INTERNATIONAL ALERT

IMPROVING CAPACITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE CONFLICT PREVENTION STRATEGIES

An Overview of Recent Donor Initiatives

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I. Conflict and development - The role of aid agencies in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Most violent conflicts nowadays are taking place in developing countries. The costs of these wars are immense and can throw back a country's development efforts by years or even decades. Among them are human costs, peacekeeping and humanitarian costs, commercial and reconstruction costs, and political costs. As far as numbers can express human suffering, we may recall that during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, an estimated 800,000 persons were killed and more than 2 million forced to flee their homes. Between 1990 and 1995, Rwandan exports dropped by 60% due to internal instability (Killick/Higdom 1998). During the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 145,000 were killed, 174,000 injured, and 2,5 million people made refugees. The Bosnian GDP plunged from an estimated $ 10 billion to $ 2 billion between 1990 and 1996, while the costs of reconstructing Bosnia have been estimated at several billion dollars (ibid.). The rising number of conflict-related humanitarian emergencies also diverts scarce resources from long-term development to humanitarian assistance. While in the 1980s emergency relief accounted for only 3% of the total development co-operation budget of the OECD countries, this proportion has risen to 10% in the 1990s. At the same time, the total amount of international assistance has fallen sharply.

In this context, development and humanitarian agencies have been called to revise their largely reactive approach to violent conflicts. Major reviews of aid performance in conflict situations such as the *Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (1996)* have played a critical role in moving this discussion forward and catalysing a wide array of donor initiatives. It has been highlighted that agencies should assume a more proactive role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding since aid has the potential to positively affect the root causes of conflict and create the conditions for sustainable peace. Concern has also been voiced about the sometimes negative effects of aid on a conflict situation (Anderson 1999). Agencies should therefore develop systems to monitor and redress these effects.

Development and humanitarian agencies are increasingly recognising this challenge. Conflict prevention has rapidly risen on the policy agenda of many foreign and development ministries. This new proactive approach towards humanitarian aid, development and violent conflict poses new challenges to aid agencies, for which they need to review their procedures, instruments and tools. In this article, I will examine the main lessons learned regarding development and conflict and then outline a framework for building donor capacity to support peacebuilding work.

It is important to stress in the beginning, however, that aid cannot promote peace on its own, but should be part of a package of foreign policy measures towards a conflict-affected country or sub-region. Other relevant instruments include policy dialogue, preventive diplomacy, cultural, trade and investment policies, and military co-operation. To be effective, policy coherence between these instruments is required, which means that they all should be applied with peace as the ultimate objective in mind.

II. Research methodology

This paper is based on a survey of major donors, which sought to identify good practice in mainstreaming a conflict prevention perspective into development co-operation. The survey included (i) the collection and review of policy documents relating to conflict prevention and peacebuilding; (ii) the examination of relevant planning and project management instruments; (iii) expert interviews with policy makers and desk officers using a standardised aide memoire; (iv) a sythesis review of evaluations of relevant donor programmes. Donors reviewed comprise the EC, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, UK, Germany, Austria, Norway, Canada and UNDP.

With the expert interviews, we sought to get a sense of how far conflict prevention policies had already been institutionalised within the organisations and what were the main challenges encountered in this process. In reviewing the evaluations, we tried to establish a link between donor performance in terms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and the policies and ways of working of the given donor. The review reaches back to the early 1990s to include some of the key learning experiences of the international donor community such as the Somalia and Rwanda crises. The evaluations were selected according to regional criteria to reflect the range of assistance provided to countries in conflict. Particularly well-documented cases are South Africa, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. There are also good evaluations available on Central America, Bosnia Herzegowina, and Sri Lanka. In terms of sectors, we were particularly interested in conflict-relevant programmes such as humanitarian assistance, assistance to refugees, rehabilitation and post-conflict reconstruction, democracy, human rights, security sector reform, and programmes involving an aspect of natural resource management, human resources or community development. Most of these evaluations refer to conflict or post-conflict evaluations, while there is considerably less documentation on the role of aid in preventing the outbreak of violent conflict.

III. What are the challenges? Lessons learned from major evaluations

1. The role of aid in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

The evaluations highlight three main areas, in which relief, rehabilitation and development aid can play a positive role in promoting peace. It is important to have these areas of assistance in mind when later discussing the institutional capacities required to sustain conflict prevention and peace work.

1. Long-term conflict prevention: Aid has the potential to address the structural conditions (or "root causes"), which produce violent conflict, such as social exclusion, lack of political participation, unaccountable public institutions, and lack of personal security. It can also support people in creating institutions for the peaceful resolution of social conflict and empower them to become involved in conflict prevention initiatives. Such fundamental social transformations can only be achieved in a long-term perspective. Despite ever-shortening funding cycles, aid does have the capacity to offer such long-term commitment and support to countries at risk of violent conflict.

