PEACE and CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PCIA) HANDBOOK

Version 2.2 September 2005

**A CONFLICT PREVENTION AND
POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION
(CPR) NETWORK RESOURCE**

This Handbook works best when it is printed double-sided.

About the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Network

The Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (CPR) Network is an informal network of senior managers of bilateral donor countries and multilateral agencies dealing with the complex issues of conflict management and response. It arose out of an interest by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) members of the Conflict, Peace, and Development Task Force to continue the process of sharing knowledge and experience in good practice in field operations that could serve as a guide to those working in the CPR.

The CPR Network meets approximately every six months, and consists of donors and UN agencies with operational response capabilities in conflict prevention and mitigation. It is an informal network that has been established for international donor collaboration to allow for the formulation of strategies for improved operational effectiveness in global peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The group's work is consistent with, and builds upon, that of the DAC Conflict, Peace, and Development Network.

The strength of the self-motivated CPR Network of peace practitioners is in its focus on the practical, operational issues of responding to emerging or current conflict situations. By broad consensus, the group is kept small and the meeting is informal. It has also been the practice that attendance is at a senior decision-making level.

The objectives of the CPR Network include:

- Operational collaboration (at country/regional level).
- Sharing information, knowledge, and experience (practical lessons).
- Improving effectiveness and innovation of CPR programming.
- Development of practical tools.
- Development of lessons learned and applying them in the field.
- Collaborative mobilization/deployment of resources (human and financial).
- Bridging between policy/research and operations.
- Discussing/determining choices (rather than priorities) for selecting countries or situations in which to undertake joint engagement (possibly common programs).
- Collaboration on training and developing donor capacity to respond.

It is as a contribution toward these objectives that this Handbook was prepared and training workshops were organized for common-conflict analysis and response identification for CPR Network members. (www.cprnet.net)

Acknowledgments

Introduction

It is broadly recognised that stability and peace are prerequisites for poverty alleviation and a successful development process – and that sustainable development, when successfully pursued, reinforces human security, stability, and peace. Years of investment in development projects have been destroyed because of violent conflict, and decades of development gains can be wiped out by one civil war. Many developing countries are fragile though they may not be experiencing violent conflict, and the engagement of outside actors, even in seemingly-unrelated sectors, is likely to have a significant impact on the way that a country's political, social, and economic tensions evolve or are resolved.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has identified an irrefutable link between conflict, peace, and development, and a Policy Statement and Guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and Development, issued in May 1997, clearly placed peacebuilding and conflict prevention on the development agenda. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without being sensitive to the tensions that divide communities. The DAC Guidelines also advocate that efforts should be made to 'mainstream' conflict-sensitive skills throughout development programs, particularly in fragile states. This Handbook is a response to that recommendation.

It is unlikely that the majority of development assistance programs will be converted to work directly ON the root causes of conflict. It is important, however, to ensure that the engagement of outside actors is conflict-sensitive so that programs are consciously designed to work IN conflict and not AROUND it. DAC studies show that the influence of aid in fragile states can be significant – it can exacerbate community tensions and do harm if special care is not taken.

This Handbook is aimed at improving the understanding and skills for conflict-sensitive programming. It will assist in preparing participants to conduct Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments, as well as to identify and design conflict-sensitive options and programs. It is designed for those who wish to ensure that the impact of their engagement will, as a minimum 'do no harm', and as an optimum, have a positive effect on the conflict dynamics of the community in which the project is taking place.

This Handbook is intended for development practitioners, but also applies to non-development actors (i.e. diplomatic, political, security, trade, finance) to identify possible areas for action. The Handbook is ideally used in a workshop setting, but may also be used as a guide for a mission assessment, or working alone. The quality of the analysis depends very much on the individuals or groups that have been assembled, and the questions one asks. Analysis, which reflects the inputs and priorities of local actors, is the optimum approach.

How to Use This Handbook

The aim of this Handbook is to facilitate the design of conflict-sensitive approaches to potentially fragile communities. Through an assessment of a community profile, and impact profiles, development practitioners will be able to make strategic choices and define entry points for engagement which are sensitive to the rich tapestry or relationships and undercurrents which exist in every community.

This Handbook is divided into 3 Parts. Each step has within it an identified objective, definitions of terms used in the tables, questions to stimulate discussion, and an accompanying table. Together, these steps help complete the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment Framework. The various steps are briefly described below:

Part 1 consists of the **Profile Tools** to help users understand the underlying currents and the context in which they work (Tables 1-5).
Part 2 consists of the **Impact Tools** that allow for the assessment of the possible impacts of engagement in order to help users consider the causes and effects that may lead to unintended negative impacts, and identify unforeseen opportunities (Tables 6-8)
Part 3 provides **Decision Tools** to consolidate the unintended impacts of a project, and to identify how the project can address the harm or pursue a new opportunity to benefit people. (Table 9)

The Handbook serves as a stand-alone version of material that has been assembled from many sources including multiple applications in the field.

