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# ANALYSIS TO ACTION: A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVE USAID PROGRAMMING IN AFRICA

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# ANALYSIS TO ACTION:

## A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVE USAID PROGRAMMING IN AFRICA



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- The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

# CONTENTS

- OVERVIEW .....2**
  - A. Regional and Policy Rationale for the Handbook..... 2
  - B. Conflict-sensitive Programming ..... 3
  - C. Aims of the Handbook ..... 4
  - D. Structure of the Handbook ..... 5
  - E. Scope and Participants in Conflict-Sensitive Programming..... 7
  
- PART I: ANALYZING CONFLICT AND CAPACITIES FOR PEACE.....8**
  - A. The Elements and Roles of Conflict Vulnerability Assessments ..... 8
  - B. Preparing for the CVA ..... 11
  - C. Formulating the CVA Methodology ..... 15
  - D. Conducting the Field Work..... 18
  
- PART II: CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT .....24**
  - A. Designing Conflict-sensitive Programs ..... 25
  - B. Developing Conflict-sensitive Strategies ..... 2
  
- PART III. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING .....13**
  - A. M&E for Conflict-sensitive Programming ..... 13
  - B. What Performance Criteria Should be Assessed? ..... 14
  - C. How Can M&E Be Conducted in Conflict Settings? ..... 15
  
- APPENDIX I ~ ACRONYMS.....20**
  
- APPENDIX II ~ CONFLICT CAUSES, STAGES, AND SCALES .....22**
  
- APPENDIX III ~ REFERENCES AND HYPERLINKS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT.....27**

# OVERVIEW

## A. REGIONAL AND POLICY RATIONALE FOR THE HANDBOOK

The end of the Cold War has witnessed the eruption of numerous new armed conflicts in Africa, in Somalia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, northern Uganda, Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Darfur, Sudan, thus adding to long-standing low-intensity wars such as that in southern Sudan. Various labeled complex humanitarian emergencies, civil wars, secessionist struggles, identity-based conflicts, failed states, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, almost all the recent major conflicts have been primarily intra-state in their initial issues, but regional factors have contributed to these conflicts and they often spill across borders into neighboring countries.

While intra-state conflicts have arisen in all the regions of the world, they have been especially devastating in Africa. In the period from 1994-2004, Africa's conflicts resulted in millions of deaths, ninety percent of which have been civilian, and they produced 3.1 million refugees and 10.6 million internally displaced persons. Requiring huge expenditures for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, conflicts have undone decades of hard earned development by African governments, USAID, and other donors. They have led to widespread human rights abuses, including increased gender-based violence; contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS; and resulted in recruitment or conscription of thousands of child soldiers. They have also had serious but less recognized impacts far outside their conflict zones, such as increased human trafficking, arms, and drug trafficking and fostering of terrorist groups and activities. These consequences of conflict present immense challenges to African development and the world for decades to come.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, conflicts have severely curtailed USAID's presence and activities in several strife-torn countries.

Because of the negative impacts of conflict on development, as well as their direct human toll, USAID and all other major donors have adopted conflict prevention and management as an explicit priority and cross-cutting objective, to be mainstreamed into their sectoral programming such as economic growth, democracy and governance, and health and education. Formerly, donors approached conflicts largely by avoiding the areas where conflict interfered with development activities or by providing humanitarian assistance for its victims. Now, however, donors view conflict and its various sources as challenges in themselves that need to be addressed through development programming. The whole range of development programming is considered as another form of intervention, along with diplomacy, and defense policies, that must be considered if existing conflicts are to be transformed and future conflicts prevented. In short, USAID has chosen not only to work *around* or *in* conflict areas, but *on* conflict.

To operationalize its goals of conflict management and peacebuilding, USAID has undertaken a considerable number of new activities over the past decade that are aimed at reducing the problem of conflict. Spurred by the Rwanda genocide of 1994, the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative, encompassing ten countries in the Horn of Africa and east and central Africa, was the first major USAID effort to explicitly apply a conflict perspective in its development programming. USAID bureaus have sponsored a variety of conflict case studies, training workshops, conferences on conflict and development, and

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<sup>1</sup> Describing civil wars as "development in reverse," a World Bank study lists the costs for the countries in conflict as deaths, disease (HIV/AIDS among them), physical destruction, population displacement, high military expenditures, capital outflows, political breakdown, psychological trauma, and landmines. The costs for other nations include refugees, disease, increased military burdens, reduced economic growth, illicit drugs, and international terrorism (World Bank 2003).