2. Supporting peace processes: During war-peace transitions and in post-conflict situations, aid can help prepare the ground for sustainable peace. Experience has shown that political negotiations ("Track I") are unlikely to lead to a lasting peace agreement, if they are not supported by a peace process that goes down to the grassroots. The social groundwork for peace is based on the triangle participation, material benefit and security. In the early stages of the peace process, aid can support citizens in creating social spaces for dialogue, generating public pressure for peace and formulating a people-focused peace agenda. During peace negotiations, their role as facilitators, mediators, and witnesses can be strengthened, while later their participation in the process of reconciliation and building structures to sustain peace is essential. Aid for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction can help build trust in the peace process by offering real material improvements to people (e.g. new business or employment opportunities) and making sure that the "peace dividend" is distributed equally among the population. The transformation from a "culture of violence" to a "culture of peace" requires that people can trust in their personal security and the institutions of justice. Prudent support for a reform of the security services can assist in bringing about this change.

3. Addressing localised violence: Development aid can support communities in dealing with localised forms of violence and conflict. Such violence can range from cattle rustling in rural Kenya to gang violence in the urban centres of Latin America. These conflicts are often associated with high numbers of unemployed (male) youth, the ready availability of small arms, and a deep disregard for the value of the individual life. In this context, aid can assist people to develop community-based security systems, it can address the material pre-conditions of violence and support local mediation efforts. Traditional ways of conflict resolution can be very effective in these situations and should be explored and strengthened.

The evaluations also emphasise the ambivalent impact of development and humanitarian aid on conflict situations. It cannot be stressed enough that every external intervention in a conflict-prone area has an effect on the conflict - positive or negative! Therefore, it is crucial for agencies to make conflict prevention a cross-cutting issue for development assistance to conflict-prone regions. This means avoiding the risks of inadvertently aggravating the conflict as well as seeking out opportunities for promoting more peaceful relationships. The following table maps out the main risks and opportunities of development and humanitarian aid to conflict regions as they emerge from the evaluations.

Table 1: Risks and opportunities of aid to conflict-affected regions

Thematic area	Risks	Opportunities
Governance	aid reinforces illegitimate political structures aid weakens local government by creating unsustainable parallel structures aid replicates authoritarian structures aid undermines local capacities and creates dependency	aid strengthens local formal and informal structures aid encourages participation and local ownership aid recognises local ownership of peace process aid agencies assume engaged, but neutral position in conflict
Economics	aid distorts local economies aid cements existing socio-economic	aid strengthens local economy aid promotes more equal opportunities

	divisions aid encourages unsustainable use of natural resources aid supports contentious claims to natural resources	aid delivery encourages collaboration and cohesion aid encourages sustainable resource management aid strengthens equal access to resources
Socio-cultural factors	aid agencies duplicate and reinforce war images aid grafts Western conflict resolution methods on local peace processes	aid agencies support trust building and reconciliation aid empowers people to resolve violent conflict in their own ways
Arms and war economy	aid subsidises the war economy	aid avoids instrumentalisation by warlords aid develops alternative livelihoods to violence

2. The logic of peace and the logic of development - Issues for institutional capacity building

The evaluations mention a wide range of challenges development and humanitarian agencies have been confronted with when working towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Many of these difficulties can be attributed to the different ways, in which peace processes and development assistance operate.

Peacebuilding can be described as "empowering people to make peace" (International Alert 1998) by supporting local efforts and capacities. This approach is based on the experience that just and sustainable peace can only be achieved with the consent and participation of those most affected by conflict. For humanitarian and development agencies, this principle implies supporting people in creating the conditions for lasting peace and the non-violent resolution of social conflicts. In contrast to traditional aid, however, peace work is centred on participative processes rather than on outputs, is a long-term path dotted with small successes and even more setbacks, and gives priority to (re-)building trust and relationships (Lederach 1997). Those, who support peace processes, must be prepared to take considerable risks and may face moral and political compromise. Ways also need to be found to overcome the inappropriate time-frames and project approach of conventional development and humanitarian assistance. In peacebuilding, "projects" exist only as administrative categories, while in fact they consist of a series of activities geared at supporting a long-term process. It is also extremely difficult to relate certain activities to distinct outcomes, and sometimes it is deemed more important to sustain the process than to prematurely insist on concrete results Moreover, peace work relies on building trust and spaces for dialogue, which also includes confidentiality. A delicate balance needs to be struck between the needs for transparency and loyalty to partners. In terms of institutional learning, process-oriented monitoring is more appropriate than result-oriented evaluation. The following table charts - albeit schematically - the main structural differences between peace and development work.