Part 1: Community Profile

Objective - To stimulate discussion amongst those who are planning to engage with potentially fragile communities in order to develop an understanding of their various components and undercurrents.

Rationale - Profile Tools can be used at any time before a project commences or when it is operational. They aim to strengthen the understanding of the context in which participants work. The Profile Tools use Political, Economic, Social/Cultural, Security, and Regional/International lenses.

In order to analyse a community profile, three areas need to be tackled: (a) what are the issues (indicators) that underpin and drive community tensions? (b) What are the factors (indicators) that put a brake on rising tensions and serve as the basis for peace? (c) Who are the main stakeholders involved in the community?

- ❑ Conflict indicators can be identified at various levels (manifestations, proximate and root causes of conflict).
- ❑ Similarly, peace indicators can be identified at various levels (ongoing peace efforts, structures and processes in place, and peacebuilding gaps).
- ❑ Stakeholder dynamics can be understood by reviewing actions, agendas/needs, and alliances.

Assumptions - This Profile Tool is a 'light' version of conflict analysis and is not an in-depth conflict diagnostic. It is understood, that assessing the context of underlying dynamics in the community is a prerequisite for determining the impact of projects (i.e. water, agriculture). It is necessary to do at least a light version of a conflict-peace analysis for this purpose.

Political Lens - Development has traditionally considered itself politically agnostic and has avoided political partisanship; however, extensive studies, including those of the OECD/DAC Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development indicate that all aid, at all times, has a political impact, whether intended or not. As a result, development actors are moving to more deliberate consideration of political impacts in order to assess all the relevant issues that may affect the success of the project. The Political Profile should consider the political and social groups in the community, political power and discrimination, and political rights and freedoms.

Economic, Social and Cultural Lens – Economic and social development are traditional comfort zones for development projects and recently have become more holistic in their approaches. Rather than focussing on one sector, relationships and synergies amongst these sectors are recognised. Even with new approaches, however, there are unintended impacts across sectors to consider. External actors need to be prepared to look at impacts that are outside the intended scope of the project. A profile in this lens considers economic assets and deficits in the community, social attitudes, cultural practices, and coping mechanisms.

Security Lens – The security situation in a community can hinder the success of new initiatives if they are not understood. Conversely, the introduction of new resources into communities that are resource-hungry can cause tensions if not handled carefully. Consideration of security issues can help external actors think about whether their interventions will strengthen or weaken the security of individuals or groups in the community. A profile in this lens should consider inter-community conflict, conflict between groups in the community, and the ability of the community to resolve conflicts.

Rights & Responsibilities – Once a profile of the community has been conducted, it is possible to reassemble the information to identify the key issues that need to be considered, analyse the actions, attitudes and structures that support the concern, and identify who or what is responsible for the situation.

Scenarios & Objectives - are developed by assessing trends in key conflict/peace indicators, as well as amongst stakeholders. Once these trends are understood, it is possible to make a judgment on where "things are going" by weighing up conflict and peace indicators, and stakeholder developments.

The additional value of scenarios is that they are easily translated into overall objectives, thus "rooting" project objectives in reality. As such, an optimal objective can focus on realizing a best-case scenario and contingency objectives focused on avoiding—and being prepared for—a worst-case scenario.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

GEOGRAPHY

Location:	
Area	
Climate:	
Terrain:	
Natural resources:	
Land use/water use:	Arable land: % Permanent Crops: % Other:
Environment issues:	i.e. Deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; poaching and habitat destruction threatens wildlife populations; water pollution; inadequate potable water

POPULATION

Population:	
Age structure:	0-14 years: % (male ; female) 15-64 years: % (male ; female) 65 years and over: % (male ; female)
Ethnic groups:	%
Religions:	%; Traditional %; Other %
Languages:	
Literacy:	Definition: age 15 and over can read and write Total population: % Male: % Female: %

GOVERNMENT

Region name:	
Capital:	
Legal system:	
Political parties and leaders:	
Local Governance Structure:	• Court (judges, traditional dispute resolution systems) • Local government authorities • Local decision-making • Military, Police, security structures and processes
Political pressure groups and leaders:	• Key actors, individuals • Labour organizations • Business organizations • Youth organisations • Women's organisations • Farmers • Environmental lobby
Other:	• Type of labour • Livelihoods • Employment • Social services available (health, schools, electricity, water)

PROJECT OUTLINE	
Start date	
Where it is located? On whose land?	
What is the project objective?	
Current status of the project (planned, operational, completed)	
Who initiated the project?	
Contractor(s) Contracting process	
History of community reaction to the project	
Other projects in the community related to the current project	
Local content/ ownership/ management and sustainability	
What are the main resources/benefits generated by the project?	
Has the project generated any conflicts in the community?	

Step 1: Conflict Profile

Objective
To understand the history of tensions in the community, their causes, and what fuels them; to identify the priority issues (root causes) of the tensions and identify the priorities for action.

