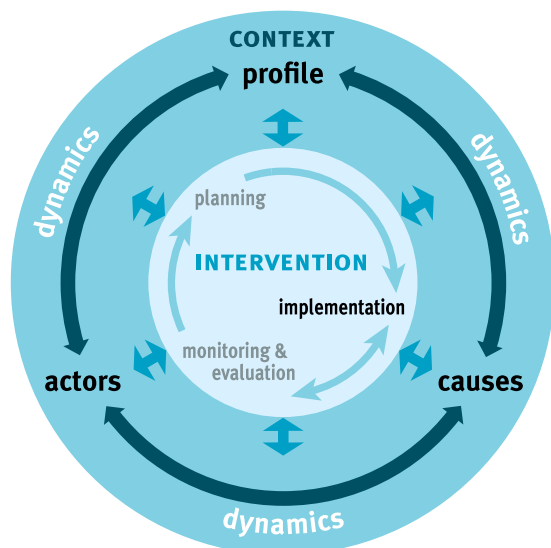
Purpose of module

To help ensure that project and programme implementation remains conflict-sensitive, through the understanding of key project management and implementation issues. This will help the reader to set up, implement, monitor and adjust the project and programme in a conflict-sensitive manner. (The intended audience includes donors: while they generally implement projects through other agencies, they often have a strong influence on a project or programme's implementation, and many of the large INGOs are themselves donors to smaller NGOs.)

Contents

1. What is conflict-sensitive implementation?
2. Key stages of conflict-sensitive implementation
3. Challenges
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Annex 1: Draft principles of operation for agencies providing humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka



1. What is conflict-sensitive implementation?

Implementation is the process of achieving objectives by undertaking activities designed in the planning process. It involves regular progress reviews and adjustment of activities as required.

Conflict sensitive implementation additionally involves close scrutiny of the operational context through regularly updating the conflict analysis, linking this understanding of the context to the objective and process of achieving the activities, and adjusting these activities accordingly.

It builds on the conflict analysis and planning processes (see **Chapter 2** and **Chapter 3 Module 1**). The key elements are to:

- sensitively *manage* the process of implementation (activities, staffing, information networks, finances etc)
- regularly *monitor* the operational context and the interaction between the intervention and the context, using the indicators defined in the conflict analysis and planning stages
- *adjust* the project in light of new information gathered through monitoring, focusing particularly on the objectives and the process of implementation.

BOX 1

Key elements of conflict-sensitive implementation

Management involves the ability to see the bigger picture: how all the elements of the intervention, its operational context and the interaction between the two, fit together. It involves supervising the entire process of implementation and making operational decisions.

Monitoring requires gathering, reviewing and analysing information in order to measure progress and change using the conflict indicators, project indicators, and interaction indicators described in **Modules 1** and **3**, and **Chapter 2**.

Adjustment means changing the plan in response to unforeseen changes of circumstance. The choices of *what*, *who*, *where*, and *when* may periodically require alteration and may change substantially. In certain situations more extreme measures may be required, such as fundamentally changing the project's implementation approach.

BOX 2**Failure to understand the context***Example 1 (violent conflict):*

Purchasing a vehicle may seem like an innocuous activity. However, even this relatively minor activity could be highly conflict insensitive. Purchasing the vehicle from a given supplier can support one group or actor over another. The funds received from the sale of the car could be diverted to the war economy, or be taxed by a conflict actor. It is not uncommon for INGO vehicles, bearing their organisation's logos to be taken and used by military or other conflict actors.

Example 2 (structural violence):

In rural Nepal, a development organisation implemented a project designed to empower members of the lower castes. As part of their education, the trainees learned that they enjoy equal rights to those of other castes within their community. One of the trainees chose to exercise his right at a subsequent village meeting by sitting on a chair alongside members of higher castes. The higher caste members – who themselves had not benefited from caste empowerment training – were upset by what they saw as an inappropriate action by the lower caste member, and physically assaulted him.

Understanding the context is crucial to conflict-sensitive implementation. As the two examples in Box 2 demonstrate, activities that may be well-intentioned, or even apparently unrelated to conflict dynamics, can unintentionally exacerbate conflict factors if the context is not well understood.

Effectively monitoring, managing and adjusting an intervention requires efficient information networks. To effectively triangulate information (see **Chapter 2, Box 10**), these networks will be based on multiple sources and should be set up in the planning stage. Such information networks can prove particularly challenging in conflict-affected contexts, or situations at risk of violent conflict, as information that is politically sensitive may be difficult to obtain (see **Chapter 3 Module 1**). Equally important is the commitment to honest self-reflection and learning. Only through such commitment can changes be made to the objectives and process of implementation to ensure that an intervention remains conflict-sensitive.

2. Key steps to sensitise the implementation process

Most conflict sensitive implementation work is undertaken at the planning phase and through the conflict analysis. The four following steps then build on this prior work.

The four key steps in conflict sensitive implementation and management

Step 1: Refer back to the conflict analysis

Step 2: Set up the project

- a) Prepare and/or assess plans of operation
- b) Negotiate project contract issues and sites
- c) Co-ordination
- d) Define security procedures

Step 3: Implement, monitor and adjust the project

- a) Implement and monitor
- b) Adjust to the context and the interaction

Step 4: Conflict-sensitive project phase out

2.1 Step 1: Refer back to the conflict analysis

If time has elapsed between the planning and implementation stages, the conflict analysis should be reviewed and updated. This may require a revision of the decisions made during planning, such as the selection of partners and beneficiaries, the timing of the intervention, and even the objectives of the intervention. Some of the challenges presented by changing implementation modalities tied to donor funding are explored later in this module.

2.2 Step 2: Set up the project

2.2.1 Preparing and / or assessing plans of operation

It is good practice to engage all parties when developing operating plans, including seeking their input and feedback on the timing and contents of the plans. This engagement should begin in the planning stage, but continue during implementation as the plans become further fleshed out and operationalised. Contingency planning should also be reviewed. Maintain flexibility in the plans.

Bringing in donors, decision makers and implementing organisations at this preparatory stage will help them to understand the context better, and will help to generate a common understanding of the likelihood of changes of context and needs in the project areas.

2.2.2 Negotiating project contract issues and access to sites

Programmes are often implemented through a chain of subcontracting or cooperation agreements, and your organisation may have only peripheral contact with the affected populations. Partner selection has been addressed under planning, but it is important, when implementing, to monitor the sensitivity of partners and subcontractors. This can be achieved by regularly updating the actor analysis component of the conflict assessment through an active partnership approach, independent validations (eg evaluation visits), or regionally based information networks. Likewise, supply chain contracts for the provision of goods – such as construction materials, vehicles or foodstuffs – need to incorporate conflict sensitivity (see Box 3).

BOX 3

Supply chains and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

The Socio-Economic Development Organisation (SEDOT) needs rubble and sand to construct dwellings for displaced persons who are returning to their village. The sand and rubble are each sourced in rival communities. SEDOT hopes to turn the supply contracting of construction materials into a peacebuilding opportunity by capitalising on cross-community economic exchange to transform community conflict.

Provisions for conflict sensitivity can also be included when negotiating contracts and performance objectives with staff. This may mean a proactive capacity-building stance to ensure staff development (see **Chapter 5**).

Simply because of the nature of a given context, the administration of resources (as well as management of perceptions about how they are administered) can be a major source of tension and greatly exacerbate conflict or potential conflict. Field staff may not have access to banking facilities, thus the payment of wages can present challenges. Payment for goods can also be susceptible to corruption in some contexts, perhaps commending the use of purchase orders over cash payments. The choice of bank and signing authority can also convey certain messages.

BOX 4

Negotiating access or co-operation

The negotiation of access and of the intervention strategy can be a good first opportunity to set the ground rules of the relationship between donors, organisations and local authorities. In some cases, it can be beneficial to bring together as many interested parties as possible to remind all actors of everyone's obligation for proper accountability and quality.

Nevertheless, care is needed over the inclusion of parties who control or influence access, as their inclusion could result in the perceived or real legitimisation of their power, and increase their capacity to exert control, even over project activities. For instance in Somalia, following the 1992 military intervention, humanitarian assistance was severely disrupted by militias, whose ability to use violence prompted humanitarians to negotiate with them for access. These negotiations contributed to the legitimisation of the militias who were then able to gain an international audience.

As with all aspects of project implementation, the conflict analysis is key in understanding who these potential negotiating parties are, what dynamics could be fuelled, and how to cope with any problems.

The location an organisation chooses for its headquarters or regional head offices can imply stronger relationships with one group over another – be it rural / urban or divided communities in different locations. Physical separation from beneficiaries may also undermine your ability to monitor and manage interventions, and potentially strain relations between field and headquarters. In some circumstances, negotiating access to specific areas or communities can present specific challenges (see Box 4).

2.2.3 Co-ordination

Co-ordination between organisations in any given area is important to:

- optimise sharing of information and analysis
- avoid overlap in activities, and rationalise use of resources
- avoid situations where interveners are trying to carve out a niche for themselves
- avoid counter-productive programming.

At certain levels of conflict, it can become imperative to negotiate with other organisations or groups to develop a common set of guidelines or rules of engagement. For instance, in Sri Lanka, a group of donors and organisations came together to co-ordinate their work and define common perspectives and principles of operation in conflict-affected areas. And in Northern Uganda, a consortium of INGOs under World Vision leadership is conducting a joint conflict analysis. **Annex 1** to this module

summarises an example from Sri Lanka of the principles that can be applied when operating in conflict prone or – affected areas. Note that such co-ordinating principles are not conflict-sensitive unless they are respected and implemented effectively. Experience with Operation Lifeline Sudan shows that this does not always happen.

2.2.4 Defining security procedures

In situations of violent conflict, the implementation strategy of the project may inadvertently pose a serious threat to the safety of staff, beneficiaries and partners. Different approaches are usually adopted with the objective of ensuring their safety:

- contingency planning must contain security procedures. These should be defined in the planning phase (see **Chapter 3 Module 1**) and contain pre-determined plans of action. The monitoring process should feed into this
- codes of conduct and guidelines, such as Amnesty International's, can incorporate security procedures (see Box 5)
- staff safety can be increased and control systems implemented through the use of specialised advisers (for example the network of security consultants operated by the UN security office, UNSECOORD). Many publications focus on these increased staff safety and control systems, such as Save the Children's "Safety First" guidelines¹
- staff negotiating and analytical skills can usually be improved through training
- an image of transparency and impartiality can be cultivated by encouraging open communication and participation and avoiding any threatening conduct.

BOX 5

Security guidelines

Amnesty International has developed a series of guidelines for human rights activists in the field. These relate to staff procedures, and include specific advice regarding security of staff, of those providing information, and of those about whom the information is concerned. It details the accountability of staff for their own and others' security, and defines the procedures the organisation will take if staff, providers of information or those whose rights have been violated, are put at risk.

2.3 Step 3: Implement, monitor and adjust the project

2.3.1 Implement and monitor

Having set up the operational aspects of the project, the next step is to begin implementation.

Potential or actual conflict is inherently dynamic, and the operating environment will change over time as profile, causes, actors, and their dynamic interactions change and evolve. Central to ensuring a conflict sensitive process is to monitor (and periodically evaluate) the context and the interaction of the intervention with that context; to re-assess the appropriateness of project parameters (such as the choice of beneficiaries, the timing of the intervention) in light of changes; and to adjust accordingly. Monitoring is discussed in the planning module (**Chapter 3, Module 1**), and in more detail in the module on monitoring and evaluation (**Chapter 3, Module 3**).

2.3.2 Adjusting to the context and the interaction

A balance must be struck between the flexibility necessary to be conflict sensitive, and the commitment to existing plans. Understanding the role of the intervention in the changing context is key to determining the appropriate reaction to the situation. Some of the most common forms of adjustment are set out below:

Adjust programming Ensuring that the intervention remains relevant depends on timely adjustments of project parameters according to a consistent self-assessment. Thus the choice of in *what way*, with *whom*, *where*, and *when* the intervention is implemented may require review and change.

Adjust contingency plans Monitoring procedures may reveal unforeseen circumstances for which contingency plans will need to be adjusted.

Adopt an advocacy role The advocacy role gives priority to the non-confrontational presentation of complaints and queries to responsible authorities in a manner acceptable to those authorities. This approach implies a degree of confidentiality and trust, based on constant verification of the limits to acceptable behaviour, and on the avoidance of any form of coercion. It requires continual presence on location, and a high degree of tolerance to conflict instigators.

Adopt a support role In situations where the authorities are weak or simply dysfunctional, but social order still prevails, the support role mobilises energies from a wide range of sources for the achievement of certain life-saving actions. This role is predominant, for example, with NGOs working around or with 'failed state' administrations, and when conditions lead to chronic human rights violations.

Re-negotiate ground rules Ground rules and terms of access have been noted in Box 4 and **Annex 1**. In the event of a breach of agreement, these ground rules may need to be re-affirmed or re-negotiated.

Freeze operations Where a programme or project is found to be unexpectedly negatively impacting on the context, or the context is negatively impacting on the

intervention, it may be necessary to *temporarily* place implementation on hold until a more conflict-sensitive approach can be developed. The period for freezing implementation must be kept to an absolute minimum so beneficiaries, suppliers and staff do not suffer additional hardships. Further, the intervention must adjust to meet the newly developing context – waiting for the context to change such that it meets the intervention’s implementation plan is simply not conflict-sensitive.

Denunciation This approach places a greater price on respect for values than on the continuation of programmes, and was the founding principle of Médecins Sans Frontières which prefers to withdraw from an area rather than continue to provide assistance that could prolong a destructive status quo. Denunciation may place personnel under considerable pressure, even insecurity, and must be built on an ability to pull out easily. For peacebuilders, the principle of impartiality and the need to maintain relationships with all actors effectively preclude denunciation.

Abandonment Even though the criteria for the exceptional decision to suddenly terminate a project should be defined from the start, conflict-sensitive implementation must leave open the way for substantial adjustments to fit the evolving context. A decision to withdraw should be seen as a last resort, and taken only if a careful review of the context (see ‘freezing operations’ above) reveals that the intervention cannot be adjusted to interact positively with its context.

If a decision to abandon an intervention is taken, conflict sensitivity becomes particularly important. Proper exit management will consider first the safety of everyone involved (not only project staff) and will also put in place adequate mechanisms for the preservation of the project’s impact. More than ever, for a conflict-sensitive withdrawal, there is a need to review the conflict analysis to understand the consequences of different termination strategies and how each approach to abandonment will affect actors and dynamics of conflict.

UNHCR in Burundi has resorted to building less capital intensive structures in provinces from which it might have to withdraw, and to investing more in training and social mobilisation. Many agencies still struggle during the preparation phase to define the minimum space required for implementation in highly volatile environments. Options and methods for withdrawing conflict-sensitively – and more importantly, for adjusting implementation to reflect an evolving context – become clearer during implementation when monitoring can be used to regularly update the conflict analysis.

2.4 Step 4: Conflict-sensitive project phase out

At the conclusion of the project, the plans for conflict-sensitive phase out are implemented. These have been discussed in the planning module (see **Chapter 3 Module 1**).

3.

Challenges for conflict-sensitive implementation

3.1 Being flexible

Being flexible is crucial to conflict sensitivity, and nowhere is this more important than in the implementation phase. The volatility of conflict dynamics regularly results in the unexpected. A constant dialogue with all parties and regularly updating the conflict analysis will minimise the number (and degree) of surprises. The process of adjusting programming has been discussed under **step 2.2.2** above. However, to enable such flexibility on the part of implementers also requires flexibility on the part of funders.

Sound administrative and financial systems normally demand rigorous expenditure planning, monthly closing and reconciling of accounts, periodic budget audits, and several other rather rigid requirements. As a conflict or potential conflict unfolds, these requirements can greatly constrain implementers’ flexibility and easily threaten the life or impact of the intervention. However, both implementer and funder bear an equal responsibility for the finances and the successful implementation of the project. Most funding schemes and implementation strategies can be adjusted if the parties agree with the need for changes.

From the beginning, implementers should look for acceptable adjustments of normal budget requirements to support the specific context of the operation. They should have a good understanding of the mechanisms (funding systems, contract management rules, conceptual and implementing alternatives, etc) available and plan for regular reviews over the duration of the project. Finally, implementers should maintain a fluid dialogue between donor and implementing agency (including during the financial planning stage and about possible contingency budget modifications).

Donors are also partners, with equal responsibility to see a project to completion. The relationship between implementers and donors requires transparency and trust, such that honest progress updates can be made even when implementation is altered by the context. Likewise, when implementers find that the intervention is having a negative impact on the context, a frank and honest exchange with donors on how to become more conflict sensitive should be facilitated. Frequent and honest dialogue between donor and implementer improves knowledge and learning on both sides and enables better project implementation.

3.2 Learning lessons

The processes of monitoring and adjusting (steps 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above) provide substantial opportunities for learning lessons. Interventions in an ongoing conflict or potential conflict situation have added responsibility of higher accountability for impact and depend on applying good practices and lessons learned as an effective way of contributing to that impact. Actively reflecting on practices that have been incorporated as part of the project objective and developing a learning culture will also help contribute to a positive impact. Implementers should also consider bringing the communities into the analysis and evaluation processes, using an ongoing conflict analysis to identify key conflict environments and actors, and integrating them into existing information systems.

3.3 Building and maintaining relationships

During implementation, the project becomes not only a systemic part of the context but also a dynamic element of it as a result of the different relations and interactions with other actors (eg communities, implementing organisations, donors, authorities).