Tab. 2: Characteristics of peace work and traditional development assistance

Peace Work	Development Assistance
1. Time orientation	

long-term process	short funding cycles
unpredictable	strategic planning
	little flexibility
2. Activities and outcomes	
process-orientation	result-orientation
often no clear progress	need to show success
progress depends on many external factors	clear relationship activity-outcome
intangible outcomes	tangible outcomes
3. Ownership and participation	
local ownership crucial for sustainability	can succeed with lower degrees of ownership
simultaneous involvement with various levels of society	focus on specific target groups
	sometimes dominance of external actors
limited role of external actors	
4. Risks	
risky	risk averse
moral and political compromise	neutrality
5. Operational issues	
co-ordination and coherence	often fragmentation of initiatives
local capacity building	often focus on service delivery
monitoring	evaluation

IV. Mainstreaming conflict prevention into development and humanitarian assistance

Building the capacity to diffuse violent conflict and sustain peace processes requires mainstreaming conflict prevention into development and humanitarian assistance. Mainstreaming is a concept that was developed in relation to gender and the environment. It implies that an organisation considers a certain issue in every relevant activity and sets up the structures to do so. The following table shows the critical areas for mainstreaming conflict prevention into the work of development and humanitarian agencies.

Tab. 3: What is "mainstreaming"?

Mainstreaming conflict prevention
• Policies and commitment
• Programming
• Institutional capacity building
• Human resources
• Co-operation and partnership
• Learning and good practice
• Values and ethical guidelines

1. Policies and political commitment
Peacebuilding needs to be recognised as a cross-cutting development objective rather than a positive side effect. Setting clear *peacebuilding objectives* for all forms of aid in conflict-affected situations can add value to traditional development work and bring enormous efficiency gains. Thereby, peace should not only be regarded as the absence of violence, but also encompass co-operation, reconciliation and development. The use of

peacebuilding indicators would also enhance the quality of project evaluations and thus promote learning from past experience. A commitment to conflict prevention also requires the readiness to take *risks* and sustaining a long-term approach. Extra-developmental aims of aid policy need to be carefully reviewed in terms of their compatibility with conflict prevention.

2. Programming

Aid programmes can only make a substantial contribution to peace processes when they are planned and implemented in a strategic and coherent way. For this, agencies need to build the appropriate instruments and procedures.

(i) *Analytical capacity* and *local knowledge*: Conflict prevention programmes need to be based on an intimate knowledge of local conditions and thorough needs assessment. Agencies can best gain an understanding of the main factors and dynamics of the conflict situation through sustained engagement with civil society both in the South and in their own countries. Tools such as *strategic conflict analysis* can support agencies in systematising this knowledge and drawing conclusions for strategic planning. On the project level, conflict impact assessments can help identify the conflict risks and peace opportunities of particular initiatives.

(ii) *Strategic planning*: "Country strategies" or "strategic conceptual frameworks" can be useful instruments for setting out the broad directions of commitment to a conflict-affected country. They should demonstrate a *long-term orientation* to support complex peace processes. An integrated *transition strategy* is needed that links *crisis response to development* and sets the signposts for long-term recovery. "Quick impact" solutions such as infrastructure rehabilitation or the distribution of agricultural tool kits need to be integrated into long-term programmes for maximum sustainability. Priority should be given to social investment, which is fundamental to recovery and long-term development. At the same time, such plans should foresee sufficient flexibility to react to new developments in the conflict situation.

(iii) *Coherence* and *co-ordination*: There is still much scope to strengthen policy coherence and co-ordination both within single agencies and among the donor community. To ensure sustainability, peacebuilding strategies should be planned and implemented with a maximum participation of local communities within the framework of national government structures and development plans. Country-wide stakeholder consultations have proven to play a critical role during war-peace transitions for formulating a common peace agenda and promoting social dialogue. The common strategy should outline the roles of the external and internal actors based on the principles of comparative advantage and ensure maximum synergy.

3. Institutional capacity building

(i) *Institutional focal points:* Dedicated conflict prevention units can provide useful focal points within the donor agency. Their tasks include developing policy guidelines, initiation and coordination of conflict-relevant initiatives, and providing a pool of specialised knowledge. Within the regional departments, peacebuilding advisors can be instrumental in developing and implementing conflict prevention strategies. Interdepartmental task forces for conflict-prone regions are a useful way of achieving intra-agency co-ordination.

(ii) *Information flow and information management*: In order to react to situations of conflict in a more timely manner and with more appropriate instruments, donor agencies need to facilitate the flow of information between the field and the country delegations and headquarters. Positive incentives for reporting on conflict issues have to be found to overcome the widespread protectionist attitude towards projects. At the same time, capacity needs to be build to react to early warning signals coming from the field.

(iii) *Suitability of instruments*: The instruments (e.g. budget lines), which are used for conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, should be regularly monitored to ascertain their suitability and efficiency.