Definitions
Manifestations: Easily identifiable occurrences (what you see) that indicate unrest in the society. Examples may be civil unrest, high unemployment, marginalisation of ethnic or religious groups, refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing, corruption, etc.

Proximate Causes: Factors that accentuate and make more severe the underlying causes of conflict. They can support or create the conditions for violent conflict, and are time-wise closer to the outbreak of armed violence. They may change over time. Examples may be poor personal security, availability of weapons, increase in the poverty level, shocks, etc.

Root Causes: Structural or underlying causes of conflict. They are necessary, but not sufficient, causes of violence, and are mostly static, changing slowly over time. Examples may be poor governance, absence of the rule of law, lack of respect for fundamental rights, ethnic diversity, colonial history, etc.

Conflict Synergies: There is no single cause of a conflict. Factors vary in importance and can reinforce each other. Conflict analysis must involve assessing the relative importance of various conflict factors and their interrelationship. The combined effect of conflict factors produces an effect that enhances or reinforces the effect of individual conflict factors.

Process
Left-to-Right logic applies to this Table. Identify a manifestation of tensions first, then burrow down through proximate and root causes. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available to get a broad overview of the context of tensions in the community. Identify synergies last, as reinforcing relationships become apparent.

Key Questions for Manifestations:
- What are the indicators of tension in the community?
- What are the stated reasons for the tensions or conflict?
- Are there tensions within the community or between communities?
- Are there indications of civil unrest, high unemployment, corruption?
- How do these tensions directly impact community members?
- Are there groups that face political, economic or social discrimination?
- Are people leaving their homes because of rising violence?
- Do the indicators selected reflect the concerns of various sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, children, rich) and the vulnerable?

Key Questions for Proximate Causes
- What are the factors that give rise to, or support the tensions?
- How have existing political processes and institutions fuelled tensions?
- What are the mechanisms that people use to voice their political views?
- How is competition for resources managed? What inequities exist?
- To what extent is identity manipulated for political or economic gain?
- What legal institutions, formal or informal, including dispute resolution mechanisms exist? Have they played a role in the tensions?
- Is the delivery of social services declining or improving?
- Are there systems that support the availability of small arms?

Key Questions for Root Causes
- Legitimacy of the state
  - Does the community participate politically in fair elections?
  - What is the level of citizen representation or degree of decentralisation?
- Rule of Law
  - How strong is the judicial system?
  - Does the law protect people equally and fairly? Do they have rights to a fair trial that treats them as innocent until proven guilty?
  - Is there biased law application and enforcement?
  - Does civilian power control the military system?
- Respect for fundamental rights
  - Is there evidence of social exclusion or marginalisation of ethnic groups,
  - Are political, civil and religious rights respected?
- Active civil society and media
  - How free are people to express their political or ideological opinions or practice the religion of their choice?
  - How free are people to gather to share ideas or form groups?
  - Are effective dispute resolution mechanisms absent?
- Sound economic management
  - Are inequities related to particular identity groups?
  - Are there unique historical legacies, or issues surrounding the distribution of economic, social, or political resources?

	TABLE 1 CONFLICT PROFILE			
Left to Right	**Manifestations**	**Proximate Causes**	**Root Causes**	**Conflict Synergies**
Political	*What are the easily identifiable occurrences (what you see) that indicate unrest in the community /country?*	*What are the factors that accentuate and make more severe the underlying causes of conflict? They can create the conditions for armed conflict*	*What are the structural or underlying causes of conflict?*	*What are the root causes of tension that combine to enhance or reinforce the effect of individual conflict factors? Paying attention to these synergies may identify key targets for containment or prevention.*
Economic				
Social				
Security				
Regional/ internat'l				

STEP 2: Peace Profile

Objective

To understand what factors can contribute to a sustained peace, reduce the incidence of violence, or prevent the outbreak of violent conflict.

Definitions

Ongoing Peace Efforts: Easily identifiable manifestations or occurrences (what you see, the evidence) that indicate that non-violent solutions are being sought, i.e. groups advocating non-violence, media promoting tolerance, etc.

Peace Structures and Processes in Place: Structures or processes in place for dealing with unrest or violence, and sustaining peace may include: traditional courts, inter-village meetings, a process where elders meet, etc. The mechanisms put in place specifically for dealing with the conflict may include truth commissions, tribunals, etc., or systemic supports that uphold peace or reduce the "conflict carrying capacity" of society such as the existence of rules governing relations between villages and groups, a culture of tolerance, etc.

Peacebuilding Gaps: Regional or international political, economic, social, and security initiatives requiring attention to sustain peace that are not currently being undertaken either from domestic or external actors. What or who could spoil the peace?

Peacebuilding Synergies: There is no single precondition for sustainable peace. Factors vary in importance and can reinforce each other. Peace analysis must involve assessing the relative importance of the various peace efforts and opportunities and their interrelationships. The combined effect of a number of peace factors can produce an effect that enhances or reinforces the effect of individual peace factors. Paying attention to peace synergies may identify key targets for support in the pursuit of peace.