Constructive conflict management should form a common goal across a spectrum of actors, both within and beyond the project area. Use this goal as the starting point of every negotiation or activity as it will generate a greater capacity to discover common solutions, and be strategic about the relationships you develop. The actor analysis undertaken during the conflict analysis will help.

Project participants: Trust and participation

To gain trust and participation from beneficiaries requires commitment and hard work. Seek to:

- engage the communities in as many planning and reviewing activities as possible and actively seek their input (this engagement will require the introduction of specific systems that will ensure the effective participation of communities and avoid the risk of unbalanced involvement)

- avoid behaviour that may be misinterpreted by local actors
- maximise participation at all levels of the project to build mutual trust – project success may depend not only on the trust beneficiaries have in interveners, but also in how much interveners trust beneficiaries
- plan a constructive engagement with beneficiaries to positively influence the context.

Project staff: Internal dialogue and safety

Conflicts and potential conflicts usually have an important impact on project staff. Be sure to:

- reinforce constructive messages and nurture an atmosphere of dialogue
- enable staff to perform their activities without endangering their safety
- make staff feel respected for their work in difficult conditions
- ensure management systems do not affect conflict dynamics in a negative manner
- be mindful of implicit messages that could damage capacity to constructively address conflict dynamics through the ethnic or caste composition of staff, suspicion, unnecessary security measures that increase anxiety, salary policies, gender biases, and other management practices inconsistent with the context.

Partners: Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability should guide the deepening of relationships.

- use basic (but strict) rules of partnership
- be mindful of unequal relations between powerful institutions and local smaller structures of civil society as this inequality may undermine the ability to develop an open dialogue
- negotiate basic rules of accountability and independence that can help ensure an equitable relationship.

It is common practice to implement through local partners. If accountability is ensured, this is usually a positive approach as this process can itself support the strengthening of civil society in cases where conflict dynamics have undermined the social fabric. The selection of partners can provide an important opportunity to foster dialogue and trust within the local civil society. Do No Harm analyses have revealed that by setting up committees where all local actors participate using transparent rules of selection, the process can result in the identification of appropriate partner agencies. Equally importantly, the committees can set an example and space for trust and dialogue that may have previously been absent.

4. Endnotes

¹Mark Cutts and Alan Dingle, “Safety First: Protecting NGO employees who work in areas of conflict” 2nd Edition, Save the Children, 1998.

Annex 1

Draft principles of operation for agencies providing humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka (abridged)

1. Humanitarian imperative

Agencies recognize that the right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle that should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. Our primary motivation for working is to improve the human condition and alleviate human suffering, facilitating the returnee process with different communities taking into consideration their security and their rights.

2. Non-discrimination

Agencies follow a policy of non-discrimination regarding ethnic origin, sex, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, political orientation, marital status or age in regard to the target populations with whom we work.

3. Respect for culture and custom

Agencies respect the local culture, religions and traditions of the people of Sri Lanka.

4. Independence

- Agencies function independently from all governments, government controlled / organized bodies, political parties.
- Agencies set independent policies, design their own programmes and use implementation strategies which they believe are in the best interests of the humanitarian needs of individuals, families, and communities of the target population and ultimately in the best long-term interests of the people.
- Select where they work, select beneficiaries, select the most appropriate form of intervention based on their organizational mandate, their independent assessment of need and organizational capacity.

- Do not knowingly gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those purposes that are strictly humanitarian.
- Provide funds and project materials directly to project beneficiaries. Agencies do not provide funds or materials directly or indirectly to government departments or parastatal organizations for project implementation.
- Humanitarian Agencies should have unimpeded access to the population of potential beneficiaries.
- International humanitarian organizations must have unimpeded access to local partners who have the capacity to implement projects efficiently and with accountability.

5. Monitoring and accountability

- Agencies are accountable to donors and beneficiaries and adopt and implement necessary monitoring mechanisms to ensure all assistance reaches the intended targeted beneficiaries.
- Humanitarian agencies must be able to freely monitor the implementation of projects implemented with designated funds sourced for the said purpose.

5.1 Financial accountability

- Agencies consider themselves stewards of donors' funds and accept that responsibility with the utmost seriousness and have control systems in place to ensure that financial resources and assets are used solely by and for their intended project beneficiaries and are not diverted by the government or any other party.

5.2. Accessibility

Agencies work directly with and have direct access to project beneficiaries and their communities to assess, evaluate and monitor projects.

6. Transportation / Taxation

- Persons engaged in humanitarian assistance, their transport and supplies shall be respected and protected. They shall not be the object of attack or other acts of violence.
- Based on the principle that donated funds designated by the donors for specific purposes should be used fully for the said purposes, such funds or materials, or labour secured by such funds, should not be subject to taxation in any form.

7. Rights-based programming and advocacy

Agencies respect fundamental human rights as defined by the United Nations and our programmes take a constructive proactive approach to advocate for rights of

individuals as consistent with programme objectives in the communities where we work.

- The fundamental right of all IDPs to return voluntarily to their homes in condition of safety and dignity must be fully respected. The establishment of their conditions is primarily the responsibility of those who are governing the said areas. This must be recognized as an essential prerequisite to material intervention by humanitarian agencies.
- The rights of beneficiaries, in particular women, to fully participate in the design of projects planned for implementation in their communities must be respected.

8. Capacity building

Agencies seek to operate in a way that supports civil society and builds the capacity of human resources in the country.

9. Sustainability

Agencies employ a diverse set of strategies with a long-term goal of achieving a suitable impact in their programming. Sustainability can be defined in a number of different ways, including the long-term impact of specific intervention following the closure of a project, continued financial viability of an institution, or capacity built within the community, within local community-based organizations or among staff members. Different agencies may employ different definitions and different methods, but all consider sustainability of paramount importance and strive to achieve it.

10. INGO co-operation

- Agencies exercise mutual respect for each agency's mandate methodology, independence and self-determination.
- Agencies practice transparency and confidentiality in engaging in a regular dialogue with one another regarding these principles and encourage one another to maintain the highest possible level of ethical programming.
- Agencies encourage and support additional agencies entering the country to develop and undertake responsible ethical programming to provide needed humanitarian assistance.

11. Local NGO Participation

The situation is now conducive for local NGOs to be made knowledgeable of humanitarian principles and to implement activities more effectively and efficiently. Therefore we consider it as an opportunity for humanitarian agencies to invite them to participate in training and capacity building programmes, in planning, monitoring and evaluating activities targeting the population in need, and linking them with both government and NGOs.

Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

Purpose of module

To help the reader to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system that captures the interaction between project and context, and to identify relevant indicators to monitor this interaction.

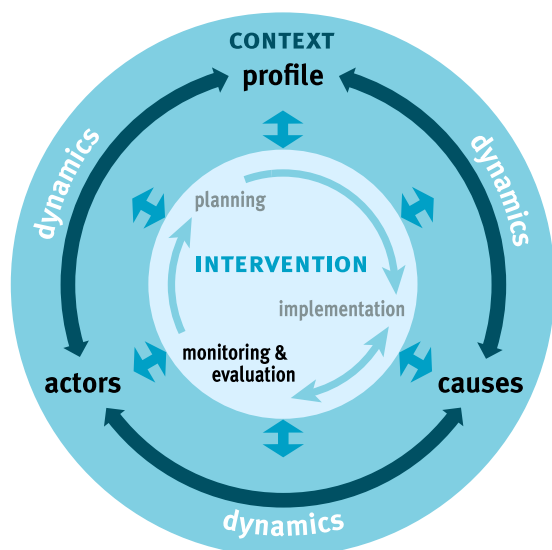
The monitoring system should seek to measure the impact of the intervention on the changing context and vice versa, and to enable programming to be adjusted if necessary to ensure optimum conflict sensitivity.

The evaluation system should seek to identify lessons for improving conflict-sensitive planning and implementation in the future.

Contents

1. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation
2. Key steps in conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation
3. Key issues in conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation
4. Endnotes

Annex 1: Sample indicators – links between context changes and project, and project changes and context



1. What is conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring is the process of regularly examining a project's actual outputs and impacts during implementation. It provides the project team with current information that enables them to assess progress in meeting project objectives, and to adjust implementation activities if necessary. It also generates data that can be used for evaluation purposes.

Conflict-sensitive monitoring will enable project staff to gain a detailed understanding of the context, the intervention, and the interaction between the two. It introduces an understanding of conflict actors, profile, causes and dynamics into traditional monitoring processes and activities to inform required adjustments and changes to project or programme activities. In this way, conflict sensitive monitoring helps ensure the intervention has as positive an impact as possible on conflict dynamics.

Evaluation is a one-off assessment that typically takes place at the end of a project, although it can also be undertaken as a mid-project review. On the basis of systematically applied objective criteria, an evaluation assesses the design, implementation and overall results of an ongoing or completed project in relation to its stated goals and objectives.

Conflict-sensitive evaluation introduces a detailed understanding of actors, profile, causes and dynamics into traditional evaluation activities and processes. Conflict-sensitive evaluations are used to understand the overall impact a given intervention has had on its context, and the context on the intervention. These evaluations can then be used to adjust subsequent phases of an ongoing initiative, and / or provide lessons for future initiatives.

In other words, while traditional monitoring and evaluation focus primarily on assessing the intended and actual outputs of a given project, conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation also requires:

- an understanding of the context as it changes over time
- measuring of the interaction between the project and the context.

It should be noted that conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation is still in the early stages of development; this module presents thinking current at the time of writing but should not be taken as the definitive statement on the subject. Outstanding challenges include, for example, the development of indicators (see **steps 2 and 3** below). Because conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is very much context- and activity- specific, it is difficult to offer specific guidance; indicators that are useful in one case are generally not transferable to other situations. Despite the challenges, this module does offer a perspective on current thinking in the area of conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, including some new approaches to outstanding issues.

2.

Key steps in conflict sensitising monitoring and evaluation

Broadly speaking, traditional monitoring and evaluation processes are organised around the following steps:

The five key steps in monitoring and evaluation

- Step 1: Decide when to monitor or evaluate
- Step 2: Design monitoring and evaluation process
- Step 3: Collect information
- Step 4: Analyse information
- Step 5: Recommend and redesign

The introduction of conflict sensitivity into the process does not change these basic steps; it does, however, change the way in which they are applied. The main differences are highlighted in this module.

2.1 Step 1: Decide when to monitor and evaluate

Traditional monitoring and evaluation processes are typically organised around pre-defined timeframes outlined in the project documents (eg quarterly and annual reports, end of project, new project phase). Integrating conflict sensitivity into the monitoring and evaluation processes and activities may require changes in timing to relate the timing of these processes to significant

aspects of the conflict profile, causes and dynamics identified by the conflict analysis.

For example, a project's regularly scheduled monitoring work may inadvertently take place at the same time as an election or the period leading up to it, but the understanding of the local context gained from the conflict analysis may suggest that this is not appropriate (eg if there is a history of violence during election times, reliable information may be harder to obtain than at other times). Alternatively, an evaluation trip may be scheduled to avoid monsoon rains or cold winter months in order to facilitate travel, logistics and comfort, but evaluators may then miss important aspects of human interactions and attitudes prevalent at those times and crucial to the assessment. Decisions about when to monitor and evaluate which are dictated by institutional and funding requirements should be systematically reviewed to assess the impact of the preferred timing on the context – that is, through linking the proposed timing to the conflict analysis. Such timing adjustments may prove challenging to both financial reporting requirements and funders.

2.2 Step 2: Design monitoring and evaluation process

In addition to typical outputs from traditional monitoring and evaluation, conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation assesses the interaction between the context and the project. In order to understand this interaction the process should be designed around three primary issues: (a) understanding the context and changes in the context; (b) understanding the intervention, including its implementation; and (c) measuring the interaction between the two.

(a) Understanding the changing context

As outlined in **Chapter 2**, a conflict analysis can be used to provide an understanding of the context in which project interventions are situated, and to track changes that occur. In particular, the conflict indicators developed at the conflict analysis stage will help systematically monitor changes in the context in terms of conflict profile, causes, actors, and dynamics.

However, some organisations may not have a conflict analysis at the time they want to start sensitising their monitoring or evaluation; or they may have a conflict analysis that has become outdated.

For monitoring purposes, if a conflict analysis does not exist it will suffice to conduct a current analysis and to begin incorporating conflict indicators from this point forward. This conflict analysis will provide the baseline from which to monitor and later evaluate changes in the context. The depth and scope of the conflict analysis should be appropriate to the existing or anticipated intervention and your organisation's capacity. If on the

other hand the conflict analysis is outdated, there is no need to redo it – simply develop (if none exist) or use the conflict indicators from the initial analysis to monitor changes in the operating context.

If you are conducting an evaluation, then given the importance of a conflict analysis to create a baseline, a retroactive conflict analysis should be undertaken using past reports and other information sources to estimate the situation prior to the start of the intervention.

(b) Understanding the project implementation

As conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation focuses on the interaction between the context and the intervention, it is important to understand the project's intended and actual implementation.

Intended implementation, activities and approaches

- purpose and scope of the activity
- geographic location of the project
- project beneficiaries and partners
- timeframe
- funding level and sources.

The information outlined above can generally be found in the project proposal and approved implementation plans.

Actual implementation, activities and approaches

- who are the project partners and beneficiaries? And why?
- what have been successes and challenges?
- were any activities undertaken that had not been envisaged during the planning? Why?
- were any adjustments made from the initial strategy? Why?
- have any activities been changed or cancelled?
- were there problems with staff (eg security, motivation)?

This information is typically found through the monitoring of traditional project indicators that were designed in the planning stage. You may want to ensure that the questions above can be answered through your initial project monitoring indicators, and add or adjust indicators as necessary.

When gathering this information for an evaluation, reference can be made to previous monitoring reports. It is important, however, to gather other perspectives that may not be reflected in these reports: designed as they usually are for a specific audience they may not fully capture the project's implementation realities (see *triangulation* below, **Chapter 2 Box 10**, and **Module 1 section 3.2** of this chapter).

(c) Understanding the interaction between the context and the project

As described in **Module 1** of this chapter, there are three elements to conflict sensitive indicators:

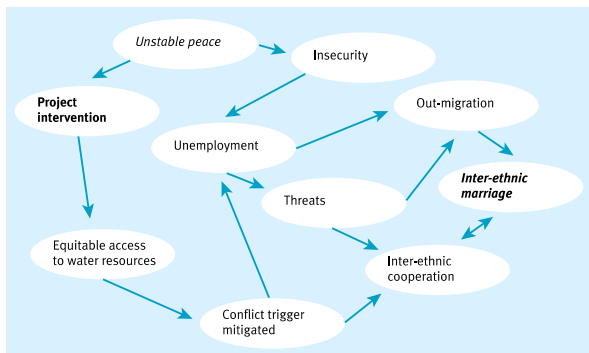
- *conflict indicators* are used to monitor the progression of conflict factors against an appropriate baseline, and to provide targets against which to set contingency planning (see **Chapter 2**).
- *project indicators* monitor the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project (see **Module 1** and **Annex 1** of this chapter).
- *interaction indicators* (see **Module 1** of this chapter) are created at the planning phase of the project in order to measure the interaction between the context and the project.

Specifically, interaction indicators are used to monitor the impact of the project on the context, and of the context on the project. For example, if the context tells you that corruption amongst local government officials is a contributing conflict cause, and the project involves building the capacity of local government officials, then an interaction indicator will measure both:

- the project's effect on corruption amongst local government officials
- the effect of corruption amongst local government officials on the project.

A key challenge practitioners face when undertaking conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation is the issue of agency or *causality*. For example, an NGO may be working in a remote village to provide access to water resources in a way that is equitable between two ethnic groups – an issue identified as key in a conflict analysis. Following the successful implementation of the project, evaluators using interaction indicators find that inter-marriage rates between the two ethnic groups have increased. The challenge of conflict-sensitive evaluation resides in the attribution of this change: is increased inter-marriage a result of the project intervention? Of interventions by other actors operating at the same and other levels? Or of changes in the context that are unrelated to external actors?

The highly simplified schematic that follows demonstrates the difficulty of determining the causal link between – in this example – the project intervention and a change in inter-ethnic marriage rates. Most contexts are substantially more complex than outlined in this diagram.

Diagram 1¹

Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation must recognise that there is not always a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the context and the project. In this sense, ‘good enough’ thinking is required as conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation can never provide absolute certainty. It is nevertheless important to anticipate the challenge posed by causality when developing conflict-sensitive indicators. Good indicators often seek not to address directly the interaction between the project and the context, but to focus instead on more indirect causal manifestations of this interaction (eg not “did my project contribute to reduce discrimination?” but “are there parts of the district that are safe for some groups and not for others?”).

Because every context is unique and can change dramatically over short periods of time, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of conflict-sensitive indicators that practitioners can use or adopt to their own situations. In addition to the guidelines outlined above, it is, however, possible to outline a general approach to developing indicators for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.

Annex 1 uses a fictionalised context to provide a detailed breakdown of the type of analysis and indirect questioning that is useful for developing conflict sensitive indicators. Box 1 below provides some actual examples of using indirect indicators to help determine impact.