conflict-oriented project evaluations. In recent years, USAID Missions have been asked to conduct “conflict vulnerability assessments” (CVAs) or “conflict assessments ” (CAs)<sup>2</sup>. In Africa, CVAs are the principal tools that USAID has used to date to analyze conditions of conflict and peace to assist Missions and Regional Offices with strategic planning and programming. In 2002, the Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management was created to strengthen the agency’s analytical and programming capacities in conflict. USAID has released Conflict Policy Paper, Conflict Policy Implementation Guidelines, as well as a Fragile States Strategy. USAID and other donors and multilateral organizations are increasingly integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into development programming. Related activities include:<sup>3</sup>

- Funding explicit conflict management and peacebuilding programs and projects;
- Training staff and partners in peace and conflict theory and practice, and in monitoring and evaluation;
- Evaluating the impacts of programs/projects for their impacts on conflict and peace; and
- Collecting “lessons learned” and “best practices” and using them for program design and implementation processes.

## **B. CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING**

USAID currently works in many countries that are affected by various stages and degrees of conflict through its Democracy and Governance, Economic Growth, and other sectoral strategic objectives (SOs). When viewed through a conflict lens, all this development programming can be designed and applied in specific ways so that it does not worsen the various sources of conflicts and, instead, may contribute to reversing conflict trends. While not all countries in Africa are experiencing conflict, programming through a conflict lens is beneficial because it seeks to identify the potential and actual sources of tension in a country or region so that programs can avoid aggravating these or creating new sources of tension. Just as importantly, it seeks to identify the potential and actual peace capacities in a country or region so that programs can avoid undermining as well as contribute to strengthening these capacities or build new peace capacities. Strengthening peace capacities can include indigenous or international programs, national or international policies or legislation, indigenous institutions or organizations, traditional practices for preventing and resolving conflicts, or individual national or community leaders. In many contexts, the single most effective means of contributing to sustainable peace is to build and strengthen various indigenous peace capacities when and where they can be effective. Indeed, some of the most innovative peacebuilding interventions in Africa build on the wealth of traditional conflict resolution practices that exist throughout the continent.

Conflict sensitivity involves being aware in a particular context of the various causes of both peace and conflict. It also involves being aware of the impact on interventions of the causes of both peace and conflict, and designing or modifying interventions accordingly. In essence, conflict-sensitive programming involves explicit consideration of the role of development, humanitarian assistance, and peacebuilding programs and projects in contributing to conflict and promoting peace. Conflict-sensitive programming applies to all phases of peace and conflict, from stable peace, to unstable peace or latent or pre-conflict, to manifest or violent conflict, to post-conflict. This mainstreaming of conflict-sensitivity also can occur at all phases of the program cycle, from assessment to monitoring and evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup> Conflict Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) is the term used for the model that has been developed by REDSO under the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) initiative. It is based on over a decade of experience conducting analysis and programming in African conflict contexts. An Agency-wide global Conflict Assessment Framework has been developed by the Office for Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM).

<sup>3</sup> This list was generated by participants in the ANE workshop.

Mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding means applying the conflict lens to a local area, an entire country or regional strategy.

It is generally preferable to mainstream conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding programming into all country programs and overall strategies and throughout the programming cycle, rather than to have separate conflict mitigation or peacebuilding programs. Conflict should be mainstreamed into all levels of any Results Framework as well, from the SOs to the indicators. Viewing development, transition, and humanitarian assistance through a ‘conflict lens’ means recognizing that every decision and every activity, whether at the macro level, through policies, or the micro level, through operational decisions, has the potential, depending on how and when they are designed and implemented, to contribute to conflict or to peace. For example, decisions and resources can create winners and losers. In Africa, a gain or loss for an individual often means a gain or loss for an entire extended family, and sometimes for an entire community or an ethnic group.