Process

Left-to-Right logic applies to this Table. First, identify a manifestation of peace, and then identify whether there are processes or structures in place to support sustainable peace, or if gaps exist. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available. Identify synergies last as the reinforcing relationships become apparent.

Key questions for Ongoing Peace Efforts

- Are there groups seeking non-violence or calling for meetings?
- What is the public media saying? Are there independent, private messaging sources?
- Are there groups calling for negotiations, including civil society?

Key questions for Structures and Processes in Place

- Have parties agreed to demobilise their forces or turn in their arms?
- Is there demonstrated commitment on the part of the major conflicting parties to implement a settlement?
- What are the incentives and disincentives to pursue non-violence? Are central actors getting what they want? How much of a threat to peace are those actors who did not get what they wanted?
- What would it take to placate these interests in the short, medium, and long term?
- What degree of consensus exists among political actors and stakeholders? What is the consensus based upon?
- Have trends emerged during the process of discussions or negotiations? Do these trends have any 'predictive' value?
- Are there processes that have been used which appear to have led to some problem resolution? Are these processes worth repeating?
- What are the forms of conflict resolution, and judicial enforcement relied upon by the community, both legal/judicial or traditional?
- Have you considered indicators at all levels (local, national, international)?

Key Questions for Peacebuilding Gaps

- Are there peace-promoting initiatives that are not being undertaken that need attention?
- Are there sufficient a resource devoted to peace promotion (the positives), or is more energy devoted to the conflict (the negatives)?
- What or who can spoil the peace?

TABLE 2 PEACE PROFILE				
Left to Right	**Ongoing Peace Efforts**	**Structures & Processes in Place**	**Peacebuilding Gaps**	**Peacebuilding Synergies**
Political	*What are the identifiable manifestations (what you see) that indicate that non-violent solutions, or peace are being sought?*	*What are the structures or processes in place for dealing with community tensions or sustaining peace?*	*What initiatives require attention to sustain peace that are not currently being undertaken? What or who could spoil the peace?*	*What are the peace factors which combine to enhance or reinforce the effect of individual peace factors? Paying attention to peace synergies may identify key targets for support in the pursuit of peace.*
Economic				
Social				
Security				
Regional/ Internati'l				

STEP 3: Stakeholder Profile

Objective

To understand the potential and actual motivations of various stakeholders and the actions they may take to further their respective interests.

Definitions

Stakeholders: Primary, secondary, and external parties to the conflict. These actors represent the groups and/or individuals with a stake in maintaining the conflict and/or building peace.
Actions: Easily identifiable manifestations or occurrences (what you see, the evidence) of efforts made/activities undertaken by various stakeholders to promote peace or conflict.
Agendas/needs: The vested interests of key stakeholders in maintaining the conflict or working toward peace - opposing or overlapping requirements affected by the conflict or peace. e.g. access to land for pastoralist groups, or medical supplies for guerrillas. Note: wants are different than needs, and some stakeholders have legitimate needs or grievances against authorities..
Stakeholder Synergies: Actors can vary in importance and reinforce each other. Stakeholder analysis should assess the relative importance of the various actors and interrelationships. The combined effect of stakeholders can produce an effect that enhances, or reinforces, the effect of individual actors. Synergies can exist without being consciously pursued. Paying attention to synergies between the actors may identify key targets for support or preventive action.

Process
Left-right logic applies to this Table. First, identify a stakeholder, then plot their actions, their agendas (what they want), needs, and alliances. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available. Identify synergies last as the reinforcing relationships become apparent.

Key questions for Stakeholders
- Consider all stakeholders (political, economic, social, and security), and race, colour, tribe, caste, language or ethnic group
- Consider relevant government, military and civil society leaders as well as communities or groups, and latent actors

- Do the stakeholders selected reflect the concerns of various sectors of the population (women, elderly, poor, children, rich, etc.)? Are there stakeholders who have no voice or are difficult to hear?
- How do they define themselves? What are the core identity features?
- Who are the real leaders of these groups - politicians, soldiers, religious leaders, intellectuals? Are they representative? Do they hold legitimate authority?
- Have the key actors changed over time?
- Consider stakeholders at all levels (local, national, international)?
- Consider the importance of historic, present, and future stakeholders?

Key questions for Actions
- How do the key actors mobilise (i.e. via political parties, armies)?
- Do they hold political power or are they subject to discrimination?

Key questions for Agendas and Needs
- What are the central interests and incentives of different actors?
- *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)?
- What factions or reformist elements exist within identity groups? Are these groups homogeneous or not? Are there spoilers opposed to peace? How great a threat do they pose?
- What are the principle alignments, and do they conform to major social cleavages? Are they diffuse, shifting or stable? What is their base?
- Did central actors get what they wanted? How much of a threat to peace are those actors who did not get what they wanted?
- Are your stakeholders reflective only of the current phase of the conflict? Consider whether other phases are relevant.