(iv) *Decision-making and project management:* The procedures for project appraisal and approval need to be streamlined to guarantee the efficient implementation of peacebuilding activities. Delays in the release of funds are particularly damaging in politically unstable situations. Sometimes, more attention is paid to pre-project controls than to effective implementation and impact. On the other hand, project management procedures should guarantee co-ordination and offer real guidance for the implementing agency. This is necessary in order to avoid duplication or the dispersal of resources over large geographical areas, to help avert negative side effects due to lack of co-ordination, and to maximise synergies between different activities. The decentralisation of decision-making to the field level is particularly recommended for conflict-prone countires, where local knowledge and swift reaction to changing situations are crucial. Reporting requirements should give equal importance to programme content as to financial accountability.

4. Human resources

(i) *Knowledge and skills:* All staff should be familiarised with the importance of conflict prevention and the main approaches developed in this field to make mainstreaming successful. Training programmes should provide basic conflict analysis and peacebuilding skills. The project approach to training has proven particularly useful as it encourages the trainees to apply their new skills to concrete professional tasks.

(ii) *Staff retention:* Many agencies experience high levels of staff turnover due to the low level of incentives provided for long-term engagement in difficult environments. This affects their capacity to build an institutional memory and draw on past experience. More secure contracting practices and better payment and career structures are required to overcome this problem.

(iii) *Staff security:* The special risk of working in conflict-prone regions and the associated pressure on staff need to be recognised. Clear security arrangements, special insurance schemes, additional leave and routine debriefing can help ease the strain on employees.

5. Partnership and co-operation

(i) Given the apparent urgency of the problems, *local capacity building and participation* are often not given priority. However, it is crucial to involve communities and local administrations in the decision-making and implementation process to achieve a sense of ownership and make peace really work. Local administrative and management capacities are also crucial to sustain initiatives after the foreign agencies have pulled out.

(ii) *Communication:* Many donors face problems in maintaining regular communications with projects. This is due both to the strong fragmentation of funding as to the poor reporting practices of some implementing agencies. Therefore, donors often miss opportunities to learn from past experience.

(iii) *Short-term perspectives:* Donors often set extremely short time horizons for the implementing agencies, which are inappropriate to the long-term task of peacebuilding. Donors should try to redress this problem by enhancing their own long-term planning capacity.

6. Learning and good practice

Peacebuilding is first of all a learning process. Existing *monitoring and evaluation* systems, however, do not take enough account of the specific character of peacebuilding work. Given its process orientation, more attention should be paid to monitoring than to evaluation. Monitoring is important to keep track of the peace process, to register changes in the peace environment and respond proactively to them, and to perceive shortcomings of the project at an early stage and address them. Monitoring (and evaluation) of conflict prevention activities should strongly integrate the "peace workers", that is the staff, partners and local groups involved in the project (NPI-A 1999). Considering the intangibility of peace processes, their knowledge and participation is indispensable to gain an understanding of the real constraints of the process, rationales for decision-making and progress achieved. In this sense, monitoring should be a learning tool that is "owned" by all participants rather than an instrument of judgement and control from outside. The complexity of peacebuilding activities can best be captured by using both process indicators and outcome indicators. Process indicators document the peace process, new initiatives and adaptations, and the learning taking place. Outcome indicators, on the other hand, measure the activities' impact and whether change has been achieved. Both sets of indicators are best used when they are defined and monitored by the people closest to the processes in question. The peace workers' expertise is indispensable in establishing process indicators and monitoring them in the course of their daily work. Actual progress towards less violence in terms of outcome indicators can best be measured when local people are asked to define indicators of conflict and its effects on their lives at the very beginning of the engagement and then assess them regularly. These data can be supplemented by more structural and macro-indicators to provide a full picture of the peace process.

7. Values and ethical guidelines

Peace work can at times pose moral dilemmas. In these situations, clear statements of an organisation's ethical orientation and central values can assist in taking tough decisions. Codes of conduct and ethical guidelines have been developed both by individual organisations (cf. International Alert Code of Conduct for Conflict Transformation Work) and by the development and humanitarian community (e.g. SPHERE project). In situations of violent conflict, such values may sometimes require to take "honourable risks" as the consequences of inaction may even be more devastating.

V. Building donor capacities for peacebuilding

Donors have begun building capacities to respond more adequately to the challenge of building peace, although different donors emphasise different aspects of the mainstreaming framework. The following gives a brief overview over what has been achieved to this point already.