### **C. AIMS OF THE HANDBOOK**

By 2004, over 30 CVAs had been conducted in sub-Saharan Africa. These included national, regional, sub-national and cross-border CVAs. Generally, most CVAs are carried out by a team of national and international experts working in-country in close collaboration with the Mission. Despite this experience and because of it, there is still much to be learned from how CVAs have been conducted so far and the strengths and weaknesses in current practices. Many Mission staff are not yet familiar with CVAs. Some aspects of CVAs, especially the linkage from conflict analysis to program design and monitoring and evaluation, have not received the focused attention that is required. CVAs have mainly undertaken the initial assessment steps in the USAID programming cycle, but not dealt fully with conflict-sensitive program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

The purpose of this Handbook is to present and explain the practical elements and steps involved not only in CVAs but also the subsequent steps required to move from conflict-sensitive analysis to conflict-sensitive action. By using Africa-specific examples gained from over a decade of conflict management and peace building work, this Handbook is intended to provide programming guidance for meeting USAID’s growing requirements for addressing conflicts more deliberately. The Handbook contributes guidance from the Africa Bureau to supplement DCHA/CMM’s Conflict Assessment Framework and the companion USAID Conflict Policy and Implementation Guidelines.

The Handbook is intended for the use of USAID program and sectoral officers based in bilateral and regional Missions in Africa or in the Africa Bureau in Washington. Specifically, the Handbook is designed primarily for the following readers:

- Those who are responsible for designing, managing, and evaluating conflict and peacebuilding programs, including Missions receiving funds from the Africa Bureau Conflict and Peacebuilding Fund.
- Those whose programs are likely to be significantly affected (positively or negatively) by conflict situations or peacebuilding interventions.
- Those who are tasked with formulating, managing, and participating in conflict vulnerability assessments.
- Those implementing partners, contractors, or grantees that are asked to act as consultants to undertake s and to identify and incorporate CVA recommendations into USAID strategies and performance monitoring plans (PMPs).
- Those implementing partners, both African and international, who design, implement, monitor, and evaluate conflict transformation and peace building activities.

It is unlikely that any single individual will be responsible for all of the steps in the conflict programming process – from design of a CVA to evaluating programs. It is important for all participants in the process to know how their role is linked to other tasks. While users can read in detail only the section that pertains to the immediate task for which they are responsible, it is highly recommended that readers familiarize themselves with the entire process.

The Handbook builds on previous USAID initiatives in Africa and elsewhere that develop frameworks and models for conflict analysis and peacebuilding programming and monitoring and evaluation through case studies, lessons learned, and best practices. It incorporates references to previously published analytical frameworks and models developed by operational units in USAID including: the Africa Bureau, particularly AFR/SD, the Regional Economic Development Services Office for East and Southern Africa (REDSO/ESA), and DCHA’s Office for Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM). The Handbook has been written in generic terms so to be as compatible as possible with the emerging analytical perspectives arising from the intersecting but broader fragile states perspective currently being discussed by USAID, the Department of State, and others. Although all conflicts do not stem from failed or failing states, nor do all failed or failing states stem from conflicts, there are many common sources of both of these conditions. The steps outlined here for assessing and responding to potential, actual, or past violent conflicts are basically the same as those for failing, failed, or recovering states, although specific problems of concern may vary.

The guidebook is intended as a living document and a work in progress. As both external and internal security, political, economic, and other changes affect Africa; as USAID’s strategies for addressing conflict evolve; as more lessons are learned; better practices are identified; and as new USAID frameworks, models, and programming procedures emerge; the Handbook can be updated to reflect and incorporate these changes.

## **D. STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK**

This Handbook is divided into three sections that mirror the basic steps involved in any programming cycle: problem analysis and assessment, program design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These steps apply to all sectors in USAID’s three pillars – DCHA, EGAT, and Health. In a USAID Mission the ideal sequence in which to take steps in applying a conflict and peacebuilding perspective would be:

1. The analysis of the causes of conflict and the causes of peace, (such as through a CVA);
2. The development of a conflict-sensitive Country Strategic Plan (CSP) and conflict-sensitive programs;
3. Implementation of programs and activities; and
4. Ongoing monitoring for peace and conflict impacts, and evaluation including peace and conflict impacts, which would immediately feed back into the next programming cycle.

These steps may not always occur in an exact prescribed order, however. The Handbook is designed so that the user can pick it up and begin to use it wherever she or he is situated within the conflict programming cycle and to continue through the cycle.

The typical CVA includes three components: conflict analysis (including vulnerabilities) and peace analysis (including existing and potential peace capacities and sources of resiliency), some degree of review of current and planned USAID programs in light of these analyses, and recommendations for new activities or modifying existing activities so as to reduce the conflict causes and strengthen the peace

capacities. There are, however, several variations on this basic pattern. Each of these substantive and operational tasks and their common variations are described in more detail in Part I.