Key questions for Capacities and Vulnerabilities
- What capacities do the stakeholders have to support conflict or peace or otherwise affect it?
- Which individuals/groups have power/influence?
- What pressures are they subject to from followers, constituents, or opponents?
- What financial, human, and political resources are available to them? Look for vulnerabilities as well as capacities.
- Do they have formal or informal arrangements of support for continued conflict or peace?
- Are there synergies amongst stakeholders whether intended or unintended?

TABLE 3 STAKEHOLDER PROFILE				
Left to Right	**Stakeholders**	**Actions**	**Agendas/Needs**	**Capacities & Vulnerabilities**
Political	*Identify the groups in the community and external parties to the tensions. These actors represent the groups or individuals with a stake in maintaining the tensions or building peace.*	*What are the easily identifiable manifestations (what you see) of efforts made/activities by various stakeholders to promote peace or conflict?*	*What are the vested interests of key stakeholders in maintaining tensions or working toward peace? What do they want and what do they really need?*	*Which groups have significant numbers that are self-reliant, independent, confident, share values, cooperate, show mutual respect, or have coping mechanisms? Which groups do not?*
Economic				
Social				
Security				
Regional/ Internati'l				

STEP 4: RESPONSIBILITIES AND UNDERLYING CAUSES

Objective

To look holistically at the relationship between conflict, peace, and stakeholder dynamics, and the processes and structures that support them; to identify the focal points for future action.

In some circumstances, particularly when dealing directly with the affected, local communities, the Profile questions raise sensitive issues, and participants may be reluctant to express their concerns. Good judgement needs to be used to determine if the question should be raised publicly or not. Building rapport in the group or finding neutral spaces for dialogue and consensus building is a key aspect of moving discussions forward. Sometimes it is better to start with less threatening issues and build group confidence over time.

For external actors looking at the impact of their work, one would not expect local communities to "fill in the boxes." Rather, one might engage in a dialogue with local partners and explore areas of concern, guided by the lines of enquiry in this Handbook. The information gathered could be assembled later in a report for the use of colleagues. Ideally, project selection should be based on the priorities of local communities and not those of well-meaning outside actors. Local consultation should also take place during the project identification and planning stage.

Definitions

Issue: refers to the issue or concern that was identified from the Profile Tools e.g. the community's right to freedom from X is being denied.

Actions: refers to the actions or failures of action that has led to this problem.

Attitudes: refers to the attitudes or behaviours that caused the action named above. What human rights concern so these behaviours or attitudes reveal?

Supporting Structures and Processes: refers to what systems or structures cause the behaviours or attitudes. What systems cause, reinforce, enable, or perpetuate these attitudes or behaviours?

Responsibility: refers to which body is responsible for causing or addressing the concern.

Process

Left-right logic applies to this Table. First, identify the important, priority issue of concern. Next identify the relevant actions, attitudes, structures that support, or have led to, this concern. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available to get a broad overview of the key issues and how they are supported or "propped up".

Key questions for Tying it Together

- Have you looked at root causes as well as symptoms?
- Have you looked at the peace capacities and not just the tension-producing factors?
- Have you looked at the Dividers and Connectors in the community?
- Have you looked at national as well as regional and international factors?
- Have you considered the situation of those who have little power to voice their concerns, as well as those who are easily heard?

TABLE 4
RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES & UNDERLYING CAUSES
(adapted from CARE USA Benefits-Harms Handbook)

Left to Right	Issue	Actions	Attitudes	Supporting Systems or Structures	Responsibility
Political	*Identify the key issue or root cause that is of concern?*	*What are the actions, or failures of action, that led to this concern?*	*What are the attitudes or behaviours that caused these actions?*	*What systems or structures cause these behaviours or attitudes?*	*Who or what is responsible for this situation?*
Economic					
Social					
Security					
Regional/ Internat'l					

STEP 5: SCENARIOS AND OBJECTIVES

Objective

To draw out the best, middle and worst-case scenarios in order to prepare and define realistic objectives for engagement.

Definitions

1. Scenarios: Scenarios basically answer the question, "What will happen next?" A time frame (e.g. six months) is normally given on scenarios, as are judgments on their likelihood (e.g. most likely, likely, less likely). Scenarios are developed by assessing **trends** in indicators (i.e. are they getting stronger or weaker, or are they on the rise or decline?) and among stakeholders, and weighing conflict-indicator trends against peace-indicator and stakeholder trends. At this stage, one may look at what might **trigger** a change in the current situation (i.e. the death of a key actor), or what might ignite a change in the current situation.

Best-case Scenario describes the optimal (most positive) outcome of the current situation. It may be based on certain assumptions (e.g. rebels decide to negotiate) about stakeholder actions.

Middle-case Scenario describes a "muddling through" outcome of the current situation. It is largely based on an assumption that the status quo (e.g. fighting between parties) continues.

Worst-case Scenario describes the worst-possible outcome of the current situation. It may be based on assumptions (e.g. government launches a large counter-offensive) of stakeholder actions.

2. Objectives provide much-needed strategic direction for responses to conflict. They need to reflect a combination of "ground realities" and response capacities, as well as scenarios.

