



EVALUATING CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES

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A Joint Project of the DAC Networks on Development Evaluation & on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation

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When violent conflict breaks out, development is derailed and the human, societal and financial costs are high. With an increasing share of aid resources being allocated to conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions, there is a growing interest amongst the donor community to learn what works, what does not work and why. Still, there is also recognition of the obstacles faced by those undertaking evaluations in conflict settings. Assessing and demonstrating the impacts of work in this field remains a challenge.

In response to this challenge, two Networks of the OECD-DAC, working on conflict and on evaluation, initiated a process to develop guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. Improved evaluation practice will enable systematic learning, which will in turn enhance the effectiveness of donor investments. It will assist experts and implementing organisations in improving the quality of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work and thereby contribute to preventing violent conflicts and securing the pre-conditions for sustainable development.

WHY IS GUIDANCE NEEDED?

Evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities poses unique challenges. For instance, work 'in' and 'on' conflict involves activities that differ from well established development operations and takes place in highly politicised environments. Access to reliable data is scarce and misinformation is rife. The evaluation process itself may have unintended consequences by influencing the behaviour of conflict protagonists. Because of these and other obstacles, guidance is needed to help improve evaluation techniques in this rapidly evolving field.

WHY PREVENTING CONFLICT AND BUILDING PEACE IS IMPORTANT:

The World Health Organisation estimates that each year about 700,000 people are killed by violence or die in armed conflicts around the world. Hundreds of thousands more are displaced from their homes or die from the hunger and poverty that so often follow armed conflicts.¹ In addition to the 17 major armed conflicts currently raging,² violence affects people in many countries all over the world.

Not only is the human cost of conflict devastating but its impacts on political, social and economic development are profound. The benefits of development assistance can be reversed by violent conflict, which is not only an accompaniment of poverty but is one of its main causes.

With the presence of open conflict in a country, economic growth declines an average of 2.2% per year.³ The approximate cost of a "typical" civil war, measured by lost GDP and reduced human health, has been estimated at between US \$4 and \$54 billion.⁴ Worldwide military spending per year has reached approximately \$1204 billion.⁵

Meanwhile, in 2006 OECD member countries spent about \$6 billion on peace work, through official development assistance and the funding of UN peacekeeping missions.⁶

WHAT ARE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING?

The terms conflict prevention and peacebuilding are used in this guidance to describe a fast-developing field that covers four broad areas of intervention: equitable socio-economic development, good governance, the reform of security and justice institutions and truth and reconciliation processes. Conflict prevention activities share the goal of averting the outbreak of violence. Peacebuilding work focuses on reducing or ending violent conflict and/or promoting a culture of peace. A few examples, amongst many, of activities that would benefit from this guidance include police training in human rights, bias-reduction education, land dispute mediations, or a road construction project involving opposing groups. An indicative list of work themes within these four areas is detailed below.⁷

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GOOD GOVERNANCE	REFORM OF JUSTICE & SECURITY INSTITUTIONS	CULTURE OF TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION
Balanced physical reconstruction	Civil society development	Security sector reform (police, military, intelligence)	Enhancing non-violent dispute resolution systems
Sound and equitable economic management	Freedoms of expression association, press	Small arms and light weapons reduction	Dialogue among conflicting groups
Equitable distribution of development benefits	Media development	Nonviolent accompaniment	Prejudice reduction or diversity training
Gender equality	Power sharing	Community policing	Trauma healing
Equitable access to services	Participatory processes	Peacekeeping	Conflict resolution skills training
Repatriation/reintegration of displaced persons	Improved access	Nonviolent observers	Peace education
Sustainable use of (and equitable access to) natural resources	Democratisation	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants	Transitional justice
	Electoral processes	De-mining	War crimes trials
	Transparency and accountability		Raparations
	Anti-corruption and good governance programs		
	Human rights protection		
	Rule of law		

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES, STRUCTURES, RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOURS ⁸

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluation assesses the merit and worth of an activity. It offers a systematic and objective appraisal of **relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency**. This learning process helps ascertain the quality of policies and programmes, enhance performance, identify good practices and define appropriate standards. Strong evaluations not only help ensure accountability and achievement of outcomes, but can lead to more effective peacebuilding and conflict prevention policies and programmes.

Key questions for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities and policies include:

- **RELEVANCE:** Does the intervention relate in a meaningful way to current, key driving factors of the (potential) conflict? Are the assumptions or theory of change on which the activity is based logical or sensible in this context at this time? Are outputs consistent with the objectives of reducing or preventing conflict?
- **EFFICIENCY:** Are/were activities cost efficient? Is this the most efficient way to contribute to peace? Compare costs: what a war would have cost had it happened vs. the cost of this particular approach to prevention.
- **IMPACT:** What happened as a result of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity? Why? What were the positive and negatives changes produced, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended? In this field, the focus may be on impacts on the conflict: how did the intervention impact key conflict actors or affect on-going conflict-creating or peace-promoting factors?
- **EFFECTIVENESS:** To what extent were the objectives achieved? What factors contributed to achievements?
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Will benefits be maintained after donor support has ended? Has the intervention addressed the role of “spoilers” (those who benefit from on-going conflict) or attempted to engage the “hard-to-reach” (combatants, extremists, men, etc.)? Do locals have ownership of the activity or programme, where possible? Have durable, long-term processes, structures and institutions for peacebuilding been created?
- **COHERENCE:** How does the activity relate to other policy instruments (trade, migration, diplomacy, military)? Are different efforts undermining each other? What are the costs or impacts of coordination?

WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

This guidance is designed to fit the intersecting needs of practitioners in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, who may have limited familiarity with evaluation practices, and evaluators, who may have limited experience with evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. It has been developed for donor policy staff and desk officers, at headquarters and in the field, responsible for conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes, policies, and projects; and for evaluation managers and consultants. The audience also includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations, United Nations organisations and other development agencies working in conflict affected regions. In addition, this guidance will be relevant to practitioners in partner countries, partner governments and academics.

GUIDANCE FOR EFFECTIVELY EVALUATING CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES WILL:

Support evaluators and those commissioning evaluations by:

- providing more clarity on key emerging concepts in this field;
- suggesting techniques for the use of current and complete conflict analyses, to help strengthen evaluation of the relevance of activities in a particular conflict context;
- demonstrating the importance of assessing assumptions about how peace can be achieved (theories of change);
- stimulating critical thinking about, and strategies for, demonstrating impacts on key conflict and peace dynamics;
- specifying how the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance can be adapted to this field;
- furnishing advice and principles on how to evaluate ethically and successfully in conflict environments; and
- providing guidance on dealing with common problems in this field, including: contradictory and/or unavailable data; dangerous and rapidly evolving contexts; a lack of clearly defined objectives for these activities; a lack of consensus on effective strategies; and partner government involvement in the conflict.

Help conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners and policy makers by:

- promoting the use of evaluation, as well as monitoring, as tools to improve learning and accountability, and ultimately enhance the effectiveness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions;
- encouraging rigorous analysis and critical thinking about what actually contributes to peace and what does not;
- providing lessons about operational design, beyond those provided through audit and monitoring;
- helping to refine theories about the causes and dynamics of conflict, which will in turn lead to better designed interventions;
- providing specific tips on drafting Terms of Reference and picking effective teams for conflict, peace and security activity evaluations;
- supporting more strategic approaches that link programmes, policies and projects;
- promoting harmonisation of donor assistance; and
- encouraging coordination and coherence amongst the various government entities including security, military, trade, private, development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding fields.

Empower and protect citizens by:

- reducing violence and suffering through more effective peacebuilding initiatives;
- improving accountability and transparency in both donor and recipient governments;
- promoting participation of local people to learn about and have a say in conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, particularly among women and marginalised groups (based upon a full analysis of stakeholders and their objectives); and
- enhancing development effectiveness of tax money spent on donor funded conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ONGOING WORK OF THE DAC NETWORKS:

This initiative builds on DAC's *Guidance on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (2001) and on *Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation* (1998), which broke ground in providing direction for development co-operation work on conflict, peace and security. A working draft of the guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities has been developed in consultation with lead DAC Network members and experts and was printed in late 2007 for a test application phase. During the application phase all those interested are encouraged to use the guidance in evaluations of conflict prevention or peacebuilding work and report to the DAC Secretariat on their experiences. This feedback will be integrated and the guidance approved, published and disseminated widely (in hard copy and via internet) to practitioners, evaluators, policy makers, programme staff and others. The current document *Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Working draft for application period* can be found on the website www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork.

FURTHER READING FROM THE OECD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE:

- Visit the online Development Evaluation Resource Centre, DEReC: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork/derec
- DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance (2007) www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork
- DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management (2002) - now available in twelve languages <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>
- DAC Evaluation Quality Standards for test phase (March, 2007) <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/62/36596604.pdf>
- DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (OECD 2001) www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/preventionguidelines
- OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform (OECD 2007) www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/if-ssr
- DAC Guidelines on Security System Reform and Governance (OECD 2005) www.oecd.org/dac/conflict/ssr
- DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations (OECD 2007) <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf>
- Gender Tip sheet on Evaluation (DAC Working Party on Gender Equality 1997) <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/2/13/1896352.pdf>
- Guidance on Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies (OECD 1999) <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/50/2667294.pdf>

1 World Health Organisation (2002, 2004) World Health Reports 2002, 2004.

2 Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (2007, page 4) Yearbook 2007 Armaments, disarmament and international security. SIPRI; Bromma. This figure covers conflicts that resulted in more than 1,000 battle related deaths in 2006 and comprises: Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, India (Kashmir), Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Philippines (Mindanao), Peru, Russia (Chechnya), Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, and the USA.

3 Collier and Hoeffler (2004) "The Challenge of Reducing the Global Incidence of Civil War". The Copenhagen Consensus Papers; Copenhagen.

4 Ibid.

5 SIPRI (2007, page 12)

6 The ODA portion of the estimated figure includes only development assistance spent directly on conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions as classified by the DAC. Development Assistance Directorate, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2006).

7 The categories were modified and agreed to by members of the DAC Networks at a workshop in Oslo, 2006 and are based on the "Utstein Palette" in Smith, Dan (2004) "Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together, Overview of the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding". The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Peace Research Institute; Oslo.

8 International Alert, (2007, page 6) "Acting on commitments: How EU strategies and programming can better prevent violent conflict". International Alert, Saferworld and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office.

WHO ARE THE DAC NETWORKS?

The two Networks are subsidiary bodies of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The **Network on Development Evaluation** [<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation>] works to increase the effectiveness of international development programmes by supporting robust, informed and independent evaluation. The **Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation** [<http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict>] is an international forum for conflict prevention and peacebuilding experts from bilateral and multilateral development agencies, who meet to define and develop common approaches in support of peace.