BOX 1

Oxfam Sri Lanka

Oxfam Sri Lanka have developed a series of conflict sensitive indicators to evaluate their peacebuilding work (this seeks to build relationships and supporting links within and between communities, to empower people to transform conflict, and to develop the analysis and resolution skills of partners). In one programme the relationships are built using inter-community exchanges. Indicators – quantitative and qualitative – were developed by the beneficiary communities, and are crosschecked by Oxfam. Indicators of the growing relationships between two previously divided communities include:

- having difficulty saying goodbye at the end of an encounter event

- communications taking place between individuals in different communities above and beyond those organised by the programme (letters, further visits, inter-marriage)
- the formalities of visiting – do visitors behave, and are they treated, as relatives rather than as strangers? (What kinds of gifts do they bring? Does the language used indicate a distant or close relationship?)
- the use of a path that would be regarded as unsafe at times of tension.

In order to gauge whether the relationship building has had a wider peacebuilding effect, Oxfam has looked at those who were not directly involved in the actual project (both within each family and in the community more broadly) to see if they have been affected by the project. Indicators include:

- a Buddhist monk allowing announcements to be made in Tamil (a language generally not used by Sri Lankan Buddhists) from the temple
- comparisons between beneficiary and non-beneficiary villages. Following a high profile political assassination the non-beneficiary villages became tense, while the beneficiary village continued as normal.

Showing attribution continues to prove a difficult task, and remains an open question for Oxfam.

The three dimensions of conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation outlined above – understanding the changing context, understanding the project implementation, understanding the interaction between the context and the project – provide a means of designing a conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation process. They may also inform the identification of required skills within the monitoring or evaluation team, which are likely to include:

- conflict analysis skills
- good knowledge of the context and related history
- sensitivity to the local context
- local language skills
- monitoring and evaluation expertise (including interviewing skills).

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that there is currently no clear way of assigning attribution for the consolidation of peace to any one particular actor. Given the complexity of most contexts, intervening actors will at best be able to demonstrate that their positive interventions coincided with positive changes in the context. Project and programme goals and objectives for building peace will need to be humble and realistic.

2.3 Step 3: Collect information

Collecting information is fundamental to the process of monitoring and evaluation. Conflict-sensitive information will need to include a combination of perception-based and objective data.

Perception-based information

As explained above, conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation cannot assume a direct causal relationship between the context and the project. In order to increase confidence in information collected, the perceptions of respondents can provide additional perspectives on causal relationships. Perception-based information can be derived from the following sources:

- *executors of the activity*: eg project staff, partners and implementing agencies
- *beneficiaries of the activity*: eg recipients of project outcomes (services, goods, training)
- *observers of the activity*: eg other organisations operating inside and outside the area, experts, academics, national and local leaders. Although this may not be an obvious category of respondents, their indirect involvement in the project and / or presence in the context may help ensure a more balanced understanding of the interaction.

The strength of perception-based information primarily depends on an *honest and impartial* composition of the list of respondents. If it is not possible to find unbiased respondents, it may help to get a balance of biases from among all interviewees. Evaluators also face a unique perception-related issue, as former project beneficiaries may use an end of project evaluation as an opportunity to deliver positive and uncritical feedback on the interaction between the project and the context, in the hope of securing future assistance or employment.

Objective information

Just as perception-based information helps address the issue of causality, objective information can be used to provide additional perspectives. Where perception-based information relies on views, beliefs and feelings of respondents, objective information seeks to provide less controversial or more 'factual' data. Sources for objective data are entirely context specific – eg news media may sometimes be a good source of objective information, but in a different context or at a different time information reported may be entirely perception-based.

The principal reason for combining objective and perception-based information in the process of conflict sensitive monitoring and evaluation is *triangulation*. In other words, information received from one source is compared and contrasted to similar information received

from another, in an effort to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the intervention and the context. From a conflict-sensitive perspective, perceptions sometimes provide more information than 'facts' or the 'truth'.

It is important to triangulate data within one information source, just as it is important to triangulate information sources. For example, within one community interviewers should talk to a representative cross-section of the population, from government officials to unemployed youth, as well as individuals (although perhaps not leaders) from major social and occupational groups. As mentioned above, project staff and observers not directly related to the project also provide a means of triangulating perception-based information from the field.

BOX 2

Triangulation through types of questions

The way in which information is gathered can also be diversified to elicit a variety of perspectives. In Northern Uganda, for example, interviewers using *open questions* asked respondents 'what has been done about the local situation and by whom?' *Closed questions*, on the other hand, elicit a yes or no response: 'do you feel safe?' *Scaling* asks respondents to rank their responses: 'compared to five years ago, are local government officials today much more, more, the same, less, or much less corrupt?' Each form of questioning has advantages and disadvantages, and the best results are achieved by using a variety of different techniques.

However, the perspectives of people involved in the community provide only one source of information (albeit diversified within the source), so it is also important to triangulate sources, for example, by reviewing secondary materials such as foreign government-sponsored country reports through a desk study, as well as soliciting the views of specialists. Focus groups, stakeholder and feedback workshops, and quantitative surveys provide other means of triangulating information sources.

Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation requires that organisations acknowledge the potential impact of the monitoring or evaluation process itself on the conflict dynamics. Gathering information for monitoring and evaluation may have negative outcomes, such as putting community members at risk by raising suspicion or asking sensitive questions. Questions that are acceptable in one context may endanger interviewers and respondents in another. Interviewers may inadvertently upset respondents with probing, insensitive questions. Dialogue must always be based on mutual consent and respect, and the understanding that the consequences of the interview may last well beyond the discussion. Measures must be taken to ensure the safety at all times of both interviewers and respondents.

In situations of violent conflict, monitoring or evaluating projects often becomes quite difficult. While it is often possible to implement projects in such environments through local partners and community-based organisations or other means, it is sometimes not feasible to send external staff or consultants into the area to monitor or evaluate activities. Organisations tend to fear that ‘outsiders’ may be at risk in violent environments, and that locals may be endangered by talking to these ‘outsiders’. The struggle to monitor or evaluate their projects effectively under circumstances of violent conflict sometimes leads organisations to rely on telephone conversations and photographic evidence. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation must find ways of safely interacting with respondents in these types of environments; unfortunately this challenge remains unresolved.

2.4 Step 4: Analyse information

The analysis of the information gathered for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation will require some attempt at discerning causal linkages, despite the difficulties.

Although there is no established framework for analysing conflict sensitive information, two stages may help in the analytical process:

- find the most effective way to structure the information, in order to reduce the complexity of the data and, more importantly, to understand key linkages between the project and the context. For example, the grids or tools which most conflict analysis frameworks use to simplify the analytical process are sometimes also appropriate for conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation.
- further prioritise and deepen the linkages identified through triangulation. For example, in Central Azerbaijan, interviews with project beneficiaries in one village revealed that they were upset about the unequal distribution of benefits between them and the neighbouring village. Discussion with the implementation organisation showed that the benefits provided to both villages were identical. Rather than discount the disgruntled village perspective as incorrect, it is better to understand the community’s perceptions about unequal benefit distribution, particularly in the light of contradicting objective information, as revealing an important issue for further investigation, monitoring, and possibly action.

2.5 Step 5: Recommend and redesign

2.5.1 Report

There is no need to write a specific conflict-sensitive report on monitoring or evaluation activities. It is however

important to integrate the findings and recommendations of the analysis of the interaction between the context and the project into regular reporting (eg quarterly, annual, mid-term and final reports). It will be particularly helpful to outline explicitly the impact of the intervention on its context (ie the peace-building or conflict impact) and of the context on the intervention. This will provide a documented history of organisational learning on conflict-sensitive practice.

Consideration of the type and sensitivity of information to be included in reports should be determined by reference to the conflict analysis. In all cases, the sensitive handling of privacy and anonymity should be explicitly agreed upon not only for the monitoring and evaluation process but also at the reporting stage.

2.5.2 Feedback

Organisations need to take responsibility for the results of conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, and for transforming those results into improved practice. Gaining organisational commitment to make these changes may however require a focussed feedback strategy to ensure that recommendations are implemented (see **Chapter 5**).

Recommendations from conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation may inform decisions regarding the (re-)design or further adjustment of project activities and their implementation, in light of the interaction between the context and the project. **Module 2** on implementation provides guidance on how to take this process further.

3.

Key issues in conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

The following key issues should be kept in mind in the process of conflict sensitising a monitoring or evaluation process:

- a) monitoring and evaluation are typically extractive processes, as interviewers take information from respondents and offer little in direct return. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation can also be an extractive process, or it can be more transformative. By involving respondents in the process of indicator development and analysis, monitors and evaluators can help people understand their own place in – and possibly even their contribution to – a given context.

Transformative processes can potentially produce positive results; however, they involve risks similar to those outlined in **step 2.3 (collect information)** above, but with potentially more serious consequences

b) as with everything in this Resource Pack, the emphasis is on conflict-sensitising existing programmatic processes, rather than developing entirely new ones. For monitoring and evaluation, this means conflict-sensitising all existing steps in the process, from the design to reporting and beyond. The process of conflict-sensitising monitoring and evaluation will require additional resources. For instance, organisational and institutional support for increased staff capacity development will be needed (see **Chapter 5**). Sufficient time to review and adjust existing tools and processes, as well as additional time to monitor or evaluate conflict and interaction indicators will also be essential

c) there is sometimes a tendency in monitoring and evaluating to underestimate the importance of the profile, actors, causes and dynamics that function at other levels. A village-focused intervention may, for example, not consider the implication of national actors (eg political parties) or international dynamics (eg the foreign policies of other governments) on the local context. Alternatively, some monitors and evaluators will focus almost entirely on the macro context, and in particular on the macro political context, by emphasizing the activities and statements of warring factions, while ignoring the contribution made to conflict dynamics at the local level. Understanding the context as it is expressed at various different geographic scales is fundamental to understanding the context at the level the intervention is taking place

d) conflict-sensitive recommendations may prove challenging for staff within organisations, as well as within the institutional funding chain, as they require a different understanding of success. Organisations (and, if relevant, their funders) typically measure activities and outputs, such as number of houses built, number of wells dug, number of participants attending a meeting, rather than impact. A conflict-sensitive organisation will also want to place a high value on its projects' interactions with the context. Thus, a project that underperforms on the anticipated number of houses built may, from a conflict sensitive perspective, still be considered a success if it contributed positively to conflict dynamics. Given that the definition of a successful project can be controversial, organisations may have difficulty in valuing an under-performing conflict-sensitive project over a well-performing project that unintentionally exacerbates conflict (see Box 3). Enhancing the way an organisation understands success requires an institutional willingness and ability to think differently about how it measures impact. (See **Chapter 5**).

BOX 3

Difficult decisions (a fictionalised account)

Organisation A's most important current initiative is a housing construction project. Following a conflict-sensitive monitoring assessment, the team determined that core elements of the project inherently exacerbate conflict. These findings will present significant challenges at multiple levels within Organisation A, and will test its commitment to conflict sensitivity. The monitoring team will have to deliver a negative report about a favoured project; the project team will need to take responsibility for managing a project that entails (previously unknown) damaging aspects; and management will need to explain to their funders or executive management that what was previously touted as an exemplary initiative is in fact fundamentally flawed. In these types of situations, the typical response is for one or several elements of the organisation to decide that the monitoring assessment itself was flawed, rather than open the prized project to criticism.

Monitoring or evaluating a project from a conflict-sensitive perspective is of little value unless lessons are learned and requisite changes made.

4. Endnotes

¹Adapted from Cathy Mclwaine and Caroline Moser, *Urban Poor Perceptions of Violence and Exclusion in Colombia*, Washington DC: World Bank, 2000: 65.

Annex 1

Sample indicators – links between context changes and project, and project changes and context

The following table is provided for the purposes of better understanding what situation-specific interaction indicators might actually look like. The table uses a fictional setting to outline the types of changes that might indicate an interaction between the context and the project, and associated indicators that could be used to better understand these changes and thus the interaction. Note that the sample interaction indicators provided use a combination of objective and perceptive questioning to help triangulate information collection; objective and perception based indicators are discussed in **step 3** above.

Background

Kugan is a poor developing country. The national government is undertaking a road construction project through the northern region to create a trade link with the neighbouring country of Moyag. The road right-of-way has been cleared and levelled, but asphaltting has not yet begun. Northern Kugan is a sparsely populated region dominated by pastoralists and cattle herders. There is violent conflict in the adjacent region of Moyag, and arms proliferation in Northern Kugan has become a problem. Another problem is the involvement of Kugan locals in rustling cattle for Moyag-based gangs.

Project's impact on context – are changes in the context linked to the project?

Context's impact on project – are changes in the project linked to the context?

Change in profile: Environmental degradation, and in particular, deforestation.

Change in project: The road is now being constructed in a straight line and thus at a lower cost.

Project-related question or suspicion: Is road construction contributing to deforestation?

Profile-related question or suspicion: Is there government pressure on pastoralists to surrender land so road can be constructed in a straight line?

Indicators:

Indicators:

- 1: respondents who feel the natural habitat has improved/deteriorated
- 2: changes in the price of cut wood
- 3: percentage of road through forested areas.

- 1: pastoralists' perception about the benefit of the road
- 2: changes in real construction expenditures compared to project budget
- 3: pastoralists' feelings about the road being a government project compared to other respondents (eg cattle herders).

Change in causes: Increase in small arms proliferation.

Change in project: Payroll offices being robbed.

Project-related question or suspicion: Is road construction facilitating the trafficking of small arms?

Causes-related question or suspicion: Are bandits using increasingly available small arms to rob construction payroll offices?

Indicators

Indicators:

- 1: number of respondents who feel there has been an increase in small arms proliferation (since road construction began)
- 2: change in incidences of gun related violence along road
- 3: number of respondents who feel it is easier/ harder to purchase a gun compared to off-road respondents.

- 1: incidences of robberies and amount stolen
- 2: number of robberies that involve small arms
- 3: respondents who perceive the road building project is not a proper prioritisation of community needs.

Change in actors: Access to education for rural youth.

Change in project: Fuel being stolen from construction vehicles.

Project-related question or suspicion: Is road under construction already increasing transportation options for rural youth?

Actors-related question or suspicion: Are poor cattle herders seeking to derive benefits from road project by stealing fuel from construction vehicles?

Indicators:

Indicators:

- 1: number of youth attending schools accessed by road
- 2: number of days average student attends one of these schools
- 3: number of respondents who feel the road has increased access to schooling.

- 1: litres of fuel stolen
- 2: cattle herders' feelings about expenditure on road
- 3: change in sales by cattle herders' traditional fuel sources.

Change in dynamics: Decreased incidences of cattle rustling.

Change in project: Labour for project has become hard to find.

Project-related question or suspicion: Is increased access to employment and income undermining the need to rustle cattle?

Dynamics-related question or suspicion: Are potential construction workers not seeking employment on the road project because of their concerns about increased insecurity?

Indicators:

Indicators:

- 1: change in level of household income on road compared to off road incomes
- 2: percentage change in households that feel they have better livelihood options
- 3: change in incidences and number of cattle stolen.

- 1: number of vacancies unfilled in road construction jobs
- 2: percentage of construction workers who 'feel safe' working in the area
- 3: number of construction workers who leave the construction camps at night.

Integrating conflict sensitivity into sectoral approaches

Purpose of chapter

This chapter explains:

- what is meant by sectoral approaches
- how to integrate conflict sensitivity into the development and implementation of sectoral approaches

Who should read it

Everybody involved in the process of developing and implementing sectoral approaches, including:

- central and local governments
- donors (bilateral and multilateral)
- civil society groups, INGOs and other implementing agencies.

Why they should read it

Because assistance to a country or sector (eg education, agriculture, infrastructure) will have an impact (either positive or negative) on conflict risks and dynamics particularly in countries which are affected by, or at risk of, violent conflict. It is therefore imperative that this assistance be implemented in a conflict-sensitive way.

Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. What are conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches?
- 3. Seeking to achieve conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches
- Annex 1: Examples of linkages between structural dimensions of tension/open conflict and development assistance
- Annex 2: Bibliography and further reading

Note: in April 2004, a sectoral approach case study (justice sector) will be available as a supplement to this chapter of the Resource Pack. Please see <http://pcia.fewer.org/> in April for more details.

1. Introduction

1.1 Some definitions

Conflict sensitivity

This means the ability of your organisation to:

- understand the context in which you operate;
- understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and
- act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts.

Note: the word 'context' is used rather than 'conflict' to make the point that all socio-economic and political tensions, root causes and structural factors are relevant to conflict sensitivity because they all have the potential to become violent. 'Conflict' is sometimes erroneously confused with macro-political violence between two warring parties (as with a civil war between a national government and a non-state actor).

Context

This refers to the operating environment, which ranges from the micro to the macro level (eg community, district / province / region, country, neighbouring countries). For the purposes of this Resource Pack, context means a geographic or social environment where conflict exists (see **Introduction** for a description of the various elements in the conflict spectrum). It comprises actors, causes, profile and dynamics.

Sectoral approaches

Sectoral approaches involve a partnership between donors and governments based on a government-led national poverty reduction framework, within which there are programme priorities for specific sectors (eg health, education). Donor assistance aims at helping the government to improve its performance generally, or the performance of a specific sector or sectors.

1.2 More about sectoral approaches

Sectoral approaches are also known by some donors as Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs), Programme Based Approaches (PBAs), or Sector Wide Groups (SWGs). Denmark and Sweden currently use the term Sector Programme Support. The World Bank views sectoral approaches as a component of Programmatic Aid and has identified some of its instruments as most suitable for use in the context of sectoral approaches, such as sector investment programmes, maintenance loans / credits and adaptable programme loans. The United Nations has adopted a 'UN Program Approach', which it terms as a 'multi-sector' approach and which shares common values and orientations with the sectoral approach. Whatever the term used for the sectoral approach, they generally fall within the larger framework of a country strategy document such as the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the United Nations' Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), or the Asian Development Bank's Country Assistance Plans (CAPs).