Optimal Objectives are translations of the best-case scenario (e.g. support the negotiated settlement of the conflict). In essence, it is an objective that will direct efforts to realize the best-case scenario.

Status Quo Objectives reflect the middle (muddle through) case. It is debatable whether an objective for the status quo is needed, since the purpose of engaging in a fragile state is generally accepted to be about promoting the best case and preventing the worst case from happening.

Contingency Objectives seek to ensure that practitioners are prepared for a worst-case scenario and prevent these from happening (e.g. develop preparedness plans and discourage a military counter-offensive).

Process

Using the key conflict, peace, and stakeholder factors and their trends, build the scenarios first (approximately 50 words each), describing the state of affairs if the optimal, status quo, or most negative situation evolved. Next, define an objective for your engagement (50 words max) for each scenario that specifically addresses the key factors you have identified in the Community Profile (conflict root causes; peace opportunities, capacities, and gaps; stakeholder needs, and synergies). No objective is required for the middle case, unless your objective is to 'muddle through'.

Key questions

- What are trends in key conflict indicators/synergies, peace indicators, and stakeholder dynamics?
- Is violence on the rise or decline?
- Are peace initiatives getting stronger or weakening?
- Are stakeholders getting stronger or weaker? Which direction are things going?
- What event might trigger or "tip" the balance towards violence or peace?
- What is your judgment about best, middle, and worst-case scenarios when considering the overall (conflict, peace, stakeholder) picture?
- Given your scenario, what objective for engaging in this community is appropriate and realistic?

TABLE 5
SCENARIOS & OBJECTIVES

Scenarios	Objectives
Best Case *Describe the optimal (most positive) outcome (e.g. rebels decide to negotiate) of the current situation. It may be based on certain assumptions.*	**Optimal Objective** *Translate the best-case scenario (e.g. support the negotiated settlement of the conflict). In essence, it is an objective that will direct efforts to realize the best-case scenario.*
Middle Case *Describe a "muddling through" outcome of the current situation. It is largely based on an assumption that the status quo (e.g. fighting between parties) continues.*	**Status Quo Objective** *Translate the middle case scenario (muddle through)*
Worst Case *Describe the worst possible outcome of the current situation. It may be based on assumptions (e.g. government launches a large counter-offensive) of stakeholder actions.*	**Contingency Objective** *Translate the worst-case scenario to ensure that you are prepared for worst and prevent this from happening (e.g. develop preparedness plans and discourage a military counter-offensive).*

PART 2: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Objective

To help users understand the overall impact of their projects and programs by considering the unintended negative impacts, and unforeseen positive opportunities.

Impact Tools are designed for brainstorming, but can also be used by individuals working alone. Looking through various lenses, consider the potential or actual impact of your intervention on people's rights or lives, and identify "who will benefit?" and "who will not benefit?"

Impact tools can prepare you to capitalise on previously unforeseen opportunities as well as mitigate potential unintended impacts. Once a project is operational, they can also be used to evaluate the impact the project is having.

STEP 6: POLITICAL IMPACT

New projects or initiatives in a community may have an impact on political power structures, political rights and processes, political identity and participation, and empowerment even though they may not have been designed to do that. This can have a disruptive impact on relations in the community, or between communities.

Although development workers have traditionally avoided political partisanship, experience from the field, and OECD/DAC studies have shown that all aid, at all times has a political impact, whether intended or unintended, on the dynamics within the communities in which the project works. Political impacts need to be considered more deliberately and be clearly recognised as an area for consideration.

Process

Identify the key issues outlined in the questions for Table 6. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available. Identify key issues which received a 'yes' or 'partly' answer and look for synergies and reinforcing relationships amongst these key issues and actors.

Key Questions

Consider whether the project will help or hinder:

- Political identity, protection, freedom, and participation
- The levels of participation by women in political processes
- Rights to nationality and recognition before the law
- Rights to a fair trial, innocence until proven guilty and political asylum
- Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expression
- Rights to assembly, association, and political participation in the power structures
- Consolidation of constructive political relationships between state and civil society
- Traditional authority structures
- Transparency and accountability of public decision-making
- The composition or distribution of political resources within/between state and civil society
- Inter-group tensions
- Formal or informal political structures and processes - either within the formal arena of institutionalized state politics, or within the informal arena of civil society

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">TABLE 6
POLITICAL IMPACT TOOL
Adapted from CARE USA Benefits-Harms Handbook</td></tr>
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Possible Impact	No	Partly	Yes	Explanation/Reasoning	
I. POLITICAL POWER STRUCTURES				Positive	Negative
Might the project impact *political structures….*				**The project might…**	
…by changing the status of the relationship between certain political groups or authority structures?					
II. POLITICAL RIGHTS & PROCESSES					
Might the project impact people's *identity or political participation…*				**The project might…**	
…by changing how they are recognized or protected by the law?					
…by (not) involving them in political or decision-making processes of any form?					
…by changing their freedoms to hold political or ideological opinions or beliefs, or to speak freely, or practice the religion of their choice?					
…by changing their ability to gather together, organize around issues, or participate in social or political institutions, organizations or associations?					
III. UNDERLYING CAUSES OF POLITICAL RIGHTS DENIAL					
Might the project impact the root causes *of political rights violations…*				**The project might…**	
…by strengthening or weakening underlying attitudes or systems and structures?					