CVAs have typically undertaken the initial assessment steps in the USAID programming cycle, but do not go into detail about the subsequent operational steps of program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. These steps involved in strategy development and program design and implementation are covered in Part II, including how to link the findings and recommendations of the CVA to the strategic planning process. The tasks in conflict and peacebuilding programming have normally involved development of the Country Strategy, designing specific programs for each of the strategic objectives (SOs) and intermediate results (IRs), and producing RFPs or RFAs. There may be a separate IR specifically for conflict and peacebuilding, but it is more common that they will be a cross-cutting theme to be mainstreamed into all development or humanitarian assistance programs as appropriate.

In many respects, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of peacebuilding programming and conflict-sensitive programming are much like M&E for any development sector or cross-cutting theme, such as gender. One difference is that the evaluative criteria used in assessing the impact of programs are derived from an understanding of the sources of conflict and capacities for peace. Conflict-sensitive M&E, moreover, requires not only assessing program performance, it also requires ongoing monitoring of the conflict itself and assessing the impact of conflict and peace on the program. More research and experience is still needed in designing and conducting M&E for peacebuilding programs. Nevertheless, new tools are being developed by USAID, and these are presented in Section III.

This Handbook draws on the experience so far in an activity known as “peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA). To date, the formulation of conflict-sensitive program designs based on assessing development programs’ impacts on conflict and peace has been pursued under this rubric. A PCIA is a method for determining the effects of an intervention on peace and conflict, and the effects of peace and conflict on the intervention. PCIA marries the relatively new goals of conflict and peacebuilding with the long-established methods of program evaluation, in order to apply conflict and peace impact criteria to development, humanitarian assistance, and transition programs, as well as programs that are explicitly conflict resolution or peacebuilding. Criteria having to do with program impacts on conflict and peace, however, can be applied in the design of programs, as well as in their monitoring and evaluation. PCIA can be carried out before programs are implemented to determine their potential future impacts, much as environmental impact assessments and gender impact assessments are utilized. PCIA can also be carried out during and after programs are implemented to gauge their impacts. Regardless of the phase in the programming cycle at which a PCIA is applied, it is concerned with how and how much a program decreases or eliminates the causes of the conflict or increases or builds capacities for peace. The Handbook returns to PCIA in Parts II and III.

Every African region and country is unique in its details; similarly, every USAID Mission and its partners differs. In designing conflict-sensitive programs, there cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” approach to conflict programming. For this reason, the Handbook seeks to provide a menu of options for a variety of contexts and contingencies for carrying out each step of the process from analysis to action. In Appendix III, websites are provided to facilitate access to resources, models, and tools that can be used at each of the stages required to carry out the conflict programming process. These resources include sample Scopes of Work for each phase, frameworks for conflict analysis, sample RFAs and RFPs, and illustrative Africa-contextualized indicators based upon USAID’s conflict indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

## **E. SCOPE AND PARTICIPANTS IN CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING**

Two themes related to the conflict programming process recur throughout this Handbook as a result of major concerns expressed by USAID field officers and their partners during a planning workshop for this document held in South Africa in 2003. One concern has to do with the importance of multisectoral programming. Multisectoral programming recognizes that just as there are multiple causes of conflict, the paths to conflict mitigation and peace must be flexible and interdisciplinary. Therefore, the integrated contributions of the various USAID sectors are critical. This Handbook will discuss how to involve SO teams in the conflict-sensitive programming process, how different sectors can exacerbate conflict or contribute to peace through their programming, and how to design conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools for different sectors.

The other underlying theme concerns collaboration with multiple stakeholders. USAID cannot be all things to all countries, and sustainable peace, like sustainable development, occurs when a strategy-based synergy exists between many relevant actors. Different partners, including other USG agencies, bi-lateral or multi-lateral donors, host governments, international and African NGOs, and the private sector, each may have something to contribute to peacebuilding. Numerous USAID evaluations and other studies conclude that effective conflict prevention, mitigation, and peacebuilding require the skills and resources of many actors who collaborate to the maximum extent possible. At the same time, each faces constraints and challenges. This Handbook discusses how to carry out programming that builds on the comparative strengths and resources of each stakeholder, including those of USAID, in order to design integrated, holistic interventions that promote sustainable peace and development.