Sectoral approaches share the following characteristics:

- *provision of assistance by donors to sectors (eg health, education) in line with the government's own sector strategy, expenditure framework and priorities, thus shifting ownership towards the government and enhancing coherence*
- *donor coordination*; sectoral approaches commonly require multi-donor support. Donors aim to foster coordination through establishing common funding arrangements, and joint planning, implementation, reporting and accounting arrangements with the government (ideally based on the government's own systems) in order to reduce the administrative burden on the government
- *broad stakeholder participation* in the process, including civil society and local government, thus extending ownership to a broad range of actors beyond the government – although in practice genuine participation by these other actors is often still low
- *variable modes of assistance using various financial instruments* (eg technical assistance; projects that support the government's strategy, often managed by the government itself; or budget support, where money is injected into the government's own budget and earmarked for the sector)
- *a results-based aid management approach*, with a particular emphasis given to joint monitoring and evaluation and a move away from rigid donor procedures and controls focusing on inputs rather than delivery of results
- *a process-oriented approach* because while the expected

outcomes are agreed at the outset it is recognised that the processes by which the outcomes are to be achieved cannot be pre-determined; plans need to be revised as time goes by in the light of changing or unforeseen circumstances.

Sectoral approaches are in an early stage of development in many cases. Where they are adopted, not all donors in the country will be involved.

It is unusual for sectoral approaches to be adopted in countries suffering from widespread and protracted conflict, but they have been adopted in post-conflict settings and in countries affected by localised and regional conflict. They have proved popular with some donors in fragile post-conflict or transition settings (such as Rwanda and Mozambique), on the grounds that they help bolster weak government capacity, encourage sustainable institutions and reduce the burden on governments of disjointed donor activities. They have also been adopted in countries subject to localised internal conflicts (such as Ethiopia and Uganda), and in countries whose armed forces are involved in external or regional conflicts. In such contexts, the close donor/government partnerships developed through sectoral approaches can provide a vehicle for promoting and influencing governance reforms and policy dialogue around issues such as military expenditure.

BOX 1

An example of a sectoral approach: Education in Uganda

In 1996, the Ugandan government launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative as part of its response to the serious challenges of widespread poverty highlighted in the country's Poverty Eradication Action Plan. The initiative involves free education for up to four children per family.

To implement the policy, the Uganda Education Strategic Investment Programme (ESIP) 1998 – 2003 was developed as a sectoral approach. ESIP is supported by a group of donors, through budgetary support, with DFID acting as a 'secretariat'. Other donors have provided earmarked sector support and technical assistance to the programme.

2. What are conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches?

A conflict-sensitive sectoral approach is one that is developed and implemented so as to minimise possible negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the context and its dynamics, and vice-versa. This requires an adequate understanding of the context not only in the development, implementation and evaluation of the sectoral approach itself but also in developing the national strategic framework within which the sectoral assistance is set, and the donor / government partnerships operating at national and sector level.

As already noted, sectoral approaches have been adopted in some post-conflict settings and in situations of localised and regional conflict. But it is equally important to ensure sectoral approaches are conflict sensitive in situations of unstable peace, where insensitive interventions can reinforce or exacerbate the potential for violent conflict (eg resettlement schemes which alter the ethnic balance of a region and the access of different groups to resources).

Nor should conflict sensitivity be restricted to the ‘obvious’ sectors – military, justice and police; it needs to be integrated across all areas of activity, since development assistance in any sector (eg infrastructure, education, health, agriculture) can have an impact on the context. See Box 2, and the further examples in **Annex 1**.

BOX 2 Education and conflict

DFID has recently undertaken a study looking at education and conflict, including the aspects of education that have the potential to exacerbate conflict or, if handled sensitively, to address some of the underlying grievances that cause conflict. The study has pointed to the need (a) for methodologies for assessing sector wide involvement in education from the perspective of conflict and (b) for developing a consensus around indicators of the positive and negative roles of education in situations of conflict.

Many of the principles underlying sectoral approaches – local ownership, capacity-building, participation, inclusiveness, accountability, coordination – are also among the key principles for conflict-sensitive practice. Sectoral approaches have the potential to contribute positively to the context if undertaken in a conflict-sensitive manner.

Table 1 sets out some of the associated opportunities and risks.

TABLE 1
Opportunities and risks associated with sectoral approaches, from the perspective of conflict sensitivity

Opportunities	Risks
<p><i>Engagement</i></p> <p>Increased opportunities for donors and civil society to have a positive influence on national development strategies (eg via the PRSP process) and sectoral strategies, including policy dialogue on issues related to conflict issues and governance.</p>	<p>Donor support to a government that lacks a credible internal constituency of support may risk lending it undue legitimacy.</p> <p>There are limited options for donors should national governments undermine the partnership eg by acting in ways that fuel conflict or undermine human rights. Also, suspension of aid can risk increased instability.</p>
<p><i>Impact</i></p> <p>Increased opportunities for external capacity building support for government and civil society in areas such as policy analysis, conflict analysis, budgetary processes, transparency and service delivery - all of which can contribute to structural stability.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for linking the national and local levels, for example through strengthening the legitimacy of the central government at lower government levels and with civil society.</p>	<p>Fungibility; increased risk of diversion of funds for belligerent purposes; increased risk of corruption.</p> <p>Weak public sector capacity eg in the area of management, or more generally in a region within the country may lead to the use of parallel implementation systems which by-pass government structures and undermine government capacity.</p> <p>Focus on the national government can lead to an over-emphasis on the capital city and an increasing disconnection with local realities.</p> <p>Sectoral approaches can be counter-productive in terms of decentralisation processes and create differences and tensions between the local and central</p>

	governments, particularly where the benefits of assistance are not immediately felt at the local levels.
<p><i>Sustainability</i></p> <p>Increased opportunities for a long-term perspective and support to reform processes linked to sectoral approaches (particularly related to governance) which have the potential to increase structural stability (eg justice system reform, strengthening transparency in the legal framework for civil society participation).</p>	Donor pressure to disburse funds and insensitivity to political factors can lead to a situation where reform is pushed through too quickly, before the necessary preconditions have emerged. This may produce a backlash when expected gains do not materialise.
<p><i>Participation</i></p> <p>Increased participation by civil society organisations in policy and the political process, including a scaling up of local participatory processes to a national policy level. This can help to foster inclusive governance and build bridges between different interests, and provide a variety of perspectives on conflict risks.</p>	<p>Badly managed participation risks increasing tensions, particularly where civil society is sharply divided along the fault lines of a conflict.</p> <p>Civil society may be weak and under-developed and therefore not in a position to play an effective role in sectoral approaches, thus further undermining its position vis-à-vis the government.</p>
<p><i>Coordination</i></p> <p>Development of consensus and joint understanding of conflict issues and dynamics between different donors, as well as between donors and national governments.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination between donors and increased opportunities for the coherence of interventions around a national development strategy.</p>	<p>Risk that policy and sector strategies could appear donor driven, thus undermining the credibility of, and increasing dissatisfaction with, the national government.</p> <p>Raising sensitive political issues within the framework of policy dialogue with governments can present real challenges and lead to donor/ government tensions.</p> <p>The national focus of sectoral approaches can make it harder to address regional issues (including regional conflict dynamics) and the impacts of policies and programmes on neighbouring states.</p>
<p><i>Note: This is not an exhaustive list and the issues covered will differ according to the particular context.</i></p>	

3. Seeking to achieve conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches

3.1 Overview

Sectoral approaches derive from strategic frameworks developed by national governments and donors at the macro level. The strategic and sectoral levels are interdependent and conflict sensitivity needs to be integrated at both the national (macro-strategic) level and at the sector level. But note that the sequencing of activities at the different levels is unlikely to be linear and may vary considerably depending on the country circumstances. Conflict sensitivity also needs to be considered in relation to the partnership environment

within which sectoral approaches operate, again at both national and sector levels.

Nor can conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches be achieved by the actions of one group in isolation; members of all concerned groups (national governments, donors, civil society, INGOs, implementing agencies) should contribute to the understanding of what a conflict-sensitive approach requires, and all have a role to play in its implementation.

3.2 Stakeholder consultation

Stakeholder consultation is a core principle of sectoral approaches and should take place at all stages. It is also a core principle for a conflict-sensitive approach. Consultation can bring to bear local perspectives on the plans for the sector in a particular region; ensure it is informed by local realities; highlight any likely sources of tension or insecurity (eg over resource allocation); and suggest approaches to managing that tension.

In addition to providing information on key conflict risks, the process of stakeholder involvement can play an

important role in conflict sensitising the partnership environment by promoting inclusive governance, reaching out to marginalised groups and encouraging further institutionalisation of stakeholder participation in government policy making. In particular, involving all tiers of government (including local government) is an important element of developing accountability and securing local ownership of and commitment to the strategy and implementation of a sectoral approach.

Conflict-sensitive consultation requires an adequate understanding of the different actors and their goals, interests, capacities and relationships (as illustrated by the conflict analysis), as well as sensitivity to the causes of conflict identified in the analysis, such as marginalisation of certain groups, or inadequate participation of local actors in central decision-making. Undertaking a consultation exercise that excludes certain actors or gives too much weight to others can lead to increased tensions and skewed perspectives.

Difficulties may include a weak, fragmented or polarised civil society; lack of consensus on development priorities; or local government structures that lack resources and capacity to engage effectively in sectoral policy making and implementation.

A number of actions can be taken to promote conflict-sensitive stakeholder engagement. These include:

- drawing on information provided by the conflict analysis, in particular information on actors. This can help ensure that key groups are not overlooked or marginalised and that all actors are engaged, including traditional governance structures and the private sector
- taking advantage of the valuable role that donors and other external actors can play as critical observers of the participation process, with the ability to raise concerns in their dialogue with government. They can also facilitate the participation process (see Box 3)
- providing support to stakeholder consultation processes, and projects aimed at strengthening civil society groups and local governance structures.

BOX 3

European Commission support to civil society participation in Sudan

The EU is supporting the development of a National Indicative Programme for Sudan. The European Centre for Development Policy Management has facilitated a process of awareness raising and mapping of non-state actors (civil society), at the request of and paid for by the European Commission and the Government of Sudan. This process of civil society engagement is taking place within the context of an ongoing political dialogue and progressive normalisation of EU / Sudan relations. It is hoped that with further capacity building support, civil society will be in a position to play a role in a future EU / Sudan country strategy and dialogue.

A number of organisations specialise in supporting dialogue and policy advocacy mechanisms in conflict and post-conflict settings, using participatory action research methodologies in order to map issues and actors with a view to informing policy (see Box 4). Donors might want to consider supporting such initiatives.

BOX 4

War Torn Societies Project

The War Torn Societies Project's approach is based on a participatory action research (PAR) methodology adapted and developed by the director, Mattias Steifel. The methodology involves setting up core teams of local people to undertake research in their own post-conflict societies, with a view to drawing up a 'balance sheet' or country note describing the state of the country, and a list of priority rebuilding tasks that need to be tackled. The country note is not produced by researchers working in isolation, but is developed from the opinions and suggestions of many different individuals and groups, so beginning a process of interaction.

In the project in Somaliland, for example, the team was based in a local research organisation, the Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development, and after five months of fieldwork in 1999 produced a country note, "Self-portrait of Somaliland". The team travelled widely, reaching people in all regions and sectors. The project treats the participants as authorities, and aims to provide the neutral space necessary for frank discussions.

3.3 Conflict sensitivity at the national level

The key elements where conflict sensitivity needs to be introduced include:

- *nationally owned strategic development frameworks*, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Comprehensive Development Frameworks. These frameworks outline the overall development priorities for a country and inform the priority areas and actions needed within and across different sectors. They are developed by the government, ideally with broad consultation with a variety of stakeholders including civil society, and should be reflected in government resource allocation frameworks, such as medium term expenditure frameworks
- *country and regional strategies developed by donors*, which outline the type of relationship donors have with the government (including whether to move towards sectoral approaches and close government partnership); the overall donor strategy towards the country; the priority actions within and across sectors to support this strategy; and the overall budget. They are drawn up by the donors, again ideally in consultation

with a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, as well as with the government and each other

- *the partnership environment* at the national level, including donor / government and donor / donor dialogue processes (eg donor coordination forums, political dialogue processes) and national stakeholder consultation processes (eg participation processes related to the PRSP process)

3.3.1 Strategic frameworks

Introducing conflict sensitivity into nationally owned strategic development frameworks and donor strategies requires them to be informed by an understanding of the overall context (including economic, social, political trends) and its impact on the development process in the country (for example, the impact of conflict on economic and social structures). This can be derived from a conflict analysis at the national level, preferably undertaken jointly by donors and governments. The analysis should identify the key issues, and establish how actions within and across sectors can address them. The implications for resource allocations – both government expenditure frameworks and donor budgets – should also be determined.

Donors can use the analysis in their assessment of the government's commitment to poverty reduction (eg via the nationally owned strategic development framework), and in deciding on the nature of their partnership with the government (eg whether to move towards sectoral approaches).

Chapter 2 provides detailed guidance on conflict analysis. In addition to undertaking a separate conflict analysis at the national level, it is also important to ensure that the other assessment and analytical frameworks used by donors and governments, such as poverty analysis and governance assessments, give adequate consideration to conflict issues (see **Chapter 2, section 4**).

3.3.2 The partnership environment

Developing a conflict-sensitive partnership environment at the national level involves fostering a shared understanding

by donors and governments of the conflict issues affecting a country. It also implies ensuring that this understanding is informed by and reflects the perspectives of other actors, such as civil society and local governments. Approaches to promote this enabling environment include:

- donors and governments undertaking a joint participatory conflict analysis. This approach was recently successfully piloted in Nigeria (see **Chapter 2** Box 11)
- raising conflict issues in the course of political dialogue, to build a consensus between government and donors on the key issues. The conflict analysis can help to inform the content of this dialogue, and stakeholder participation in the dialogue can help to ensure its inclusivity
- addressing the issue of conflict within strategic donor coordination frameworks and fora, such as UN-led coordination exercises (eg the Common Country Assessment Framework (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)). Donors can consider undertaking joint conflict analyses which feed into strategy development. This can also increase their influence with governments
- opening space for broad stakeholder involvement in national and donor strategic frameworks (eg via PRSP consultation processes), assessment processes (eg conflict analyses) and policy dialogue processes. See **section 3.2** above.

The above assumes some willingness on the part of national governments, donors and civil society to consider issues of conflict sensitivity. In practice, this willingness is not always there: groups within countries may have a vested interest in the status quo because they benefit from the current situation and its associated political, social and economic dynamics; external actors, such as donors, may be unwilling to address politically sensitive issues. But this should not deter individuals and organisations from advocating the adoption of conflict-sensitive sectoral approaches. Table 2 highlights some of the key challenges, and suggests some possible approaches to overcome them.

TABLE 2
Challenges

Challenges

Priorities

Whilst donors may wish to develop a conflict sensitive country strategy, national governments may not be willing to recognise conflict as an issue in their strategic development frameworks.

Possible approaches to overcoming challenges

The commitments to conflict prevention and management made by many governments within frameworks such as NEPAD and the Cotonou Agreement can provide a powerful argument from donors and other stakeholders for the inclusion of these issues in the country's strategic development framework.

By presenting issues in terms of governance and social / political issues, governments and donors can help avoid some of the sensitivities that can occur when conflict is discussed openly / explicitly.

<p><i>Lack of capacity</i></p> <p>Governments may lack the capacity to undertake conflict analysis exercises.</p>	<p>Donors can provide capacity building support to governments and associated research organisations (see Chapter 5).</p>
<p><i>Sensitivities</i></p> <p>Raising conflict issues in government / donor dialogue can be highly sensitive, and developing a shared understanding of the issues between different stakeholders may be difficult.</p>	<p>Again, presenting issues in terms of governance and social / political issues can help get round some of the sensitivities.</p> <p>A joint donor / government participatory conflict assessment is more likely to build a shared understanding of the conflict, and avoids the political risks of undertaking the assessment unilaterally.</p>
<p><i>Findings ignored</i></p> <p>The findings of conflict analysis exercises may not be reflected in nationally owned strategic development frameworks and donor strategies.</p>	<p>The process of conflict analysis needs to be supported by both government and donor agencies from the highest level, and mainstreamed into their activities. (See Chapter 2 on conflict analysis, and the specific example of Nigeria in Chapter 2 Box 11)</p>
<p><i>Lack of donor coherence</i></p> <p>Donor effectiveness needs common perspectives between donors, but donors may have different policy positions or perspectives towards given situations and may differ in the extent to which they are prepared to discuss sensitive issues with the government.</p>	<p>Common donor perspectives can be fostered by joint donor macro-conflict analysis, as well as by addressing the issue of conflict within strategic donor coordination frameworks and fora, with a view to building consensus around key issues and providing a framework for addressing differences.</p>
<p><i>An abundance of analyses</i></p> <p>Donors and government may be overwhelmed by the number of different approaches and assessment frameworks they are faced with – gender analyses, environmental analyses, governance assessments etc.</p>	<p>One possible approach will be to ensure that conflict is adequately considered within the other assessment frameworks (see Chapter 2 section 4).</p>

3.4 Conflict sensitivity at the sector level

The government’s nationally owned strategic development frameworks will set out the key development priorities, and the priority actions needed within and across different sectors. Discussions at the national level will often also have provided a budgetary allocation for each sector. The donors’ strategies will have outlined their priority areas for development assistance. If a conflict-sensitive approach has been applied at the national level, and provided that actions at the sector level reflect this, then there should be a good basis for integrating conflict sensitivity at the sector level, at all stages – assessment and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The macro conflict assessment will, however, need to be complemented by a deeper analysis of the linkages between the specific sector (eg health, education, agriculture) and the context.