STEP 7: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL IMPACT

Objective

To help users understand the economic, social or cultural impact of their projects and programs by considering the unintended negative impacts, and unforeseen positive opportunities.

The introduction of new projects into a community may affect the economic assets or the vulnerability of individuals or groups in that community. An irrigation project, on the surface, may appear to be worthwhile, but if the economic benefits of that project flow to, or favour one group over another, it can create tensions.

An assessment of these impacts should include rights essential to livelihood security such as economic well-being, nutrition, food, water, health, education, the environment, shelter, and culture. Projects intended for one sector can have crossover impact on other aspects of the community that are unintended. Resource injections can affect economic markets and people's livelihoods.

Process

Identify the key issues outlined in the questions for Table 7. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available. Identify key issues which received a 'yes' or 'partly' answer and look for synergies and reinforcing relationships amongst these key issues and actors.

Key Questions

Consider whether the project will help or hinder:

Economic

- The equitable sharing of project benefits
- Economic infrastructure
- Access to scarce natural resources
- Economic independence
- Employment or income generation
- Relative economic status of identity groups

- Reliance on an economy related to violence (e.g. small arms)
- Capacities for individuals and communities to define problems, formulate solutions, or resolve problems?
- The status of indigenous or vulnerable groups?

Social

- Inclusion of members from the various communities in decision-making. How can you find those who have no voice?
- The ability of individuals & groups to work together for mutual benefit?
- Positive interaction between groups?
- Building bridges between the different communities
- Constructive communications
- Those promoting tolerance or inclusion
- Social services and health care

Cultural

- The attitudes, systems or structures that lead to, or encourage economic rights violations
- Contact, confidence, common interests, or trust between communities?

Possible Impact	No	Partly	Yes	Explanation/Reasoning	
TABLE 7 ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPACT TOOL Adapted from CARE USA Benefits-Harms Handbook					
Possible Impact	**No**	**Partly**	**Yes**	**Explanation/Reasoning**	
I. IMPACT ON ECONOMIC ASSETS/DEFICITS AND CAPACITIES/VULNERABILITIES				Positive	Negative
Might the project impact *people's human rights to…*				**The project might…**	
…work & adequate income?					
…a healthy environment, health, or health care?					
…food & nutrition, education?					
…shelter or clean water?					
II. IMPACT ON SOCIAL ATTITUDES, CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL COPING MECHANISMS					
Might the project impact group social attitudes or coping mechanisms *unintentionally…*				**The project might…**	
…by weakening people's self-reliance, independence, confidence, or capacity?					
…by weakening shared values, cooperation or mutual respect and trust between groups?					
…by strengthening or weakening particular attitudes?					
III. ROOT CAUSES OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR CULTURAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS					
Might the project impact *the root causes of economic, social or cultural rights violations…*				**The project might…**	
…by strengthening or weakening underlying attitudes or artifices (systems and structures)?					

STEP 8: SECURITY IMPACT

Objective

To help users understand the impact of their projects and programs on the security of the community and its members by considering the unintended negative impacts, and unforeseen positive opportunities.

A review of the security impact of projects should include effect on tensions between and within communities, and the capacity for individuals or groups conflict resolution.

The introduction of new resources into a resource-hungry community can create additional tensions. In fragile communities, aid resources can alter security rights dramatically, and affect power structures and relationships. Communities often have their own internal balances, working relationships and hierarchies. The disproportionate flow of project benefits to one group may shift power balances and make some groups more vulnerable to others.

Sustainable development is not likely to be achieved unless we address the tensions that divide communities. Projects which make personal or group security more fragile are likely to fall short of their development goals while energy and attention are focused elsewhere

Process

Identify the key issues outlined in the questions for Table 8. Repeat this process until sufficient information is available. Identify key issues which received a 'yes' or 'partly' answer and look for synergies and reinforcing relationships amongst these key issues and actors.

Key Questions

Consider whether the project will help or hinder:

- The relationships between the community and those with whom there are disagreements
- The community's vulnerability to violence from outside, or their capacity to commit violence against outsiders

- The empowerment of those who commit violence or victims to resist violence
- Making potential victims more or less attractive targets
- The individual or group sense of security (physical, food, violence)
- Capacities to pursue non-violent options
- Strengthening or weakening underlying attitudes or systems and structures that cause violence or security rights violations
- Strengthening or weakening local structures for conflict resolution
- Life, liberty, freedom from slavery & torture, displacement, sexual assault, arbitrary arrest and detention;
- The military/ paramilitary/criminal environment -directly or directly;
- Political, economic, physical, food, security;
- Environmental degradation, resource scarcity, political manipulation, disinformation, mobilisation and politicisation of identity, etc.;
- The development or consolidation of equity and justice, or the means of providing basic needs.