1. Policies and commitment

Many donors are now laying down their commitment to conflict prevention in comprehensive *policy statements*, which spell out the donors' "working theories" about the nature of conflict and the most appropriate manner to address it. Among the most developed policy papers are the EC Communication from the Commission to the Council "The European Union and the issue of conflicts in Africa: Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and beyond" (1996), the DFID policy statements "Conflict reduction and humanitarian assistance" (1999) and "Poverty and the security sector" (1999), and the SIDA "Strategy for Conflict Management and Peace-Building" (1999). These papers provide strongly needed policy frameworks, but still require further translation into the agency's structures and processes to be of full operational use.

As part of the process of preparing these guidelines, many donors have engaged in or commissioned significant policy research. Multilaterally funded *policy research* include the work of the WIDER institute in Stockholm on the economic root causes of violent conflict, the research by the UNRISD War-Torn-Societies Project on participatory processes in post-conflict transitions, and - on a smaller scale - the action research of the Local Capacities for Peace Project on avoiding negative side effects of aid on conflict. Notable among national efforts is the research project initiated by the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation on the impact of its development assistance on the dynamics of conflict (Klingebiel et al. 1999).

2. Programming

Making a meaningful contribution to peace requires timely and reliable information about the conflict and its dynamics. This information then needs to be translated into realistic action plans, which outline a coherent strategy towards the conflict. It is probably in this strategic area that donors are advancing most at the moment.

Several donors have established close ties with universities and peace research institutes, whom they commission to conduct *in-depth research* on particular countries in conflict. Finnish researchers, for example, have just completed a thorough study of the Great Lakes conflict for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Sweden, a similar study on the conflict in Angola has been undertaken. The strength of these research projects is that they are undertaken by independent researchers, whose perspective may differ from those of the embassies and ministries. Participants in these projects said that they found the discussions and learning taking place during the research process at least as valuable as the final result.

A few donors are currently establishing internal *early warning systems*, which monitor the political developments in certain high-risk regions. Within the EC, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) is currently developing early warning mechanisms for natural disaster, which will also be of relevance to conflict situations. Most advanced among the European donors is probably the Swiss Direction for Development Co-operation, which has developed both an external and an internal conflict monitoring

system. While both of them are indicator-based, the internal system is more geared towards integrating "atmospheric" and intangible types of information, while the external system, undertaken by the Swiss Peace Foundation, rather provides "hard data". An important side effect of the internal monitoring system is to encourage field staff to think about conflict in a more systematic manner and train them in techniques of conflict analysis. Other donors are working on models and frameworks for the periodic review of conflict situations in relation to strategic planning. Such *strategic conflict analyses* focus on the macro-factors of conflict and point out entry points for conflict prevention initiatives. Such a framework is currently being developed for the European Commission under the title of "Conflict Impact Assessments" (CIAS). The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has commissioned research on a "conflict prognosis model", modelled upon existing frameworks for human rights reporting for the use of embassies. The World Bank "watching brief" assumes a similar function. As the World Bank is not operational in countries with open conflict, it is used to follow conflict developments and build a knowledge base to facilitate effective and timely World Bank intervention once the conflict is coming to an end.

The main challenge is to translate such strategic conflict analysis into a forward-looking strategic action plan, which reflects a coherent and co-ordinated approach to conflict prevention. Some donors are currently outlining the place for such a document, although little practical experience exists by now on how to draw up such a plan. Within DFID, e.g., the "*country strategy papers*", which are prepared every two or three years, are the most important policy instruments on the country-level. For countries affected by violent conflict, DFID is currently thinking about introducing the preparation of a "conflict brief" into the consultation process proceeding the preparation of the country strategy. This document would provide critical background information on the conflict, which could then be integrated into the measures envisaged in the country strategy. The German Ministry of Economic Co-operation is taking a slightly different approach. It is currently engaged in a research project on crisis analysis in development co-operation, which aims to develop conflict indicators for conflict early warning and monitoring. It is planned to integrate these indicators into the analytical and planning instruments routinely used in German development co-operation.

3. Institutional capacity

In terms of building the institutional capacities to support peace processes, donors are gradually progressing. Nearly every European donor agency now has a specialised *Conflict Unit* or employs at least a *Conflict Advisor*. These persons or units are mainly engaged in policy work and sometimes administer a specialised conflict prevention budget. The concentration of all responsibility for conflict issues within a specialised unit has not always proven very productive, however. Effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes require a closer co-operation between the Conflict Unit and regional and sectoral departments. Mainstreaming conflict would mean here to integrate more conflict advisors into the operational parts of the agency. Some donors are even trying to achieve inter-ministerial co-ordination to achieve more coherence between different foreign policy instruments. Within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, *country-specific task forces* achieve co-ordination between the foreign policy and development branches in the area of peacebuilding.