3.4.1 Assessment and planning stage

Key steps at this stage include:

- the development and appraisal of sector strategies, work plans and budgetary provision. These are usually developed by national governments and involve consultation with stakeholders, before being considered

by donors for support (donors may assist in the process of strategy development)

- the development of indicators or benchmarks against which the impact of the intervention will be monitored and evaluated.

Conflict-sensitive strategic assessments undertaken at the national level will have helped identify priority areas for addressing conflict issues within and across sectors, but in order to integrate conflict sensitivity into the assessment and planning of a sectoral approach it will be important to consider complementing the macro conflict analysis with a sector specific conflict analysis of the linkages between the specific sector (eg health, education, agriculture) and the context. In particular the sector specific analysis will address the different levels of conflict, particularly local level dynamics that will impact on sector activities, and the relationship between those various levels (local, sector, national). (See Box 5.)

BOX 5**Examples of linkages between sectors and context****Health & education (service provision)**

- Inadequate educational and health provision for certain parts of the population lead to insecurity and reduced mobility (conflict profile).
- Uneven distribution of health and education service provision and marginalisation of certain groups fuels grievances (conflict causes).
- Inadequate health and educational provision increases conflict risk due to youth dissatisfaction with lack of opportunity (conflict dynamics).

Natural resource management (land, water, agriculture)

- Environmental damage leading to natural resource management problems (conflict profile).
- Unequal access to resources such as land/water fuelling grievances (conflict causes).
- Environmental damage fuelling conflict due to competition over scarce resources (conflict dynamics)

Applying the sector specific conflict analysis to the development and appraisal of the sector strategy and budgetary allocation will revolve around two sets of key questions:

- how do the sector strategy and budgetary allocation relate to the understanding of the context and key priorities identified through the conflict analysis? Do/can they include strategies to address conflict related issues?
- what adjustments are needed to address possible negative impacts and possible opportunities (see Table 1)? What actions are required within other sectors?

Relating the sector strategy to the conflict analysis can be done using the analysis framework provided by the conflict triangle outlined in **Chapter 2**. Table 3 provides examples of questions that need to be asked to determine how the sector strategy can address the issues raised in the analysis (the actual questions will differ according to the specific context).

TABLE 3**Examples of key questions to inform sector strategies**

Key elements of conflict analysis	Questions
Profile	<p>Does the strategy take into consideration specific conflict-prone / affected areas? Is it adapted to different geographical regions in the country? Does it consider the location of natural resources or important lines of communications?</p> <p>How is the strategy informed by the history of conflict (eg previous experience of tensions escalating into violent conflict due to land policies or reform processes / policies linked to sector interventions)?</p>
Context	<p>Do the strategy and budget address the long-term structural causes of violent conflict (eg marginalisation of certain groups from the political process and access to services; educational bias in terms of language / culture; corruption related to certain sectors which undermines confidence in the state; unequal access to resources; food insecurity; weak governance structures)?</p> <p>Do they address the accelerating or prolonging factors aggravating conflict risks?</p> <p>Do they seek to maximise factors contributing to peace? Eg do reform processes linked to sector strategies seek to address governance and representation issues? Does the strategy support the development of a nascent civil society? Does it seek to capitalise on regional integration opportunities on issues that address regional tensions (eg over resources)?</p>
Actors	<p>How does the strategy relate to key actors and their goals, relationships, capacities? Does it empower those working towards peaceful solutions and local capacities for peace? Does it challenge vested interests (eg in government)? Does it increase or decrease opportunities for communication between different groups?</p>
Dynamics	<p>Does the strategy take into consideration conflict dynamics? Can it adapt to different scenarios and conflict trends? For instance, does it take into consideration specific reconstruction activities which might be needed following a local peace agreement? Can it serve to promote positive trends (eg by providing quick peace-dividends / incentives in the event of positive developments)?</p>

Note: see Chapter 2 section 2 for a detailed explanation of profile, causes, actors and dynamics.

Having ascertained the extent to which the strategy and budgetary allocation aim to target conflict issues, a number of actions / strategies can be developed to address outstanding issues. Examples will vary according to the context, but include:

- developing specific strategies for delivering support to sectors in conflict-affected or potentially conflict-affected regions
- considering budget plans that address issues such as equity of resource allocation between regions, and inter-group disparities
- developing governance reform programmes related to the sector (eg to increase participation of certain groups)
- supporting existing or additional local level peace-building or conflict prevention projects related to the sector (eg local peace education projects)
- integrating an anti-corruption strategy into the sector strategy
- ensuring consistency and coordination between the strategy and other areas of intervention and ongoing local processes eg humanitarian assistance, local peacebuilding activities, local NGO assistance
- ensuring that the sector strategy addresses the needs of particularly disadvantaged / marginalised groups
- balancing approaches that address short-term needs and long-term structural issues.

The development of actions and strategies will involve considering the linkages between sectors, as actions will most likely be required in other sectors to ensure the conflict sensitivity of the strategy. For example, actions in the transport sector, such as the building of a new transport corridor, might increase opportunities for arms or drugs trafficking and would therefore need to be linked to actions within the security sector to enhance security for the region. Furthermore, making a difference in one sector, such as transport and housing, without improvements in the provision of other basic services, can fuel new grievances.

The process will also require consideration of strategies for addressing conflict issues in key crosscutting areas, such as governance. For example, governance problems may be at the root of tensions between groups over unequal access to resources; or corruption (eg in the police) may fuel a variety of grievances and undermine state credibility.

Indicators and benchmarks need to be developed alongside the sector strategy, to gauge the success or impact of the implementation of the strategy and the intervention, and to help determine what adjustments, if any, need to be made to secure the planned outputs. Conflict sensitivity requires indicators which gauge the interaction between the intervention and the context and vice versa (see **Chapter 2 section 3** for more information).

Indicators will necessarily vary according to the intervention in question and the context. Box 6 provides some examples related to the education sector.

BOX 6

Possible conflict analysis indicators for the education sector

Profile

Marginalisation of group x in region y from political process and access to basic services; lack of access to education, due to insecurity in region.

- numbers of group x attending primary school
- improvements in the quality of educational provision in region y.
- numbers of group x involved in school users groups (eg PTAs)
- safe access to education by group x in region y

Causes of conflict / actors

Educational bias in curriculum leading to perceived marginalisation of group x; opportunities for improved relations between groups x & z through peace education in curriculum.

- increase / decrease in incidence of teaching of language x in schools
- increased interaction between groups x and z
- adjustment of educational bias in curriculum

3.4.2 Implementation stage

Key steps at this stage include:

- development of structures for donor coordination and donor / government management
- decisions on the instruments (mechanisms) for implementation
- implementation
- monitoring

Management structures and partnership issues

Building the requisite shared understanding at sector level involves:

- addressing conflict sensitivity within donor coordination frameworks and other processes. Discussions should be directly linked to the national level discussions to ensure coherence and consistency (particular attention to this is required where personnel work at only one of the sector or national levels). Undertaking a joint conflict analysis can assist the process of developing common perspectives.
- addressing conflict sensitivity within donor / government management structures. These structures provide the key interface between donors and governments and the framework within which strategies are developed, implementation is monitored, and reviews planned. It is therefore vital that conflict sensitivity is considered within the framework of these

structures. A participatory joint donor / government conflict assessment (including the deeper analysis for the sector) is again a good way of fostering agreement around key conflict issues and actions.

Financial instruments

Table 4 describes the three most common financial instruments available for donor support to sectoral approaches.

The right choice of instrument is very important, and must take account of the conflict analysis. Making the most appropriate choice involves a process of anticipating the impact of different instruments, evaluating the benefits against the risks and developing strategies to minimise potential negative impacts. The information gained through the conflict analysis is clearly relevant to this process.

TABLE 4
Financial instruments used in sectoral approaches

Sectoral support		
Technical assistance	Project funding	Sector earmarked support (programme funding)
		General budgetary support (donor pooled and sector programme funding)
Technical Assistance (TA) is the transfer, adaptation, mobilisation and utilisation of services, skills, knowledge and technology, through the provision of personnel, training, equipment, consultancies, study visits and seminars.	Donor-funded activities support the government's sector policy framework, but are managed as projects – usually using government systems (reporting / contracting) but sometimes relying on donor management systems	Coordinated aid from a number of donors is disbursed and accounted for through government systems and earmarked to help finance an agreed policy and sector expenditure plan.
<i>Note: This table¹ is necessarily stylised and a number of variations will occur depending on country circumstances. Different approaches may be used simultaneously as sectoral approaches are usually a hybrid of funding forms.</i>		

Table 5 below gives examples of relevant questions for general budgetary support, as this funding instrument is, from a conflict perspective, the most risky. Other instruments have their own challenges and raise other questions.

For example in the case of project funding, a possible impact of government management might be increased opportunities for corruption and domination by elite interests, while management by donors might undermine government capacity and legitimacy.

TABLE 5
Anticipating impacts of general or targeted budgetary support on the context

Key elements of conflict analysis	Examples of questions for consideration in anticipating impacts
Profile	Is budgetary support the most appropriate choice for all geographical areas in a country? Do the instruments of implementation need to be adopted for different regions, particularly conflict-affected regions where government capacity to deliver may be weaker?
Causes	<p>Is there a risk that budgetary support might give external credibility to a government that lacks internal legitimacy?</p> <p>If government corruption is a cause of conflict, what are the risks of budgetary support exacerbating this problem? What needs to be done to minimise this risk?</p> <p>Will the use of budgetary support serve to strengthen weak government structures and bolster reform programmes?</p> <p>Are government structures strong enough to manage flows of funding?</p> <p>Does the provision of budgetary support through the central government risk an overemphasis on the capital city and favoured regions and neglect of marginalized areas? If so what can be done to mitigate this?</p>

Actors	<p>If the national government / military is a key conflict actor, is there a likelihood of diversion of funds to the military or elites?</p> <p>Are there risks that the nature and pace of the reform processes might undermine certain vested interests and increase conflict risks?</p>
Dynamics	<p>Are political issues, such as human rights abuses, likely to worsen, thus increasing the likelihood of a suspension of budgetary assistance, which in turn may exacerbate instability?</p> <p>Is budgetary support a realistic choice, in terms of a window of opportunity for providing macro-economic stability to a weak, but legitimate post-conflict government?</p>

A number of strategies may be developed in order to minimise potential negative impacts, including:

- integrating anti-corruption activities into the sector strategy
- integrating a component of institutional capacity building for weak governance structures to ensure that they can manage funds and implementation processes
- ensuring adequate representation / involvement of local government and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the sector strategy (see section on stakeholder involvement below)
- considering budget plans that address issues such as equity of resource allocation between regions and inter-group disparities
- supporting mechanisms to ensure the transparency of budgetary allocations and military spending (eg military spending reviews).

Budgetary support should not be the chosen option if the risks are too high.

The implementation process

It is important not only that the overall strategy and choice of instruments of support are sensitive to conflict, but also that the process of implementation is undertaken in a conflict-sensitive way.

Implementation involves a range of different actors, which will vary depending on the instrument used (see Table 4). These actors include implementing agencies (such as INGOs and government contractors), different tiers and agencies of government, local community users' groups, etc. It will also require the active involvement of the government / donor management structures (see "Management structures and partnership issues" in **section 3.4.2** above).

These actors need to be sensitive to the impact of their actions on the context and to be aware of the principles of conflict sensitivity (see **Introduction**). Governments and donors responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the sectoral approach can take steps to ensure that these actors are adopting a conflict-sensitive approach to their implementation process. They need to make implementing actors aware of the findings of the conflict analysis and key conflict issues (preferably involving them in the analysis process) and to develop systems to

ensure that they are regularly monitoring the impact of activities on conflict, making adjustments and feeding back findings that can be incorporated into the overall analysis (see **section 3.4.3** below). Where contractors and implementing agencies are used, a conflict-sensitive approach should be made a condition of the contract. **Chapter 3 Module 3** provides further guidance on how implementing actors can take conflict sensitivity on board.

3.4.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Section 3.4.1 describes the development of indicators and benchmarks in the sector strategy. Indicators should also be used to measure the relationship between individual activities or projects undertaken within the sectoral framework. The information gathered can then feed into the overall review process (see below).

Reviews are usually undertaken by joint donor / government teams at regular intervals. The findings feed into a process of adjustment of the strategy and the implementation process. From a conflict-sensitive perspective, it is important to ensure, in between these reviews, an ongoing monitoring of the implementation and impact of the activities as they relate to conflict. Donors and governments may need to develop information systems and mechanisms for gathering this information from the wide range of actors involved in the implementation process (see **section 3.4.2** above).

The review process should be informed by:

- the information gathered in the ongoing monitoring exercise
- broad stakeholder consultation
- a process of updating the conflict analysis to allow for a comparison of the situation at the beginning of the activity and at the moment of the review.

4. Endnotes

¹ Adapted from CIDA: "Planning and Implementation of SWAPs: An overview," Issues Paper. Ottawa: Canadian International Development Agency, 2000.

Annex 1

ANNEX 1

Examples of linkages between structural dimensions of tension / open conflict and development assistance

Structural dimension of tension or conflict	Feature of latent or open conflict ²	Examples of negative impacts of development assistance
Security	Increased arms spending	Fungibility of development assistance frees up finance for increased government spending on arms or the military.
Political	State is captured or dominated by particular interest groups or ethnicities and may be characterised by patronage politics and corruption. Lack of citizen engagement in political process and public policy Poorly managed governance reforms	A close / uncritical donor / state relationship increases the 'external' legitimacy of a regime, and internal disillusionment and disaffection with the state. Conversely, sudden criticism of a regime by development donors (eg regarding lack of adequate internal audit related to use of budgetary support) fuels grievances and feeds internal tensions. Poorly monitored and managed support via government budgets or tenders leads to increased levels of corruption. Inequitable sector policies developed with inadequate consultation, or consultation dominated by particular interests or groups (eg an education policy which favours a particular language group; a decentralisation process which fails to address inequalities and marginalisation of excluded groups)
Economic	Uneven development process contributing to creation of discontented groups Land / agricultural policy Liberalisation and privatisation programmes	Assistance to sectors is unevenly distributed reinforcing differences (eg geographically or between groups). Withdrawal or downscaling of assistance (across a range of sectors) to a particular area creates a vacuum which benefits belligerent groups. Poor natural resource management leads to scarcity, resource competition and conflict. Resettlement schemes alter the ethnic balance of a region feeding ethnic tensions. Can serve elite interests and generate conflict
Social	Histories and discourse of violence	Education systems emphasise ethnic or religious boundaries; language used as a tool to exclude or mobilise groups

Annex 2

Bibliography and further reading

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Institutional capacity building for conflict sensitivity

Purpose of chapter

This chapter explains how to begin the process of mainstreaming conflict sensitivity into an organisation in a systematic way using a six-step framework.

Who should read it

Practitioners working in governments, civil society (local and international) and donor organisations. But first they need a good understanding of the key aspects of conflict sensitivity as outlined in the earlier parts of this Resource Pack.

Why they should read it

Because all practitioners at all levels are both impacted by, and can impact, the development of their institution's capacity for conflict sensitivity.

Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity
- 3. The importance of connectivity
- 4. Reflecting on experience
- 5. Opportunities and challenges
- 6. Plan of action
- 7. Monitor and evaluate results
- 8. Endnotes
- Annex 1: Institutional framework for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity
- Annex 2: Resources and training facilities
- Annex 3: Bibliography

1. Introduction

1.1 A definition

Institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

This means the ability of an organisation to develop and use the sum of its human and organisational capital to minimise negative and maximise positive impacts on the conflict dynamics of the environment(s) where it works. Human capital includes staff and partner skills, knowledge and experience. Organisational capital includes departments, structures, financial resources, organisational culture and learning.

1.2 Why should an organisation want to be conflict sensitive?

Essentially because it will increase the effectiveness of their programming, by minimising the risks to actors involved and mitigating the risk of occurrence or escalation of violent conflict. Other reasons might include:

- internal and external assessments or reports showing that intervention in conflict areas caused harm and have not been maximising possibilities to impact positively
- linkages demonstrated between increased conflict sensitivity and more effective humanitarian relief, human rights, poverty reduction, and peacebuilding programming
- harmonisation of programmes with partnership agreements (eg NEPAD, ACP-EU Partnership within the Cotonou Agreement) and international commitments (eg Millennium Development Goals, Responsibility to Protect).

1.3 Background

TABLE 1

The ‘What’ and ‘How’ of conflict sensitivity

What to do	How to do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the institutional context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out an institutional analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the interaction between the institutional context and the capacity building needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link institutional capacity building to the institutional analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this understanding to address weaknesses and build on strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate conflict-sensitive capacity building

There are some very real institutional challenges that need to be addressed, even in the most capable organisations, if conflict sensitivity is to become a reality in terms of organisational strategy and operational practice. Although many organisations have made quite considerable progress in recent years in promoting good practices in conflict and conflict-prone areas, and donors, national governments, INGOs and local civil society organisations have developed and adapted many aspects of their own institutional capacities, particularly since the mid-1990s, they all have some way to go before becoming genuinely conflict sensitive. Even those that have made significant progress acknowledge that new challenges arise daily, and that these challenges require the development of appropriate institutional responses. Some of these challenges are recurrent and common to organisations working in highly fluid contexts where, for example, there may be an absence of effective and / or legitimate partner organisations, or where the situation is so insecure and volatile that institutional development is seen as impossible. Indeed, many of the factors that negatively impact on an organisation’s capacity for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity, such as lack of institutional commitment, high staff turnover, lack of institutional memory, and weak analytical capacity, are linked to both difficult operating environments and funding structures that emphasise ‘acting’ above ‘thinking’.