Possible Impact	No	Partly	Yes	Explanation/Reasoning	
TABLE 8 **SECURITY IMPACT TOOL** Adapted from CARE USA Benefits-Harms Handbook					
I. CONFLICT BETWEEN COMMUNITIES				Positive	Negative
Might the project impact the potential for conflict *between the community and others…*				**The project might…**	
…by increasing the tensions or strengthening the relationships between the community and those with whom there are tensions?					
…by changing the community's vulnerability to violence, or capacity to commit violence against outsiders?					
II. CONFLICT IN THE COMMUNITY					
Might the project significantly change the potential for violence *between people in the community…*				**The project might…**	
…by increasing the tensions or strengthening the relationships between groups in the community?					
…by empowering those who commit violence or by empowering victims to resist? …by making potential victims into a more or less attractive target?					
III. UNDERLYING CAUSES OF POLITICAL RIGHTS DENIAL					
Might the project impact *the underlying causes of security rights denial in the community…*				**The project might…**	
…by strengthening or weakening the underlying attitudes, systems or structures that cause tensions?					
IV. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION OF SECURITY RIGHTS					
Might the project impact *local forms of conflict resolution or community-based rights protection…*				**The project might…**	
…by strengthening or weakening local structures, and processes used to resolve conflict and protect rights?					

Part 3: Decision

Step 9: Decision Tool

Objectives

To look holistically at the relationship between the profile of your community, and the impact your project or programme may have on that community. It is also an opportunity to review identified vulnerabilities and capacities in the community. The Decision Tool aims to help practitioners move from understanding to action. In this step, participants also look at key strategic issues in order to define possible response strategies.

This is the time to reduce or distil a possibly large volume of issues to a manageable number. This distillation process could reflect 1) the urgency of response needed, 2) the identification of priority, root causes of tensions which multiple ripple effects, or 3) a peace-promoting opportunity which is absent.

There are often constraints or resistance to change - both internal and external, as well as supports. It is important to identify both the obstacles and opportunities in order to decide on an effective course of action.

Definitions

Constraints are attributes that make your decisions more difficult.
Supports are attributes that make the decision easier.
Internal refers to attributes of your own organisation or project.
External refers to those forces outside the organisation that might oppose or support a change.

Paying attention to these obstacle and opportunities may identify key targets for action or partners and allies.

Process
Identify the key issues outlined in the questions for Table 9 (perhaps 5?). Identify many strategies for action to deal with these issues (10 words max). Strategies could include something to support, contain, prevent, or be a new initiative in the project. Continue plotting ideas until a broad range of possible responses have been identified. Do not allow your own capacity to respond bias your recommendations for action. If you are a

hammer, do not look only for nails. Proposed action could include actors other than your own organisation.

Key questions
- In view of the full analysis, are your identified key issues complete?
- Have you heard the voices of all the stakeholders? Not everyone has the power to speak, but they need to be heard.
- Once the possible strategies for action have been identified, they need to be looked at in terms of:

  - ❑ Overall conflict-sensitive objectives
  - ❑ Coherence of the strategy

It is not possible for every actor to tackle every issue. Capacity and resources are usually limited. Choices need to be made. In order to make strategic choices, there is a need to assess the initiatives of other agencies and the capacity of one's own agency in the different fields (governance, economics, socio-cultural and security). Key questions include:

- What peace-promoting initiatives are being undertaken?
- What is my agency's comparative advantage and capacity?

Specifically look at your capacity in various fields (political, economic, social, security) at all levels (local, regional and international). What can be mobilized to impact on the conflict-sensitivity of your project?

- Should you implement policies and practices for more-inclusive participation, or are such efforts adequately supported?
- What are the most critical activities that need to be undertaken?
- What initiatives need to be taken which might enable other things to happen?
- What stakeholders need to be supported to move the agenda forward? What stakeholders need to be contained or included? Are women or vulnerable groups being included or heard?
- Do some actors, either local or external, have a special capacity to respond?
- What is the rationale for the specific initiative being recommended?
- Which agency or group has the greatest capacity to respond?
- What mechanisms need to be put in place to promote collaboration or coordination amongst external actors such as donors?
- Concretely address an unintended harm, caused by the project or identify a new opportunity to benefit people.

		TABLE 9 DECISION TOOL (adapted from CARE USA Benefits – Harms Handbook)			
Left to Right	**Issue**	**Supports**		**Constraints**	**Action**
		Internal	**External**	**Internal**	**External**	
Political	*Name the unintended impact here. From your impact analysis, what are the problems or opportunities that most require attention?*	*What are the attributes of your organisation impacting your decision-making?*		*Consider how various actors might react to your decision.*		*How can the project address the harm or take a new opportunity to benefit people?*
Economic						
Social						
Security						
Regional/ Internati'l						

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