Enhanced funding arrangements and procedures are another crucial way of supporting peace work. Peacebuilding needs to more flexible funding than traditional sectors to allow swift reaction to upcoming opportunities. The funders should also factor in an increased rate of "failures" as peacebuilding work needs to take higher risks. Many donors have recognised these needs and created *peacebuilding funds* with flexible decision-making mechanisms and speedy disbursement procedures. In some organisations with a particularly high degree of bureaucracy, however, these funds have attracted "predators" which try to divert these flexible moneys for other purposes. A largely unresolved problem in financial terms is the long-term character of peace processes and the near impossibility to prove "success". Traditional project-oriented funding mechanisms are extremely inappropriate to sustain peacebuilding work as they require the artificial framing of complex processes as discrete project activities, which should lead to tangible outcomes. Funding *timeframes* are often much too short to allow the development of meaningful relationships between peacebuilding organisations and its local partners. In volatile war-peace situations, disruptions created by the expiry of project funding are even more harmful than in other circumstances. To overcome this problem, SIDA for example has developed an understanding with its core NGO partners that combines an assured multi-year commitment from SIDA with the yearly renovation of project funding.

4. Project appraisal

It was a major achievement of the discussion on "Do No Harm" that donors increasingly want to know about the potential impact of a proposed project on the dynamics of conflict and peace in an unstable region. Approaches to answer this question have largely been discussed under the heading of conflict impact assessment. At the moment, a number of donors are undertaking work on different policy tools that can help them to better appraise projects in areas at risk of violent conflict. These tools range from funding guidelines, project appraisal and evaluation criteria, and conflict-specific additions to the Logical Framework to full-blown screening procedures.

An important tool for donors to request information about the potential conflict impact of a planned project are the guidelines for project submissions (for internal use) and the *funding guidelines* (for external funding proposals). The DFID Office Instructions for project submissions of July 1997, for example, explicitly mention the need to appraise a project's contribution to conflict reduction and peacebuilding as well as to consider the overall impact of violent conflict on the project site. SIDA is currently working towards integrating conflict issues into its guidelines for NGO funding proposals. These guidelines are seen as an important tool to help improve communication between the donor and the implementing agency. Starting from the other end of the process, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considering to integrate conflict as a fourth item into its *project appraisal and evaluation criteria*, which by now include poverty, environment, and gender. This process is not an easy one, however, as there is much resistance against introducing another appraisal procedure into already cumbersome bureaucratic processes. Previous experiences with a criteria approach (e.g. for gender and environment) have also shown that it may either lead to unnecessary resource-intensive screening procedures or - more frequently - to "ticking boxes" without thorough analysis.

For this reason, many donors have realised that there is a need for operationalising such general guidelines on the programme and project level. A first starting point is the

Logframe, which has now become the standard project planning and management tool. The Swedish approach, for example, is to strengthen the Logframe, which already includes an analysis of the target groups, problems, objectives, and an assessment of enabling requirements in the project environment. It is suggested to repeat the Logframe analysis with a special focus on conflict, if serious concerns about conflict arise from the first analysis. Another way is to require the preparation of a special conflict analysis to integrate into the "assumptions" section of the Logframe.

Conflict Impact Assessment is another and largely complementary approach. Its aim is to assess the complex relationship between a proposed development intervention and (potential) violent conflict. Conflict Impact Assessment offers a systematic method to analyse a conflict situation and position a proposed or ongoing project within it. Discussions and research on Conflict Impact Assessment have been going on in several donor fora since 1998. In June 1999, CIDA presented an overview over different approaches and elements for Conflict Impact Assessment to the donor working group on post-conflict reconstruction. In terms of an operational formulation of Conflict Impact Assessment for the programme and project level, DFID is one of the most advanced donors. It has now completed a period of internal consultation on a graded screening system for projects in conflict-prone regions and is initiating trials of these tools in four pilot countries (DFID 1999c).

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Our evaluation review showed that conflict had been part of the *evaluation criteria* in only about 10% of all cases. However, as there are more and more projects, which explicitly seek to promote the reduction of violence, the protection of human rights or the reintegration of demobilised soldiers, there is a slight increase in evaluations focusing on the conflict impact of development assistance in the last years (e.g. APT UK 1998, COWI 1997). Responding to this trend, more attention is now paid to the question of how to evaluate the performance of projects aimed at conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This question has become salient both on the donor as on the field level. In 1998, CIDA published a useful research paper on "performance indicators for peacebuilding" (Laprise 1998), while on the other end of the spectrum the National Council of Churches - Kenya (NCCK) has recently convened a grassroots workshop on how to evaluate peacebuilding work (NPI-A 1999). The prerequisite for conflict-conscious evaluations, however, is that conflict prevention had been a project objective at all. While more and more donors are integrating conflict into the TOR for mid-term and end-of-project evaluations, the process of giving peace objectives to new initiatives is still progressing slowly.

As in many other areas, *long-term assessments* of the conflict impact of development assistance are rarely undertaken, so that this important body of knowledge is largely missing.