There are, however, ways to look systematically at institutional challenges, to learn how others have attempted to respond to them, and also to prioritise key areas of action. Again, there are often considerable internal and external challenges that must be overcome to effect change. At times it is necessary to gain some distance from one’s working environment and one’s own place in it in order to fully understand all aspects of the challenges and opportunities that exist. Understanding institutional dynamics, connections and disconnections is particularly important when attempting to improve an organisation’s conflict sensitivity.

Increasing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity – preferably through mainstreaming across all programme areas – helps organisations better to manage their relationship with a volatile context, and improves the quality of their work. **Table 1 in Chapter 1** suggests a framework for implementing a conflict-sensitive approach. Table 1 above suggests a similar approach to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity within an organisation.

BOX 1

Organisational capacity assessment

A consultant undertook an assessment for CARE International of existing organisational strengths and capacities relevant to the successful mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity in the organisation. The main purpose of the review was to clarify CARE’s stance and role(s) relative to conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding, and to make recommendations on how to strengthen its capacity to support country office operations in conflict-affected areas. Staff in the field and headquarters, as well as other organisations, were consulted. One of the key findings was that organisational culture can be a key constraint; many CARE field staff felt overwhelmed by the roll-out of many different initiatives.

It was therefore seen as critical that conflict sensitivity should not be viewed as yet another initiative, but rather that CARE should develop capacity and competence in an incremental manner at different levels, without compromising its traditional core strengths; and should ensure that conflict-related work remained consistent with CARE’s vision and mission. It was recommended that the process be supported through focal points at various levels of CARE rather than by creating a separate conflict transformation and peacebuilding unit. A key priority, given the feeling of initiative overload, was for the process to remain demand and country office driven, while modestly increasing capacity.

Conflict sensitivity is not an easy add-on, or something that can be acquired by undertaking one or two specific and discrete ‘peacebuilding’ projects. It means integrating the

appropriate attitudes, approaches, tools and expertise into an organisation's culture, systems, processes and work. This cannot be brought about overnight; it will take time and needs to be based on an understanding of the institutional context and in particular the capacity, and the limitations, of the organisation when it comes to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity.

For example there may be reasons why, initially, a minimalist approach may work better than a full-blown rollout across the organisation – see Box 1 above.

Table 2 lists what are likely to be the essential prerequisites for developing a sustainable capacity for conflict sensitivity.

TABLE 2

Five essential prerequisites

A. Institutional commitment

This is indispensable to making conflict sensitivity a reality; without support from the top, organisational change will not happen. If an organisation's leadership is not actively and enthusiastically supportive of conflict-sensitive approaches, there may nevertheless be scope to pave the way for incremental organisational change if some key individuals and / or departments of the organisation are supportive.

B. Willingness to make changes in organisational culture and institutional structures

Such changes are likely to be needed if a conflict-sensitive approach is to take hold. It may be that a full-blown roll-out is not feasible, and indeed many organisations will recognise the 'initiative fatigue' illustrated in Box 1. But most organisations will have offices, teams and / or individuals who are open to learning, risk-taking and self-reflection – including on conflict and peace issues – and who may be able to act as drivers of change.

C. Support for capacity development

Needed to keep and build momentum as a process of change in organisational culture and institutional structures starts to occur. While many organisations do not have in-house staff development programmes, mainstreaming conflict sensitivity requires at a minimum providing space and encouragement for staff to pursue and share their own related research and learning.

D. Conducive external relationships

Needed both in the implementing area and outside it. For example, funding parameters that emphasise output over process, or programme implementation over longer-term capacity development, will make it difficult for organisations to fund conflict-sensitive programmes and / or invest in organisational capacity building. In addition, effectively mainstreaming conflict sensitivity requires at a minimum the willingness of partner organisations to engage in some level of joint review and mutual improvement of practices.

E. Accountability mechanisms

Needed to underpin and reward staff and teams who incorporate conflict sensitivity in their daily practice. While organisations do not need to have a fully developed accountability framework to begin implementing conflict sensitivity, they do, at a minimum, need measures on multiple levels of the organisation that encourage learning – and acting on learning – from past and ongoing experiences.

Building on the above five key aspects, this chapter offers a six-step framework for starting the process of mainstreaming conflict sensitivity within an organisation, including deciding whether and where a minimalist or a more comprehensive approach, or something in between, is most appropriate. The framework will help you to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your institution in relation to conflict-sensitive policy and practice, and to think about how to promote and support the development of institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

The six steps fit within the larger framework of conflict sensitivity, and can be seen as a process for gaining a fuller understanding of the institutional context in which you operate, understanding the interaction between the institutional capacity building and the institutional analysis, and finally acting on that understanding. Table 3 brings together the six steps and the overall approach suggested in Table 1.

TABLE 3
Six steps

Framework	Step	Question
Understand the institutional context in which you operate	Step 1: Assess your organisation's institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity	What is the current institutional context?
Understand the interaction between institutional capacity building and the institutional analysis	Step 2: Assess how the different institutional aspects (ie A to E in Table 2) connect	What is the relationship between the different institutional elements?
	Step 3: Reflect on one's own and others' experiences	What experiences can we learn from?
	Step 4: Identify key opportunities and challenges	What opportunities exist and why do existing challenges exist (and persist)?
Act on the understanding	Step 5: Prioritise, develop and implement a plan of action	Based on what we now know, how do we proceed?
	Step 6: Monitor and evaluate results and review plan of action	What have we learned so far and how can we improve?

2. Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

Step 1: Assess your organisation's institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity, using the matrix in Annex 1.

There are various aspects of the make-up of any organisation (whether it be a government, donor, INGO or local NGO) that will impact on its ability to behave in a conflict-sensitive manner. Grouping these aspects under the five key headings in Table 2 will help to develop an understanding of the existing capacity and opportunities for conflict sensitivity. The matrix in Annex 1 provides tangible examples of all the aspects detailed below.

A. Institutional will and commitment

All organisations have 'institutional drivers', both internal and external, that contribute to setting priorities and focussing resources. Institutional will is really about how interested the organisation is in a topic and what priority it gives to it. Conflict issues or related factors such as quality and impact assessment may be very high on the institutional agenda and have a lot of institutional commitment; or may be quite low on the agenda with little

commitment. Questions to ask to assess the degree of commitment might include:

- is there an internal policy statement on the issue (or a closely related issue); for example a statement on 'Improving practice in conflict areas' (or equivalent)?
- are there dedicated personnel assigned to furthering the mainstreaming of the issue, eg a conflict adviser in the Humanitarian Department of a large INGO?
- is the issue high on the organisational agenda, eg is it regularly discussed in staff and / or management meetings?

B. Organisational culture and institutional structures

The organisational culture means the attitudes and structures that permeate the agency. The type of organisational culture has implications for an organisation's capacity to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity. For example, some organisations have very hierarchical structures while others are highly decentralised: the factors which help or hinder mainstreaming will be different in each case. Another example is the organisation with a highly oral rather than written tradition: this may impair organisational learning, especially if staff turnover is high, thus making mainstreaming more difficult. Where there are unhelpful features in the culture, you need to assess how important it is to change them, and to ask whether there is the will to change.

C. Capacity development

Where sufficient institutional commitment exists to mainstream conflict sensitivity, including a commitment to invest in change in organisational culture and structures, developing staff skills and knowledge is important to sustaining and deepening the organisational momentum. Whereas technical service-delivery skills have traditionally been prioritised in development, and particularly in relief programmes, a stronger emphasis on analytical skills and context knowledge is necessary in order to mainstream conflict sensitivity. These include conflict transformation and peacebuilding skills, but also:

- relationship-building skills
- process and analytical understanding
- lateral thinking
- applied social science knowledge (socio-political / political-economic / anthropological)
- knowledge of the geographical context and the issues pertaining to it
- cultural sensitivity.

D. External relationships

The impact of organisations on the context is closely linked to that of their partners and other organisations that either share operational space or can directly or indirectly impact upon it. An organisation’s ability to be conflict sensitive is also directly influenced by the external environment, including the funding and policy parameters within which they function. Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity – and taking steps to build capacity – therefore needs to take account of the conflict-sensitive capacities of the organisation’s external partners and others they share operational space with, including implementing partners, funding agencies and political actors.

E. Accountability

Suitable accountability systems to manage the organisational mainstreaming process are essential. Policy guidelines, training, appointment of dedicated conflict advisers, etcetera, need to be complemented by clear and well thought-out accountability systems that provide appropriate rewards and disincentives to encourage staff to consider their tasks through a conflict-sensitive lens and to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their actions and programmes in those terms. Finally and most importantly institutional capacity must be developed to ensure accountability for the impact of action (and inaction) on the communities at which interventions are targeted.

2.1 Understanding the motivation and interest that guides the assessment and the associated resources

Before assessing the institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity within an organisation (or any unit or department) there should be a frank understanding of the motivation and interest that guides the assessment and of the resources (human and financial) that are available to undertake it. Individual motivation should not be confused with the organisation’s motivation, interest and resources. Individuals need to understand the motivation that will either support or undermine their organisation’s ability to mainstream conflict sensitivity.

Motivation, interest and resources will vary significantly from individual to individual, agency to agency, experience to experience, and can stem from many different personal, semi-formal or formal sources. Some examples are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Examples of motivation / interest

Type of motivation / interest	Definition	Example
Personal	A motivation or interest primarily stemming from an individual commitment to conflict sensitivity	An individual attends an external course in conflict analysis and sees its importance and relevance to her work. She realises that without the right institutional capacities her ability to implement programmes in a conflict-sensitive manner is severely limited. Although holding a relatively low position in a large bureaucracy she wants to see how they can promote conflict-sensitive practice in her organisation.
Semi-formal	A motivation or interest stemming from an informal institutional desire to improve conflict sensitivity	A department within the agency has become increasingly concerned about the possible negative impact of their work on conflict dynamics. The Head of Department has called in all middle managers for a workshop about how the organisation could do better in responding to conflict. They want to have a framework for this workshop.

Type of motivation / interest	Definition	Example
Formal	A motivation or interest arising from a formal institutional desire to improve conflict sensitivity	After some mixed experiences in conflict areas, concerns expressed by local stakeholders, and consistent bottom-up pressure from staff located in conflict regions, senior management has instigated an institution-wide reflection process to define better practice in pursuing their core mandate in conflict areas. They have asked a group of individuals in the Quality and Evaluation Unit to develop a framework to analyse the institutional challenges involved.

The level and depth of the analysis will depend not only on the motivation which guides it, but also on the resources (human, time and financial) that are available. Investing the necessary amount of resources is essential to the quality of the analysis (and subsequent plan of action and impact), but it is important to be realistic about the resource constraints the organisation may be facing.

2.2 Depth and level of analysis

Depending on the circumstances, the six-step framework can be used either as a basis for deep analysis to feed into a longer-term institutional reflection process, or for a quick scan. The framework can be used and adapted by an individual or a group of individuals. It is best used in a participatory fashion, although it can also be used for desk-based research.

Examples of how the framework could be used:

- the director of a National Government Office of Reconciliation / Conflict Prevention uses it to frame an in-depth SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the entire government. This could take several weeks and involve large numbers of personnel and external specialist consultants
- an official charged with mainstreaming conflict issues within a donor agency uses it to assess progress for a report and action plan for the director
- an INGO regional technical adviser for peacebuilding tasked with improving impact in conflict countries uses it to conduct a two-day workshop with national technical advisers
- a national NGO official running a micro-credit programme in a conflict area uses it to focus on assessing the institutional challenges and opportunities for promoting conflict sensitivity through an hour-long discussion with key staff and leaders of community based organisations.

Thus the level at which the analysis is carried out – country office, headquarters or section – will be determined by the level of the individual conducting it.

The depth of the analysis, on the other hand, will be determined by the capacity of the individual or group and of the institution in which they work.

3. The importance of connectivity

Step 2: How, if at all, do the different elements of the organisation's capacity (A – E in Table 2) connect?

Some aspects of conflict-sensitive capacity may be well developed in (eg institutional commitment) and others (eg organisational culture) less well developed. It is important to understand how these different aspects connect. The experience of organisations seeking to become conflict sensitive shows that a number of them have made good progress in developing certain aspects that help to enhance conflict-sensitive practice, for example:

- linking better practice in conflict areas directly to their agency mandate (why)
- development and usage of operational guidance for working in conflict areas – such as tools for conflict analysis (what)
- training in conflict and peace related skills (how)
- appointment of specialist skilled staff (who),

but they have generally been less successful in ensuring that progress is even across different aspects so that they connect and add up to more than the sum of their parts.

BOX 2

Examples of bad, and good, connections

In agency A, progress was made in terms of the organisation's commitment to address conflict as part of its overarching mandate of poverty alleviation. Some specialist staff were recruited, and a tool for conflict analysis was developed. But the specialists were allowed to focus more on developing explicit conflict resolution programmes than promoting and enabling conflict sensitivity across the rest of the organisation, and the tool was developed in isolation from the end users, with no comprehensive training programme on how to use it nor any clarity about how it fitted with existing planning procedures. Moreover the initiative was announced and rolled out from the top with insufficient consultation and participation across the organisation – staff lacked ownership and were reluctant to use it.

In agency B, a 'reflecting on practice' initiative involving all staff across the organisation (both at headquarters and in the field) identified that, although theirs was not a peacebuilding organisation, improving practice in conflict areas was a priority. Reflecting on the agency's mandate for poverty alleviation, and following a review of prior and existing programmes in conflict-affected areas, a new policy for working in conflict areas was designed drawing on the experience of the agency, partners and other organisations. After consultation, a plan of action to promote better practice was written. This plan identified the most pressing needs as learning, operational guidance for planning and evaluation processes, some skills development, and new strategic partnerships. Key aspects of conflict analysis were factored into existing planning and evaluation guidelines. Country directors were introduced to these updated plans and guidelines directly and a wider awareness raising campaign was conducted, as well as making training in these one of the focal areas of the general agency training and induction programmes. An electronic forum was created where people from different regions and in different parts of the agency could share their different good and bad experiences with the new approach and provide support to each other in applying it to their respective areas of work.

The first example in Box 2 shows that even where an agency has several of the key components needed for conflict sensitivity, this will not contribute to mainstreaming unless they are planned and implemented in a joined-up way. A possible way of remedying the disconnect in agency A would be to initiate a comprehensive cross-organisational consultation process (also involving relevant external partners) in the light of which both the conflict analysis tool and policy framework could be reviewed. These steps could contribute to building a sense of ownership, and increase the likelihood of the policy and the tool becoming an active part of the organisation's practice.

4. Reflecting on experience

Step 3: Reflecting on one's own and others' experiences

There is a great deal of experience that can be drawn on to build an agency's own institutional capacity. Just as no conflict context is the same, no two agencies are the same, so what works for one agency, local office, or sector may not work for another. However, reflecting on why and how others' experiences might or might not work for one's own organisation can in itself provide useful insights.

Other experiences generally come from three main sources: other parts of the organisation; other organisations; and lessons from the mainstreaming of other issue-based frameworks (eg gender, environment).

4.1 Internal experience

Other parts of the organisation can provide useful experiences; larger organisations and those with operations in multiple geographic settings usually offer a wealth of experience and knowledge that can be drawn upon. A review of organisation-wide experiences of working in conflict-affected areas is therefore often a useful first step in a mainstreaming process. Organisations that belong to an alliance or network will also be able to draw on the experiences of sister organisations.

4.2 Experience of other agencies

Research has shown that agencies often find it most useful to learn and draw inspiration from organisations with similar mandates, operating in a similar geographical context or of a similar size, and from specialist conflict related organisations. In particular, agencies can draw on others' experiences of establishing conflict units, appointing conflict advisers or bringing in outside conflict specialists.

There is also a range of networks that can offer organisations wishing to mainstream conflict sensitivity the wealth of their own reflections and learning on conflict and institutional capacity related issues – see Table 5.

Conflict units and advisers will be most successful in mainstreaming conflict sensitivity when they help practitioners and policy- and decision-makers to increase the impact and sustainability of their work. There is currently an unresolved debate, particularly amongst donor agencies, as to whether designated conflict or peacebuilding units are more or less effective for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity than field-based

specialists. Currently, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has a headquarters based Peacebuilding Unit that provides peacebuilding support to CIDA's regional teams. The UK government, on the other hand, has recently chosen to increase its emphasis on region-based conflict advisers who support country programmes directly. Other agencies argue that conflict is everybody's business and reject the idea of designated

specialists fearing that they will impede the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity by marginalising it within one department or individual.

