

CONFLICT SENSITIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE & PEACE-BUILDING

Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment

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Editorial

PCIA: A Perspective from IDRC

Why would the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), fund a programme on peace & conflict impact assessment (PCIA) led by three UK-based NGOs? Why would we support PCIA efforts in the first place?

To answer these questions we have to take a step back to the mid-1990s, when the idea of PCIA emerged. At the time many multilateral organisations, foreign ministries, official development agencies and NGOs had learned much through their engagement in the great humanitarian crises and post-war reconstruction experiments of the post-Cold War years. Some of this learning had been codified in United Nations documents and in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation*. Yet few of these agencies were rigorously assessing their conflict programming and fewer still were programming on the basis of systematic analyses of conflict dynamics in host societies – indeed some were still trying to do conventional development work around (or in denial of) armed violence.

The first wave of PCIA work in 1997-98 was a response to these gaps, a *cri de coeur* for more careful assessments of the impacts that humanitarian and development interventions



were having on political dynamics in conflict-prone societies, and for starting these assessments earlier in the process, *ex ante*, to minimise negative impacts and maximise the potential for peacebuilding. This foundational work by Ken Bush and Luc Reyhler did not provide details on how to carry out conflict impact assessment, but it inspired policy-makers and programmers to take on the challenge of PCIA. By the end of the decade a second wave began taking shape when several northern development agencies, governmental and NGO, started developing prototype PCIA methods. Commitments to conduct PCIA were also codified in key UN reports, G8 statements, and in the Supplement to the DAC guidelines noted above.

We are now well into the third wave of PCIA, a wave with four streams of activity. The first is a continuation of the previous period, namely the development, testing and utilisation of selected PCIA methods by northern development agencies. The work of the UK Department for International Development – in crafting and applying a method for Strategic Conflict Assessment – is pioneering in this regard. Many other development agencies (from CIDA and the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) to the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, UNDP and World Bank) are also experimenting with PCIA in their own programming.

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The second stream is the pooling of efforts to learn from the practice of PCIA. It includes sharing tools and results of their initial applications, for instance through the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Donors Network. It also includes a collaborative experiment by the Japan International Co-operation Agency, CIDA and NGOs from those countries to refine and test a method for assessing NGO projects from a peacebuilding perspective.

The third stream aims to expand the PCIA community to include southern agencies: to our knowledge the PCIA programme led by the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), International Alert (IA) and Saferworld in partnership with Africa Peace Forum (APFO) and Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) in East Africa, and the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) in Sri Lanka, is the first major north-south partnership in this regard.

The fourth stream connects back to the roots of PCIA: it is a space for deeper debate on the methodological, institutional and wider political challenges involved in pushing PCIA forward. The recently published *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Prevention* is a stellar example of this fourth strand of PCIA work.

All four strands are vital to the advancement of the field. One contribution of the programme led by FEWER, IA and Saferworld is that it provides a platform for synthesising information about PCIA efforts in the growing community of northern, southern, governmental and non-governmental agencies working on particular pieces of the PCIA puzzle. The programme will also generate new knowledge, for example on how to use PCIA in sector-specific interventions. Yet what is perhaps most unique about this programme is that it opens the door to involvement by southern agencies, not as mere recipients of PCIA wisdom but as shapers of the PCIA agenda.

The PCIA Resource Manual will be the embodiment of this knowledge, synthesised from different institutional and geographic sites. It should make an invaluable contribution to mainstreaming sensible approaches to PCIA over the coming years. It might also contribute modestly to conflict prevention on the ground. The drift towards war in certain regions, particularly since September 11, highlights the enduring importance of these ambitious goals.

Programme Overview

During the past decade, international interventions and initiatives in the context of development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building have increased dramatically. Evaluations of these interventions have revealed that they do have an impact on the dynamics of conflict and peace. The impact can be both positive and negative: potentially volatile situations may be accelerated toward the eruption of violent

conflict to the detriment of peace and locally based efforts to support stability.

Understanding the relationship between these interventions and conflict dynamics is vital. Accordingly, there has been a growing awareness of the role that development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building can play in conflict prevention.

Moreover, because these fields have such potential impact on peace and conflict dynamics, a number of tools and methods have been elaborated to understand this relationship. Many of these methods are new and few have been tested.

To address these issues, a consortium of northern and southern organisations is implementing a two-year programme in several regions to integrate conflict-sensitive practice into development, humanitarian and peace-building activities.