# PART I: ANALYZING CONFLICT AND CAPACITIES FOR PEACE

The first step undertaken by USAID in the strategy development process and the planning and reporting cycle generally involves conducting assessments of the current conflict situation in the country or region for which interventions and activities are planned. Assessments in all sectors are conducted, as effective programming includes a clear understanding of the problems being faced, the identification of appropriate results, development of approaches to reach those results, determining the levels of resources, development of an organizational framework to achieve results, and defining the means to measure progress. In these ways, conflict analysis is similar to other cross-sectoral analyses such as gender or environment. Robust, multisectoral conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding programming must proceed from a thorough analysis of conflict as well as of the existing and potential capacities for peace. This analysis is called a conflict assessment (CA) by USAID/CMM, and a conflict vulnerability assessment (CVA) by the Africa Bureau. In this document, the term CVA will be employed.

As of the April 2004 release of the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) on CD-Rom, the Conflict Prevention Guidance for Strategic Planning states that “as part of preparing a new USAID country strategy, operating units are asked to: (1) prepare an appropriate vulnerability analysis that addresses the potential for conflict, (2) summarize the findings of such analyses in the strategy document, and (3) specifically indicate when and how these findings affect the proposed strategy.” Furthermore, “The objective of this strengthened vulnerability analysis is to: help safeguard the achievement of USAID strategic objectives and development investments; and make the need for costly post-conflict humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and reconstruction less likely.” As mentioned in the introduction, subsequent USAID policy papers emphasize the protection of USAID’s existing strategic objectives against the threat of conflict, as well as using USAID programs in a deliberate way to try to prevent or mitigate such conflicts.

The Mission carries out this analysis of conflict and of the existing and potential capacities for peace as part of the Mission’s series of assessments, prior to the articulation of its programming vision and a concept paper. Once the concept paper is submitted, and the operating unit has received planning parameters, more formal sector-specific technical analyses may be conducted followed by the making of strategic choices. At that point, the CVA becomes critical. A quality CVA is useful as a planning tool to both generalists (such as the PDO and the GDO) and to specialists (such as the SO team members) in the design of the strategic plan, including, as necessary, the use of scenario-based planning.

## **A. THE ELEMENTS AND ROLES OF CONFLICT VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS**

Conflict vulnerability assessments are composed of three distinct elements or components. There may be additional elements as well, but these three are always included.

The first component is the analysis of the causes or sources of the conflict(s) and the causes or sources of peace, or peace capacities, in a country or region. The analysts generally employ an existing analytical framework or may adapt one or a combination of existing frameworks to suit the specific context. Considerable overlap exists, however, in the factors that are listed in the several conflict analysis

frameworks developed by USAID, other donors, research institutions, and practice organizations in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

The second component of a CVA is the review of the Mission’s existing and planned programs to determine what impact they have in both contributing to peacebuilding and conflict reduction, or generating new or aggravating existing conflicts. In the case of a regional CVA, this would involve a review of the programs of all the Missions in that region.

The third component of a CVA contains the recommendations for the Mission’s strategy, programs, and activities. These recommendations are primarily designed for the Mission, but they may also include recommendations for other USG agencies and departments, for the host country government, for implementing partners, and for coordination with other donors. These components are visualized in Table I-A, which presents a blank “worksheet” in developing the analytical content for a CVA report.

**Table I-A.**  
**Common Components of CVAs**

I.	II.	III.
Causes of Conflict	Existing USAID and Implementing Partners’ Programs	Recommendations for Adding New Programs
Capacities for Peace	Recommendations for Modifications in Existing Programs	

**VARIETIES OF CVAS**

Beyond these essential elements, CVAs vary with respect to geographical coverage, depth, and methodology. USAID has conducted over 30 CVAs in sub-Saharan Africa.

National CVAs, which focus on conflict(s) in a single country, are by far the most common type. USAID has also undertaken regional CVAs in southern Africa and the Great Lakes Region. Regional CVAs focus on the conflicts within and between the countries in a particular region, the common causes of conflicts, the common causes of peace, and recommended regional, national, and local interventions.<sup>5</sup>

A number of CVAs have also been sub-national and cross-border in scope. For example, one CVA analyzed the conflicts in the Karamojong region, which encompasses portions of Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda. A national CVA for Ethiopia included a sub-regional cross-border component that analyzed the

<sup>4</sup> An excellent and comprehensive comparison of existing frameworks is to be found in Conflict-sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment: Resource Pack. pp. 12-40.