Table 5

Source	Name of Network / Main focus of work	Contact details
OECD Member States bilateral donor agencies, EU, IFIs	<i>Conflict Prevention Development Cooperation Network</i> Policy-related work, mainstreaming within bilateral agencies	www.oecd.org/dac - then follow link to "Conflict and Peace"
Donor and UN agencies	<i>CPR Network</i> Policy and operational issues	http://cpr.web.cern.ch/cpr/
Large US development / humanitarian INGOs (and other INGOs)	<i>Transition, Conflict and Peace Working Group, InterAction</i> Policy and operational issues relating to US INGOs	http://www.interaction.org/disaster/TCP.html
Canadian NGOs, institutions, academics and individuals	<i>Canadian Peacebuilding Co-ordinating Committee</i> Analysis, shared learned, facilitation and information exchange	http://www.peacebuild.ca/
German government and NGOs and networks	<i>Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt)</i> Project and research evaluation, new approach development and dialogue promotion.	http://www.frient.de/english/ueberuns/ueberuns.html

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of conflict related networks.

4.3 Other issue-based frameworks

In recent years, organisations have attempted to mainstream other issues – gender, environment, rights-based approaches – and to develop institutional capacity accordingly. Lessons from this mainstreaming experience can be useful in developing institutional capacity for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity.

Although conflict sensitivity mainstreaming brings up different issues, in particular because of the inherently political nature of conflict, reflecting on how an agency has attempted to mainstream gender, environment, or a rights-based approach can suggest relevant ideas, actions and experiences.

BOX 4

Learning from gender mainstreaming

The experience from the gender field has highlighted three principal elements that need to be considered when attempting to mainstreaming key issues:

- the consideration of internal and external political processes in which the organisation and its members are engaged
- the establishment of processes responsible for incorporating key issues into the design and implementation of policies
- the development of appropriate tools and technical capabilities.¹

Experience from the gender and environment fields, as well as from conflict, suggests that a multi-faceted approach to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity is likely to be most effective. Conflict is everybody's business, and all staff have a role in either mitigating or exacerbating it. But it is also important to have specialists in the field who understand the local context from a conflict perspective and who can make case- and situation-specific observations and recommendations. Similarly, a headquarters based department can serve as an important repository of cross-agency and global learning, theory and approaches. Without a designated responsible department in headquarters, it is unclear how the learning from field staff and region-based specialists will be collected and disseminated to other regions, countries and projects.

5. Opportunities and challenges

Step 4: In light of the results from step 3, identify the key opportunities and possible challenges

Having reflected on the results from step 3 and the synthesis of steps 1 to 3, there should now be a basis for answering the following questions:

- What are the key needs for institutional capacity building?
- Where do the key strategic and operational opportunities lie?
- How can these opportunities be realised?

Opportunities may include:

- new institutional two-year planning process
- changing political climates
- funding opportunity for conflict related work prioritised
- change of senior staff
- new staff development fund
- partners enthusiastic to engage on conflict sensitivity
- recruitment of new members of staff
- development of multi-donor frameworks
- development of new country strategy
- combining activities with other organisations who have more experience in conflict sensitivity
- specific request from stakeholders to address conflict issues directly or indirectly

and they can be used, for example:

- to address institutional weaknesses; for example a lack of qualified human resources at the field level to promote and train in conflict sensitivity (the organisational assessment may point to strong human resource analytical capacity in conflict issues at the headquarters level, but limited opportunities for field staff to relate this knowledge to an understanding of the context. Bringing the two capacities together in a programme planning process that allows for ongoing consultation would reinforce both)
- to build on strengths
- to overcome blockages or disconnects – see Box 2
- to address 'spoilers' and threats – see Box 5 below.

BOX 5

Examples of possible spoilers and threats

- an upcoming change in the national government ruling party makes the government less likely to be sympathetic to peace and conflict issues
- a strategic review process has come up with a very 'minimalist' interpretation of the organisation's mandate which leaves little room (and few resources) for conflict sensitivity
- commitment to conflict sensitivity is over-reliant on one individual who is scheduled to relocate or over-loaded with other work
- resources for cross-institutional learning are due to be cut because of overall budget cuts
- focus on organisational growth rather than quality means that accountability to donors is likely to be prioritised over accountability to stakeholders
- general fatigue with new tools and yet another 'mainstreaming' or 'hot issue'
- lack of acknowledgement that peace and conflict are issues that should be dealt with (either directly or indirectly) by the agency.

Options include establishing conflict units, appointing conflict advisers or bringing in outside conflict specialists. To support mainstreaming, the ultimate goal of this specialised support should be to build the capacity of other staff, and the organisation at large, to implement conflict-sensitive programming.

The establishment of a unit charged with mainstreaming conflict sensitivity can be a very important starting point for the process. It demonstrates an institutional commitment. The unit and its advisers can play an important role in leading the mainstreaming process and centralising learning and knowledge and disseminating it throughout the organisation.

To support the mainstreaming process, conflict advisers can work with staff to develop:

- mechanisms and frameworks for policy development and revision
- conflict-sensitive tools designed or adapted to the organisational processes and language
- mechanisms and frameworks for procedural changes
- staff training programmes
- revised or additional staff qualifications
- accountability mechanisms
- revised programme and indicator development guidelines
- revised programme assessment frameworks
- revised monitoring and evaluation guidelines
- guidelines for partner capacity assessment and training.

See also **section 5.4.2** above on the unresolved debate, particularly amongst donor agencies, as to whether designated conflict or peacebuilding units are more or less effective for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity than field-based specialists.

6.

Plan of action

Step 5: Prioritise, develop and implement a plan of action

Once the analysis phase is over it is important to link it to a plan of action; many agencies have commissioned or undertaken their own analysis of how to improve practice in conflict areas, and individuals themselves have also long identified problems and raised issues, but there is a marked fall-off in the implementation of the ideas and suggestions when no ownership is taken of the process of turning the analysis into action. It is highly desirable to ensure as wide an ownership as possible of both the analysis and the plan of action. (Partial ownership, or a lack of ownership, should be seen as a challenge to overcome rather than an insurmountable obstacle. Committed individuals with little support have achieved a remarkable amount in some cases.)

A plan of action can be a personal plan (and may not even be anything formal or written down), or something more formal relating to a unit within the organisation or to the organisation as a whole. The nature of the plan will depend on the influence, interest, motivation, and resources of the individual or unit supporting it. Any plan will have to prioritise and seek a balance between the aspirational (the perfect conflict-sensitive organisation) and the achievable, given the many very real constraints that are likely to be faced and the limited time and resources that can be deployed to overcome them. Staff in

some organisations have found it helpful to identify both short- and long-term plans of action and to consult key partners on the following key questions:

- what are the priority needs and how can they be fulfilled?
- what are the goals?
- what strategic alliances need to be developed?
- what resources need to be mobilised?
- what is the time-frame?
- where do we start?
- what is my / my department's strengths and what can we add to the process?

For example, there may be a pressing need for the agency as a whole to develop a comprehensive commitment to conflict sensitivity, but little top-level support for this in the short term, although one influential manager is sympathetic. Rather than abandoning efforts to change the agency's position, one option would be to seek some flexible resources from the manager to develop methods linking conflict analysis to the programme cycle and to train staff in these methods. Building strategic alliances with other like-minded individuals to engage in awareness raising and advocacy of the importance of conflict sensitivity may also help.

The plan of action will necessarily involve developing conflict sensitivity skills, raising awareness and advocating for the incorporation of a conflict sensitivity framework. These approaches are explained in more detail below.

6.1 Skills development

(see **Annex 2** for additional resources)

Building and reinforcing conflict-sensitive skills will support the mainstreaming process and at the same time ensure that the institution is able to maintain the capacity for conflict sensitivity that it has already built. Too often, however, training is conducted as a one-time event with little or no follow-up. Such training is useful for raising awareness, but offers minimal capacity development. Effective training will build on the organisation's existing culture, processes and strengths to offer long-term support and development of the skills and information required by staff to be conflict sensitive. The following recommendation for increasing the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in peace operations is relevant:

“Existing gender-awareness training programmes for peacekeepers should be given in a more systematic manner accommodating the usual six month rotation of peacekeepers and integrating context based gender-awareness. This should in turn be linked to monitoring and evaluation of the application of this training”.²

It is a mistake to offer all staff the same training. Some organisations have taken this approach to the Do No Harm tool or Interest-based Negotiations, for example. A more effective approach is to offer all staff in the organisation an introduction to conflict sensitivity, followed up with specifically tailored training for different areas of the organisation: eg policy analysts, planners, project implementers, monitoring and evaluation specialists, field staff, senior managers. Conflict sensitising existing courses and staff development opportunities can be an effective way of achieving this tailoring.

The training itself, general or job-specific, also needs to be followed up with a long-term capacity development plan. Staff need to be encouraged and given the space to apply their course learning to their daily work, to try new approaches and to learn from their mistakes. Conflict advisers can be used as mentors to help work through challenging issues. Performance objectives and reviews can also be used to provide staff with the space and encouragement to explore areas of conflict sensitivity for themselves. For example, a water specialist may participate in a general introductory course on conflict sensitivity, but then be encouraged to research various aspects of the intersection between conflict and water resources. The water specialist could then share the new learning with other staff or with partner and like-minded organisations to ensure that as many people benefit as possible.

Organisations frequently rely heavily on training, workshops and seminars to meet their staff capacity development needs. But formal training courses are not the only approach available, and – depending on an organisation’s culture, structures and resources – may well not be the most effective approach.

BOX 6

Alternatives to training

Search for Common Ground, a peacebuilding organisation, has developed a cross-fertilisation programme between different offices in different conflict areas. An individual from one country office spends ten days to two weeks with a counterpart in another country office. The visitor learns from the activities and approach in the host country office and then takes that knowledge home to see how it may be applied. Likewise, the individual in the host country can learn from the knowledge and experience of the visitor.

Search for Common Ground is also developing ‘Committees of Practice’, which include staff from their offices around the world who are working on similar themes or using similar skills. These groups will initially come into contact with each other through workshops but will later keep in touch through e-mail exchanges and periodic activities. The purpose of the Committees is to help build common knowledge within the organisation and to document this knowledge for future use within and outside the organisation.

As Box 6 above shows, peer learning and exchanges can provide an opportunity for staff to learn from others who are already knowledgeable about the material, and also about the organisational context.

Other approaches to training can be categorised under three headings: Share, Learn, and Support.

Sharing can involve approaches like secondments, where a staff member is temporarily posted to a part of the organisation that has had some success in implementing conflict sensitivity, or an important component of conflict sensitivity. Secondments can also be to other organisations where effective learning can take place. Conversely, an organisation that has had some success mainstreaming conflict sensitivity may consider seconding an appropriate member of staff to a partner organisation that is having less success.

Exchanges are similar to secondments, except that two organisations benefit rather than just one. For example, the peacebuilding department of an organisation may offer a conflict specialist to the monitoring and evaluation department of either their own organisation or an outside organisation. In exchange, the peacebuilding unit gets the expertise and support of a monitoring and evaluation specialist so they can learn more about the opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in monitoring and evaluation processes.

Partnering is another form of sharing learning and experience that builds on the advantage of diversity and economies of scale. In Uganda, for example, a group of development agencies designated representatives from each of their organisations to form a working group to learn about conflict analysis together. The working group then worked together to build capacity for conflict analysis in each member organisation. In this way the team was able to build on each member’s strengths and ensure that each organisation benefited from the diversity of the group. Another approach would be to take advantage of economies of scale by bringing together a group of organisations and designating lead responsibilities for learning and dissemination to different members. Organisation A might focus on conflict analysis, organisation B on indicator development, and so on. Then, when a member organisation needs help on a particular aspect, they could turn to the responsible organisation for specialist support.

Including partners in conflict-sensitive skills development is essential. Joint skills development with collaborating partners can support and reinforce conflict sensitive capacity development within a wider range of organisations.

Learning can also involve working with partner or like-minded organisations. A network of practitioners,

either from within the organisation or outside, can provide an important source of experiential learning. As with the example of partnering above, the network need not be comprised of conflict sensitivity specialists. Gender and environment specialists, for example, can often provide a wealth of information with respect to successes and challenges of mainstreaming. A formal or informal community of practitioners from like-minded organisations is all that is required to share experience and seek the advice of others. These groups may already exist at some level, perhaps in the form of a donor coordination committee or a network of volunteer-sending agencies, or it may be necessary to create them. Brown-bag lunches can be very effective within an organisation or for organisations located in close geographic proximity to each other, while e-mail networks can be useful for connecting across large distances. Such networks are not complicated to establish.

Space for reflection is also an important aspect of learning. Informally reflecting on past practices and completed projects can be an effective means of better understanding the complexities of conflict sensitivity and for informing decision making around new project or programme design. External space for reflection is equally important, and may take the form of support for education leave, night classes or summer schools, and self-funded leave. Even just one day per month at a local library or equivalent can provide staff with important space for reading and learning from previous experience.

BOX 7

Training and skills development

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has an explicit commitment to peacebuilding, which is reflected in the organisation's mission statement. Its strategic plan includes building capacity in peacebuilding. In addition to developing in-house training capacity, CRS has, since 2000, joined with the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at University of Notre Dame to offer a peacebuilding summer institute for staff and partners. The 10-day course covers conceptual understanding and various training methodologies, such as inter-religious dialogue. There is a lot of staff interest in attending the course and staff have to compete for places: criteria include the usefulness of the training to the individual's particular area of work, and the individual's position in CRS.

CRS will also be conducting a worldwide training-of-trainers course in the use of the Caritas peacebuilding manual that was published in 2002.

Support is an equally important component of skills development. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) offers a help desk service that connects practitioners working in the field with academics and researchers at two leading Universities. For example, if in

the course of conducting a conflict analysis in Bolivia, a development worker discovers substantial issues with land rights, but knows nothing about land rights in Bolivia, the worker can find out if there are any experts in that area through an easily accessible thematic and geographical database on the organisation's intranet. They can then make contact with the expert directly, or contact a SIDA conflict adviser. SIDA had previously used this approach successfully as a mainstreaming tool for environmental issues.

Resource centres can also provide an effective means of support. Whether virtual (eg internet based) or real (eg a library or document centre), resource centres can provide a useful repository of reference materials for practitioners, policy staff and others. When designing a conflict analysis, for example, it is often helpful to see what types of analyses other organisations have used. There are unlikely to be tools or frameworks that can be used as they stand, but the experience of others can provide a useful base and source of new ideas or approaches. Resource centres must be easily accessible, with data and lessons learned stored in a format that is easily retrievable.

6.2 Advocacy and awareness raising

Conflict sensitivity is an approach that different organisations will adopt for a variety of different reasons, depending on their organisational culture. But it is important to ensure that it is not relegated to a set of "sterile and tokenistic 'tools', useful to make superficial adjustments rather than profound, long-lasting transformations."³

Awareness raising seeks to build support for mainstreaming by helping other organisations, or other parts of one's own organisation, to experience a conflict-sensitive approach and understand how it relates to them. All the tools and processes mentioned in this chapter will support awareness raising by helping staff answer questions such as:

- what is the organisation's objective?
- how should the organisation interact with the conflict dynamics?
- what processes and procedures support the organisation's actions?
- to whom is the organisation accountable?

Box 8 below provides an example from Kenya on one approach to raising awareness.

BOX 8

Awareness raising with district commissioners in Kenya

The conflict-sensitive approaches programme, in collaboration with the Office of the President, supported and facilitated a Kenyan district commissioners' workshop on conflict-sensitive approaches to development.

The workshop, which was organised by Africa Peace Forum, aimed to introduce and raise awareness on conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding work among 86 Kenyan district commissioners. As civil servants representing the government at the local level, district commissioners play an instrumental role in the implementation of development and peacebuilding programmes, and were therefore identified as a key audience for institutional awareness raising. Although the workshop focused on raising awareness at the district level, good linkages were established with the Office of the President which provided participants as well as being co-organiser.

The workshop introduced the tools and concepts of conflict analysis to the participants and presented them with ways of incorporating conflict analysis into programming and project cycles. The discussions drew on the district commissioners' experiences in identifying the root causes of conflicts in their areas, and the stakeholders involved. These discussions gave participants the opportunity to share experiences of successes and failures. They expressed great interest in following up the workshop with more targeted training, and including additional districts.

In contrast to awareness raising, *advocacy* is used to effect a specific action or response based on a specific argument. Like awareness raising, advocacy is often conducted with individuals or organisations that do not yet support a conflict-sensitive approach.

Awareness raising and advocacy can be most effective when used together to promote mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity. One principle of both advocacy and awareness raising is that if people are to support an approach, it needs to be built on their language and experiences (and those of their organisation) so they are able to see its relevance to their work. When first introduced to conflict sensitivity individuals or organisations are often hostile for fear that it just means more work for them. People tend to be much more receptive when they understand how conflict sensitivity can be used to increase the sustainability and impact of their existing and future initiatives.

6.3 External policy drivers and commitments

Certain organisations support their work by adopting guidelines, policy frameworks, and agreements developed by other organisations. Some of these are listed in Table 6, below. Many of these guidelines can be used by agencies and interested parties to further the building of institutional capacity – either within their own organisation, or in terms of advocating to others. However, staff in some organisations may be unaware of these materials, or may not understand how they can be used as a reminder of the relevance and importance of conflict sensitivity, or as a lever to obtain, for example, extra resources.