The programme thus aims to:

- ❑ Mainstream conflict-sensitive practice into the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building work; and
- ❑ Enhance the capacity of development, humanitarian and peace-building practitioners, as well as local governments and civil society organisations to contribute more effectively to conflict prevention.

In order to bring this about, the programme will:

- ❑ Produce a **resource manual** that brings together existing approaches, tools and guidelines in relation to conflict sensitive planning, implementation, management and evaluation.
- ❑ Implement **national applications and field-testing** to ensure the applicability of the resource manual and selected tools on the ground in relation to specific projects currently being designed, implemented or evaluated.
- ❑ Conduct a **series of awareness raising and training activities** for a broad constituency, to enable the resource manual to be used effectively, thereby spreading the use of conflict-sensitive approaches.

The programme is managed by the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response, International Alert and Saferworld, in direct partnership with the Africa Peace Forum in Kenya, the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Uganda and the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies in Sri Lanka. To date financial support has been received from the Canadian International Development Agency, the International Development Research Centre and the German Technical Co-operation.

Global Consultations

The programme on peace and conflict impact assessment involves a unique complementary and participatory partnership between the different sectors involved in development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building. In order to ensure that the activities developed in the programme respond to the critical needs of these different actors, a series of consultations with a wide range of audiences are being undertaken.

The first of these consultations was held in London in May 2002. It involved implementing partners, multilateral agencies, bilateral donors, academics and practitioners in conflict prevention, peace-building and development.

The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the needs of these practitioners in terms of practical conflict-sensitive resources. In addition, it aimed to pool information on existing tools, methodologies and best practice in use in their respective fields.

To further reinforce this consultation process, continue the discussions undertaken at the meeting in London and to ensure the relevance of the programme to southern experiences, similar meetings were held in August 2002 in Kenya and Uganda. These are the first two country national applications to be implemented. (Please see article on National Consultations in Kenya and Uganda for more details)

The meetings in Nairobi and Kampala have also resulted in a wealth of information, which is currently being fed back and incorporated in the programme.

Research is also conducted at the international level to further map existing conflict sensitive tools and methodologies. Interviews are held with officials from multilateral and bilateral aid agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as academics and practitioners.

Research aims to:

- ❑ Identify and obtain practical tools from development, emergency and peace-building organisations with regard to conflict analysis and project management (planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation)
- ❑ Obtain background information on the application of these tools and lessons learned.

Consultations will be continued in Sri Lanka upon initiation of the project's national application. All subsequent country applications launched will involve a similar process.

Manual Outline

Introduction : Rationale, Content and Use

Chapter 1: An introduction to conflict sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building

- ❑ Linkages between PCIA and peace-building, development and humanitarian assistance
- ❑ Application of conflict sensitive approaches to date and lessons learned

Chapter 2: Mainstreaming conflict sensitive perspectives in project programming

- ❑ Conflict analysis frameworks and tools
- ❑ Conflict-sensitive project planning and implementation
- ❑ Conflict sensitive project management
- ❑ Monitoring and evaluating impact

Chapter 3: Sector wide and sectoral approaches

- ❑ Application of conflict-sensitive approaches within sectoral support (e.g. water, land, resource allocation, security sector)
- ❑ Application of conflict-sensitive approaches within sector-wide approaches

Chapter 4: Building institutional capacity

- ❑ Assessing institutional capacity and needs for conflict sensitive practice, and lessons learnt
- ❑ Linking policy formulation processes with conflict-sensitive implementation

PCIA and conflict sensitive approaches

The understanding of the term PCIA triggers a lot of discussion. This has occurred in our internal programme team meetings, as well as at meetings that we have held in London, Nairobi and Kampala. Humanitarian and development organisations tend to consider Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment as something out of their 'area' since they do not work on conflict. Peace-building organisations, on the other hand, can be confused on the use of the word 'conflict' since the focus is on working for peace. Some clarification is thus necessary.

For the purpose of the programme peace and conflict impact assessment refers to a wide range of techniques, tools and methodologies that enhance or assess the peace-building impact of different interventions. To that end, PCIA tools are relevant for development, humanitarian and peace-building work. The peace-building impact refers to the positive or negative effect of an intervention on the conflict environment in which it is implemented.

The neglect of the impact of an intervention on the conflict dynamics, and in turn their impact on an intervention is referred to as the problem of conflict-blindness. For example, a road-building project may indeed improve the mobility of people but it may also facilitate the supply of arms to warring groups.

The purpose of PCIA is, therefore, to both improve our positive impact on conflicts and overcome conflict-blindness in development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building work.