6. Documentation of good practice and institutional learning

"Good practice" is the condensation of the experience organisations have gained in a certain policy area. *Good practice guides* are usually recognised as excellent tools to promote policies since they are full of practical advice and examples of how to proceed in difficult circumstances. By now, the DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development

Co-operation (1998) is the most comprehensive of these guides. It is soon to be complemented by the ambitious "Practitioners' Manual", which is currently being prepared for the European Commission. This manual will provide guidance for choosing aid instruments to address specific conflict conditions and offer an analysis of past experience with these measures including "do's and don'ts".

7. *Human resources*

Desk officers and field staff usually possess rich practical experience in operating in conflict-affected regions, which is rarely systematised and reflected upon. Much of this experience is even lost due to high staff turnover at the field level. In an effort to mainstream conflict awareness into their organisations, both SIDA and DFID have developed participative *training* programmes. External experts provide theoretical input and act as a sounding board for the participants reflecting on their professional experience. It has proven useful to invite entire regional departments to a conflict prevention seminar, as this stimulates problem-oriented discussions, which are often taken far beyond the seminar itself.

8. *Partnership and co-operation*

In order to be effective, conflict prevention measures do not only need to correspond to the political and economic circumstances, but equally to the cultural and social conditions within the country. In certain circumstances, it may be very appropriate to build conflict prevention or resolution measures on traditional ways of conflict management. These ways are often poorly understood, however. These questions have attracted relatively little interest from donors, although they play an important role in the everyday work of field staff.

Donors are dealing with this challenge in different ways. There is a preference for funding agencies with *long-term local experience*, as it is assumed that they have built sufficient local knowledge and cultural sensitivity. This assumption is rarely tested, however. Another step has been to *devolve authority for funding decisions* to embassies and country representations as they are closer to local realities and therefore better able to judge the appropriateness of proposed interventions. In the case of the Danish Transitional Assistance to South Africa, for example, the Dutch embassy could allocate 10% of the substantial budget of 750 million DKK. This contributed markedly to the flexibility, creativity and courage, with which the whole programme was undertaken.

There have also been efforts to *strengthen local capacities for social and cultural analysis* and to translate them into policy recommendations. Sweden, for example, has provided support to social science research centres in Central America, which played an important role in formulating new visions for the future of their war-torn societies. Finland is currently proposing the establishment of an African Peace Academy, which would provide Africans with the opportunity to share and reflect on their diverse experiences with conflict and its resolution and explore African ways of conflict management.

VI. Policy Recommendations

This brief review of recent initiatives and experiences in the field of conflict and development highlights the following areas, in which more work still needs to be done.

1. *Integration of a conflict prevention perspective into all development and humanitarian assistance to a conflict-prone area:* No intervention in a conflict environment can be neutral. Therefore, aid agencies should not only try to minimise any potential negative impact of their presence and work on the conflict ("do no harm"), but integrate conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives into all forms of assistance to such areas. This means to target development and humanitarian assistance at the root causes of conflict and support peace initiatives. Conflict prevention can be strengthened by the coherent use of a range of foreign policy instruments and a critical reflection on the extra-developmental aims of aid.

2. *Building institutional capacity to respond to the threat of conflict and support peace processes:* Despite considerable progress in this area, there is still much scope for both donors and NGOs to strengthen their capacities to respond to the challenge of conflict prevention. Conflict and peace work poses specific demands on the way, in which development and humanitarian agencies usually function. Concrete measures to respond to this task have been discussed in sections IV and V. Building institutional memory and building on past experience play a central role for agencies to enhance their response capacity.

3. *Local ownership of peace processes:* Peace processes can only be sustainable when they are led or at least supported by the peace stakeholders themselves. External intervention is most effective when it provides assistance to ongoing local or national processes. For this, agencies need to listen to and engage with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. This can be achieved by building on local analytical capacities, stakeholder consultations, inclusive planning processes and participatory monitoring and learning systems.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Table 1: Mainstreaming conflict prevention and peacebuilding among major donors