Examples:

1. A country director for a donor agency is putting in a proposal to headquarters for finance for an extra member of staff (a part-time national conflict adviser). He notes how this will significantly enhance the agency's capacity to deliver on its commitments as outlined in the OECD-DAC guidelines 'Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientation for External Partners'.
2. A national civil society organisation uses national governments', and also EU donors', commitment to the Cotonou Agreement (Article 11) to advocate against a government-sponsored and EU-funded infrastructural project that is likely to cause conflict and unrest amongst a minority group.
3. An Emergency Unit deputy director for a humanitarian organisation uses a point in the revised Sphere Guidelines to strengthen her request for resources for conflict analysis training for all her staff: "Understanding the nature and source of conflict helps to ensure that aid is distributed in an impartial way and reduces or avoids negative impact. In conflict-affected settings, an analysis of the actors, mechanisms, issues and context of the conflict should be carried out prior to programme planning."⁴

TABLE 6			
Guidelines, policy frameworks and agreements			
Document	Relevant to	Nature	Where to find
AU-NEPAD	African countries	Vision and strategic framework to address challenges currently facing African continent	http://www.touchtech.biz/nepad/files/en.html
ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement	Certain African, Caribbean, Pacific Governments and EU Member States	Overarching trade and aid agreement based on political dialogue	http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/cotonou/agreement/agr06_en.htm See particularly Article 11 on conflict
OECD-DAC <i>Helping Prevent Violent Conflict: Orientations for External Partners</i> (April 2001)	Donors from OECD Countries	Policy guidelines adopted by OECD-DAC related to how development assistance can contribute to conflict prevention and peace	http://www.oecd.org/dac See particularly Conflict & Peace Network Page where full guidelines are available
EU Programme of Action for the Prevention of Violent Conflict	EU Member States and donors	High level policy commitment to mainstream conflict prevention in all aspects of its engagement (including development co-operation and trade)	http://www.eu2001.se/static/eng/pdf/violent.PDF See also other EU statements related to importance of mainstreaming conflict issues
SPHERE Handbook 2004	Humanitarian agencies	Standards and best practice agreed upon by humanitarian agencies.	http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/hdbkpdf/hdbk_c1.pdf See particularly Common Standards 3: Response. These recommend understanding conflict and using the understanding to inform programming

7. Monitor and evaluate results

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate results and review plan of action

What impacts have the capacity building steps had on your organisation? What went well, less well and, most importantly, why? Go back to step 1 and re-do the analysis: what has changed, what has not, and what can be done to enhance the impact?

For example, the organisation may have progressed substantially in analysing conflict and linking the analysis to conflict-sensitive planning through the development and adoption of an agency specific tool. But conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation may not have been conducted because it was not prioritised in the strategic plan, or because no specific resources were allocated. Therefore after re-doing your institutional analysis you may conclude that institutional commitment and resource allocation should be prioritised rather than further development or training in conflict related tools.

Just as in project or programme monitoring and evaluation, setting clear goals and objectives from the outset is critical to ensuring the ability to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the action plan in the future. Focal areas include:

- *strengthening* internal capacity. Evaluate the degree to which the process has enhanced your internal organisational capacity for conflict sensitivity. Review programmes planned and implemented within the organisation's conflict-sensitive framework, and survey staff opinions on how the process has worked.
- *working* with partners and like-minded organisations. Possible approaches include evaluating how the process has strengthened external relationships in terms of partners' capacity for conflict sensitivity. As previously mentioned, institutional capacity building for conflict sensitivity should not stop within the organisation. In order to impact on the context, the evaluation needs to also include partners (local and international). Monitoring and evaluating progress should therefore also include key external partners and could take place as part of joint review and learning sessions.

In formulating, implementing and evaluating the plan of action, it is important to be aware of – and avoid – the so-called 'project trap'. Whereas conflict sensitising a project may have a beneficial impact on the organisation-wide commitment and ability to be conflict sensitive, it should not be confused with conflict sensitising an organisation. Indeed, going beyond project-level conflict sensitivity is a key objective of the mainstreaming process, as it ensures that all future projects and activities have an enabling institutional environment for conflict sensitivity.

Accountability

In many situations of structural or violent conflict, institutions that are charged with developing and implementing significant social, economic and judicial programmes and policies are not held directly accountable to the people affected by these interventions. International agencies are generally held accountable to their own governments for project outputs, but often not for operational approaches or impact. To enable staff and organisations to be responsible for actions related to conflict, they must have the skills, processes and procedures that support and reinforce such accountability. The skills and processes outlined in this chapter will help to create an environment conducive to mainstreaming conflict sensitivity, but will need to be combined with measures to enable accountability to conflict sensitivity at the individual, programmatic and institutional levels.

Conflict sensitivity requires support for the accountability of individuals and organisations to:

- beneficiaries and institutions who are being supported
- organisations and individuals that fund programmes
- national and international laws and principles applicable to the institution or individual.

A. Institutional accountability

Conflict sensitivity will be most effective and easiest to mainstream when it has institutional support across programmes. Means of strengthening institutional accountability include:

- developing a policy that confirms the organisation's commitment to a conflict-sensitive approach
- making conflict-sensitive programming and support processes key criteria in decision-making by the institution's senior management team (or other group that is responsible for approving programme strategies and large expenditures)
- establishing mutual accountability for conflict sensitivity through joint programming and co-ordination with other programmes and institutions
- supporting mutual capacity and accountability for implementing conflict-sensitive tools and processes through joint training and the development of tools and procedures for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity
- conducting regular external evaluations with conflict sensitivity as one of the criteria; involving partners, other institutions (governments, civil society, donors) and affected communities in regular reviews and final evaluations to help ensure that those impacted by the intervention have influence over it.

B. Programmatic accountability

At the programme level it is important to have an internal process that supports conflict-sensitive programming and allows for new approaches to be tested and mistakes reduced through joint problem solving. Projects should be approved and evaluated partially in terms of their conflict sensitivity and responsibility for conflict-sensitive programming should be shared within the institution. Programmatic accountability can be enhanced by:

- encouraging and reinforcing conflict-sensitive programming in the development and evaluation of programmes. Encourage joint problem solving and adjustment of programmes during internal and external meetings to make them more conflict sensitive
- establishing conflict-sensitive programming criteria and applying the criteria to each project or programme proposal. Criteria could include elements such as: analysis, capacity assessment, identification and participation of stakeholders, direct and indirect programme impact, coordination and co-operation with other actors, and participation of partners in programming
- enabling (and instituting mechanisms for) programmes to receive recognition and to document success stories in support of awareness raising
- involving partners, other institutions (governments, civil society, donors) and affected communities in the

programming process to ensure the process remains attentive to both those who are involved in its implementation and those who are impacted by it

- (for funders) requesting conflict-sensitive programming in calls for proposals, and allocating sufficient resources and time, for the programme development and evaluation process necessary for conflict-sensitive programming

C. Individual accountability

Beyond the institutional and programmatic accountability measure, organisations need to ensure that all staff members understand their responsibility in a conflict environment; are provided with the resources and skills necessary to meet that responsibility; and are enabled to do so through incentives and support structures.

Individual accountability thus requires:

- individuals who understand the role and objective of their organisation in relation to conflict. These can be communicated in a number of ways that will provide staff and partners with a justification for why they are mainstreaming conflict sensitivity: review of the mandate, founding principles, human rights law, humanitarian principles (see also **section 6.2** on advocacy and awareness raising, above)
- staff who understand how to act in a conflict-sensitive manner. If reinforced throughout the organisation, the capacity and skills development opportunities outlined in this chapter will encourage them to change the way they do their programming
- staff who have the opportunity to implement a new conflict-sensitive idea or approach that will help them own and advocate for the approach within the organisation. When implementing a new concept or idea, individuals need to receive support and reinforcement throughout the programming process. As they learn, they will be able to adjust the programme and avoid doing harm during this learning process
- conflict-sensitive skills to be included in job descriptions for new staff. These skills include: conflict analysis and reporting, facilitation of participatory processes, qualitative programme development, monitoring and evaluation, conflict resolution or negotiating, coordination and relationship building (see **section 6.1** on skills development, above)
- elements of conflict-sensitive programming, relating to the position of the staff member, to be included in staff appraisal and evaluations, but only at the point where the individual's learning and work is demonstrably fully supported by the organisation.

8.

Endnotes

¹Maya Buvinic, "Project for Women in the Third World: Explaining their Misbehaviour", Washington: International Centre for Research on Women, 1984 pg 21, cited in March, C., I. Smyth, and M. Mukhopadhyay, *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*, Oxford: Oxfam GB, 1999.

²International Alert, *Gender Justice & Accountability in Peace Support Operations: Closing the Gaps* Section 1, London: International Alert, December 2003.

³March et al: 15.

⁴The Sphere Project, *The Sphere Handbook 2004*, Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, forthcoming 2004: 35.

Annex 1

ANNEX 1

Institutional framework for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity (CS)

Key aspects necessary for developing institutional capacity.	Sub-issues that form part of the key aspect (list is suggestive, not complete)	Possible strengths, as they relate to the sub-issues	Possible weaknesses, as they relate to the sub-issues	Suggested actions / useful experiences
<p>A. Institutional commitment</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <p><i>Is the external context (both in terms of in-country and regional situation, and global policy environment) conducive to CS?</i></p> <p><i>What is the current extent of internal institutional commitment to follow through on CS within the organisation?</i></p> <p><i>How deep and how wide is the organisational commitment to CS?</i></p>	<p>Internally:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership’s personal background Leadership’s perception of the organisational history Commitment at non-management levels <p>Externally:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overarching policy frameworks National, regional and global political context and events 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership have personal experience and understanding of the importance of CS The identity and past experiences of the organisation (as perceived by its leadership) underline the need for a conflict-sensitive approach There are strong champions for CS in key management and non-management positions Policy frameworks are conducive to mainstreaming a CS approach (strong link with the more general political climate) National, regional and / or international political events and processes are conducive to prioritising CS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership lack understanding / experience of how CS can help the organisation achieve its mandate and / or leadership is ideologically opposed to CS Past organisational experiences suggest that CS would not be appropriate (eg the organisation has had a traumatic experience of peacebuilding programming) Lack of understanding and commitment to CS on non-management levels and / or resistance to change Policy climate does not prioritise CS CS is perceived as ‘too sensitive’ due to (national, regional and / or global) political events 	<p>Internal and external advocacy and awareness raising contributes to developing institutional commitment. References to how CS the organisation fulfil its existing policy commitments and achieve its mandate.</p> <p>Western donor agencies have signed up to the OECD-DAC guidelines on preventing violent conflict (2001). Reference to this commitment can be used as an advocacy tool.</p> <p>Internal discussion forums can support strengthened institutional commitment as well as promote organisational change. For example, a UK-based development NGO has established a ‘conflict cluster’ open to all interested staff which meets twice a month to discuss issues of common concern in relation to conflict, providing a useful forum for cross-organisational exchange and learning.</p>

Key aspects necessary for developing institutional capacity.	Sub-issues that form part of the key aspect (list is suggestive, not complete)	Possible strengths, as they relate to the sub-issues	Possible weaknesses, as they relate to the sub-issues
<p>B. Organisational culture and institutional structures</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <p><i>Is the organisational culture of the organisation enabling for CS?</i></p> <p><i>Do existing institutional structures support conflict-sensitive practice and how might they need to change?</i></p>	<p>1. Communication: Extent of cross-organisational knowledge transfer and learning.</p> <p>2. Hierarchy and structure: (De)centralised? Strongly hierarchical or not? Do the institutional structures inhibit or promote CS?</p> <p>3. Systems and procedures: Existing policies and frameworks for planning and programming</p>	<p>1. Strong tradition of cross-departmental learning and documentation of lessons learned</p> <p>2. Clear roles and responsibilities (whether centralised or decentralised structure). Benefit of clear focal points for conflict (conflict advisers, clusters, intra-organisational learning mechanisms etc)</p> <p>3. Analysis of conflict (and associated political and power ‘process’ issues) can be fitted relatively easily into existing policy and operational frameworks.</p>	<p>1. Intra-departmental jealousies, ‘fiefdom mentalities’, artificial divisions and genuinely different cultures can breed conflict and inhibit learning</p> <p>2. Overly centralised structures, generating a lack of ownership in and / or suspicion towards ‘central’ initiatives, or untransparent, decentralised structures inhibiting cross-organisational policy development. Potential risk of marginalisation if ‘peacebuilding’ is the exclusive domain of one (technical) organisational unit.</p> <p>3. Existing policies and operational frameworks focus on outputs and ‘service delivery’, explicitly excluding more political analysis and / or more process-oriented frameworks.</p>
<p>C. Capacity development</p> <p>Key question:</p> <p><i>What skills does my organisation as a whole, colleagues in different departments and partners need to have and / or develop for CS to become a reality?</i></p>	<p>1. Human resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment: What skills do we look for? - Reward: What skills and achievement of what type of objectives are rewarded? - Retention: How are skilled individuals retained? <p>2. Training and induction: What staff and partner skills do we seek to develop and how?</p> <p>3. What analytical tools does the organisation currently use?</p>	<p>1. Understanding of the context and analytical capacity is a key component of recruitment and is also rewarded. Individuals with conflict and context skills are offered incentives to stay in the organisation (flexible postings, field / headquarter rotation systems, training opportunities, competitive salaries etc)</p> <p>2. Induction and training on conflict-related issues are offered to both staff and partner organisations, including security training with a power analysis element, conflict transformation courses and / or advocacy training</p> <p>3. Organisation is currently revising its handbook of operational practice – commitment to CS has been made</p>	<p>1. Technical and service delivery oriented skills are prioritised over analytical skills and context knowledge.</p> <p>2. Induction and training programmes focus on technical skills and do not include power / political analysis (either operational or in an advocacy context)</p> <p>3. Either no tools for conflict analysis used and / or other tools do not link analysis to practice</p>

Key aspects necessary for developing institutional capacity.	Sub-issues that form part of the key aspect (list is suggestive, not complete)	Possible strengths, as they relate to the sub-issues	Possible weaknesses, as they relate to the sub-issues
<p>D. External relationships</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <p><i>What kind of partnerships do we need to complement our own CS capacity building?</i></p> <p><i>How do our external relationships (including with donors) and the context within which we operate influence our capacity building abilities?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partners' perspective on CS and capacity 2. Funding climate 3. Operating environment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partners are enthusiastic about CS and have (or are able to develop) capacity for it 2. Indication that CS can bring more funds to the organisation 3. Operating environment allows time for reflection on CS and organisational change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partners are uneasy about (or against) incorporating a CS approach and / or don't have (or are unable to develop) capacity for it 2. The organisation's funding structures make adopting a CS approach problematic (it will be hard to get resources for it) 3. High-intensity conflict and acute crisis make it near-impossible to invest time (and resources) in CS capacity building
<p>E. Accountability</p> <p>Key question:</p> <p><i>What accountability measures are needed to advance conflict-sensitive policy and practice?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appraisal and incentives (staff accountability) 2. Reporting (accountability to donors) 3. Participation and evaluations (accountability to stakeholders, see also "External relationships", above) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexible staff appraisal systems that include evaluation of analytical skills and context understanding 2. Reporting structures emphasise organisational learning and encourage reference to both direct and indirect impacts 3. Partners and other local stakeholders participate in project/programme evaluations and are involved in follow-up 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appraisal systems emphasise technical skills and 'output' performance over analysis and process 2. Inflexible reporting criteria restrict learning and exclude an assessment of wider (unintended) impacts 3. Evaluations involve only the organisation and the donor, no significant input from other stakeholders

Annex 2

Resources and training facilities

The following organisations provide a variety of training opportunities. This list is merely indicative, and there are hundreds of other organisations and trainers that offer a variety of opportunities. Agencies and individuals should explore in detail the nature and contents of any training to ensure that it adequately meets their specific needs.

Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation (CIAN), a Canadian organisation dedicated to the prevention and resolution of destructive conflict at the local, national and international levels. CIAN provides individual courses, certificate programmes and professional designations. For further information, please call (001) 613.237.9050 or see their website at <http://www.cian.org>

Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA), an African membership organisation, organises skills trainings and workshops on conflict transformation for development, human rights and humanitarian practitioners. For further information, please call +27 11 331 2944 (South Africa) or +254 2 577 558 (Kenya) or e-mail enquires@actionsupport.co.za. There is a sister organisation in Asia – Action Asia e-mail: ActionAsia@online.com.ch

Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU), an NGO network in Afghanistan, offers training courses on Working With Conflict and Do No Harm and has developed a training curriculum for development and humanitarian NGOs working in Afghanistan. For further information, please call +92 (0) 91 5701763 (Peshawar office), or +93 (0) 70278891 (Kabul office) or e-mail sulnad@brain.net.pk

Eastern Mennonite University hosts a Summer Peacebuilding Institute with courses in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. For further details, see web site: <http://www.emu.edu/ctp/spinow2.html>

Field Diplomacy Initiative, an NGO based in Leuven, Belgium, provides training courses in field diplomacy and conflict impact assessment. For further details, see web site: <http://www.fielddiplomacy.be>

Institute for Conflict Resolution (INCORE) at the University of Ulster, and the United Nations University (UNU), offer summer courses in second track diplomacy, conflict transformation and evaluation and impact assessment of peacebuilding programmes. For further information, please contact Fiona Barr: school@incore.ulst.ac.uk or visit web site: <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk>

Peaceworkers UK, a London based NGO, provides links to education and training programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of civilians working in regions affected by conflict. A UK Training Directory can be downloaded from: <http://www.peaceworkers.org.uk>

Responding to Conflict (RTC), a Birmingham based NGO, offers conflict training courses for humanitarian and development practitioners. See web site for further information: <http://www.respond.org>

On-line sources of further information on training opportunities are available from UNOCHA at ReliefWeb <http://www.reliefweb.int/training> and also from www.conflictsensitivity.org

Annex 3

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