National Consultations in Kenya and Uganda

Two stakeholders meetings were organised at the end of August 2002 in Kenya and Uganda, the first two national application countries. The meetings were attended by government and donor representatives, local and international civil society and aimed to launch the PCIA programme in Kenya and Uganda, in order to ensure that its approach builds on and is relevant to local expertise and experience. All organisations present were working within the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building. In particular, the organisation of the consultations built on initial in-country mapping and awareness-raising processes, which had been undertaken by FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld, and their partners in the region, Africa Peace Forum (Kenya) and Centre for Conflict Resolution (Uganda).

More specifically, the consultations sought to further explore local understandings of PCIA, as well as existing needs in terms of practical conflict-sensitive resources, at both the project and sectoral levels. In addition, they aimed to provide a platform for the sharing of information on relevant conflict-sensitive frameworks and tools, as well as best practice in the context of both Kenya and Uganda.

A number of key issues, in relation to both the wider issue of conflict-sensitive approaches and the PCIA project, were touched upon in Kenya and Uganda. In particular, it became clear from the above consultations that most practitioners working in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building do apply PCIA without necessarily labelling it as such, thereby further underlining the rationale of the PCIA project.

The resource manual was also discussed in great length, in particular from the perspective of target audience clarification, language, format, research methodology and the field-testing process. In addition, the meetings provided constructive suggestions on the current resource manual outline in order to further facilitate the mainstreaming of conflict sensitive practice in development and humanitarian fields.

PCIA in Sri Lanka

By the end of this year, our PCIA programme will start in Sri Lanka. To ensure synergy with existing efforts, we will, for instance co-operate with the Clingendael Institute whenever possible (e.g. training, feedback on the PCIA Manual, etc.).

We have set the stage for a deeper co-operation with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA). They are our local partner in Sri Lanka. CHA is involved in a project that improves the PCIA capacity in Sri Lanka at different levels. FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld will provide different types of support to CHA, including technical assistance to CHA for the introductory workshops.

This co-operation is also reciprocal. Working with CHA will enable the PCIA team to incorporate experiences from Sri Lanka into the PCIA Manual. As in Kenya and Uganda, some research and testing will be done in Sri Lanka. Together with CHA, a co-operative strategy has been developed on how we can collect this information (e.g. workshops) and initiate testing of PCIA tools (e.g. seminars).

The PCIA project was thus positively welcomed in both Kenya and Uganda and, most particularly, the organization of a consultation at such an early stage of the PCIA project was most appreciated by participants. It is now anticipated that the comments and suggestions collected during the meetings in Kenya and Uganda will further inform the development of the project, particularly with regards to the resource manual and the national application process.

A Kenyan Point of View

Within the first year of the PCIA programme, it will primarily focus on Kenya and Uganda for the organisation of national applications, while working in close collaboration with partner organisations, AFPO and CECORE.

Reflecting on the concept of PCIA, Elisabeth Mutunga from AFPO acknowledged that this notion is only new in Kenya, as far as the term and the need for a systematic compilation of tools and lessons learnt go. For instance, several projects, both at the regional and the community levels, inevitably grew to incorporate peace-building components, although they were initiated with a purely development and humanitarian purpose.

Many actors, both local and external, indeed realised that it was impossible to achieve the development agenda without carefully considering peace and conflict dimensions. Within the framework of small water projects as well as large national projects, such as the government-sponsored Arid Lands Project, concepts of PCIA have thus been applied – albeit not labelled as such.

In this sense, the PCIA programme is likely to grow significantly in Kenya, especially as different actors, both government and civil society, begin to more systematically conceptualise PCIA-related issues. Conversely, the PCIA programme will greatly benefit from the wealth of Kenyan experiences in this field, many of which have never been documented by practitioners.

Implementing Agencies:

Africa Peace Forum (APFO) in Kenya aims to encourage and engage non-state actors within the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa regions to explore collaborative approaches to the pursuit of peace and security.

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) in Uganda is a non-governmental organisation working to seek alternative and creative means of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) is an association of agencies working in and supporting areas affected by conflict in Sri Lanka.

Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER) is an independent global network committed to preventing conflict through the dissemination of early warning analyses and the promotion of co-ordinated, early responses to violent conflict.

International Alert (IA) is an independent NGO, which analyses the causes of conflict, enables mediation and dialogue to take place, helps to develop the skills necessary to resolve conflict non-violently, and advocates policy changes to promote sustainable peace.

Saferworld is an independent foreign affairs think tank working to identify, develop and publicise effective approaches to addressing and preventing armed conflicts.

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