Institution	Institutional Capacity	Policy Frameworks	Policy Tools	Policy Instruments
OECD/DAC	Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development	"Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century", 1998	n/a	n/a
European Commission	DG I, DG Ia, DG Ib, DG VIII ECHO Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (from 1999) Quality Support Group Conflict Prevention Network	"The European Union and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa", 1996 "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development", 1996 "Democratisation, Rule of Law, Respect for Human Rights and Good Governance", 1998 "Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Resolution", 1998	Inter-Service Consultations (RELEX) Logical Framework/Project Cycle Conflict Impact Assessment Practitioner's Manual Early Warning methodologies Training programme "Conflict Prevention in Africa"	Regional Aid Policy Frameworks (Lomé, PHARE, TACIS, MEDA, ALA) Specialised budget lines (e.g. rehabilitation, refugees) ECHO emergency assistance
World Bank	Post-Conflict Unit Global Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Network Operations Evaluation Department World Bank Institute	"Articles of Agreement", amended 1989 "Post-Conflict Reconstruction. The Role of the World Bank", 1998	Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) Eligibility Criteria for Post-Conflict Assistance Performance Indicators Watching Brief Process Transitional Support Strategy Process (TSS) Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) Conflict Assessment Impact Analysis (CAIA) Evaluation Research Staff training	IBRD Loans IDA Credits Learning and Innovation Loans Post-Conflict Fund Japanese Post-Conflict Fund Trust Funds
OSCE	High Commission on	Helsinki Final Act (1975)	n/a	Fact-finding and rapporteur

	National Minorities Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Conflict Prevention Centre	Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) Document-Charter on European Security (1996) Helsinki II Summit: "The Challenge of Change", 1999		missions Long-term missions Ad hoc steering groups Mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes Peacekeeping operations
Belgian Administration for Development Co-operation (Belgium)	Department for Evaluation and Policy Development, Conflict and Peace Unit	n/a	Country Strategy Paper Internal Coordination Meetings Conflict Impact Assessment (in preparation)	Post-Conflict Fund Advocacy Work on Light Weapons and Arms Trade
DFAIT/CIDA (Canada)	Peacebuilding and Human Security Division (DFAIT) International Humanitarian Assistance Division (CIDA) Pearson Institute Peacekeeping Centre	"Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative Strategic Framework", 1999	Policy Framework Regional Strategy Country Planning Strategic Document Risk/Conflict Analysis Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment	Bi- and multilateral programmes Partnership programmes (NGOs) Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative Peacebuilding Fund (CIDA) Peacebuilding Program (DFAIT) Peacekeeping Missions
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Denmark)	Intra-Governmental Committee on Peace Issues Peace and Stability Secretariat	in preparation	Sector programmes Logical Framework Project Appraisal Criteria Planning Guidelines Poverty Assessment	Development Assistance Peace and Stability Fund Assistance to Eastern Europe and the FSU (esp. Baltics) Peacekeeping Missions
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Finland)	Department for Development Co-operation, Department for Political Affairs/Security Policy Advisor for Conflict Issues and Democracy	"Finland's Policy on Relations with Developing Countries", Oct. 1998	Country Strategy Guidelines for Programme Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, 1998 TOR for Evaluations Research cooperation with Finnish universities	Target Country Programmes Humanitarian Assistance (special funds for conflict prevention) Democracy Funds Peacekeeping Missions
Ministry for Economic Co-operation (Germany)	Conflict Prevention Advisor	"Development co-operation and crisis prevention", 1997 updated version in preparation	Crisis analysis in development co-operation (Framework), 1998 Pilot evaluation of "Impact of Development Co-operation in Crisis Situations", 1999	Country Programmes Sectoral Programmes

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands)	Directorate for Humanitarian Assistance and Crisis Management, Division for Conflict Prevention and Management	"Poverty Framework"	Country Task Forces Country Policy Frameworks "Conflict Prognosis Model" Project Appraisal and Evaluation Criteria	Conflict Prevention Fund (within Humanitarian Assistance budget) Peace Aid (flexible, high-risk) Sector/Programme Funding
Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Norway)		"Norwegian Humanitarian Assistance", Jan. 1999 Democracy-Building in Peace Processes (forthcoming)		Peacebuilding focus within Humanitarian Assistance Advocacy work on small arms and anti-personnel mine ban convention
SIDA (Sweden)	Division for Humanitarian Assistance, Dept. for Co-operation with NGO and Humanitarian Assistance Advisor for Conflict Management	"Strategy for Conflict Management and Peace-Building", 1999 "Justice and Peace. SIDA's Programme for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights", 1997	Project Appraisal Criteria Conflict Analysis (macro) Impact Analysis (LogFrame) Conflict Prevention Evaluation Criteria (in preparation)	Conflict prevention part of humanitarian budget Staff training
Fed. Dept. of Foreign Affairs (Switzerland)	Political Direction, Section for Peace Policy Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	"Beyond the Relief-Development Continuum", 1997 "Report of the Federal Council on Swiss Foreign Policy in the 1990s"	Working Group "Conflict Prevention and Conflict Mediation" Country Strategy Conflict Monitoring and Analysis Tools (FAST, EPUM)	Contingency Management System Target Country Programmes Budget line for peace promoting activities
DfID (UK)	Conflict & Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD), Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Section	"Conflict reduction and humanitarian assistance", 1999 "Poverty and the security sector", 1999	Country Strategy Paper Conflict Impact Assessment (in preparation)	Regional Programmes CHAD Budget Staff Training

(Source: own interviews)