<sup>5</sup> USAID’s Regional CVAs are generally conducted for USAID’s Regional Offices. There are three Regional Offices in Africa.

conflicts in the pastoralist regions and border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Somaliland. This CVA included national level, supra-regional level (Ethiopia's relations with its neighbors), sub-national level (focusing on one specific region of the country), and cross-border components.

The depth of CVAs also can vary widely, depending on the character of the problems addressed, the resources and time available to USAID, and the timing in relation to the Mission or Regional Office's strategy development or programming cycle. In some cases the CVA will consist simply of a desk study. For example, the regional CVA for southern Africa consisted of a desk study alone. It was carried out by two researchers with considerable regional expertise who did not travel to Africa for the purpose of the CVA. Rather, they relied on an extensive review of the literature, previous studies, and policy documents from international, regional, and national organizations, and they drew upon their previous knowledge of the region and the field of conflict analysis and peacebuilding. At the opposite extreme, the Ethiopia CVA involved a team of approximately a dozen researchers from the US, other African countries, European countries, and Ethiopia. The team spent approximately six weeks in Ethiopia and traveled throughout the country and to almost all of its neighboring countries.

Clearly, the scope and depth of a given CVA will determine the team composition. Consequently, teams can be comprised of international and/or local external experts only, Mission personnel only, or a combination, and can have as many as 12 members or as few as one. Teams can spend as much as six weeks carrying out fieldwork or they can conduct a desk study and a literature review only and carry out no fieldwork whatsoever. Typically, however, teams are comprised of two to four people, who spend two to four weeks doing fieldwork, and conduct an initial literature review (desk study) in addition to the field research.

The methodology employed may also vary considerably. For example, some CVAs may involve developing alternative scenarios for the short- to medium-term situations in the country and then suggest strategies and contingency plans for addressing each scenario. CVAs are not, however, intended to be predictive studies or to provide precise forecasts of the future. Other CVAs may assume that there will be little change in the current situation, and thus describe alternative strategies for addressing that situation. Still others may involve not only general recommendations, but may require that the CVA team design the results framework.

## **TIMING THE CVA**

The outset of the strategic planning process is certainly the most opportune time to conduct an assessment. Assessments are also useful and sometimes necessary at other key times for USAID Mission.<sup>7</sup> CVA timing may also respond to changing circumstances in country situations. However, CVAs can be and are conducted during all phases in the strategic planning process. The program review and recommendations components are the most affected by the phase in the planning process in which the CVA is conducted.

A crucial issue of timing pertains to when a CVA is being conducted in relation to the phase of conflict that a country or countries within a region is experiencing. One of the goals of the CVA is to establish more clearly what level and phase of conflict different parts of a country or region are in at a given moment, for these different stages tend to require differing programming components or emphases. Some CVAs are conducted in countries that are in the throes of violent civil wars or wars with neighbors. Others are conducted in countries that are in the post-conflict period and are recovering from violent conflict. Still others may not have experienced violent conflict in the recent past, and are not experiencing

it in the present, but may be in a potential conflict phase and thus are experiencing an unstable peace,<sup>6</sup> in which rising tensions and other indicators of impending violent conflict abound.

Some countries in Africa are or appear to be enjoying a condition of stable and sustainable peace with no conflict in the recent past nor any serious prospect of violence. In such cases it may still be valuable to undertake a CVA to find why peace reigns in the country, how it has been established, and how it is being sustained. Lessons can be learned from countries at peace that are as valuable as those learned from countries in conflict. After identifying the capacities that contribute to that peace, interventions also can be designed and implemented to strengthen these capacities and to ensure that programs do not undermine them.

## **B. PREPARING FOR THE CVA**

### **PREPARING THE SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)**

It is the responsibility of the Mission to prepare the preliminary Scope of Work (SOW) for the CVA. Once the team and/or contractor have been identified, it may be revisited and refined in order to bring additional expertise to the task. Sometimes the fine-tuning and clarifying of the SOW can be accomplished via telephone and e-mail even before the team has arrived in the country, such as during the off-site Team Planning Meeting (TPM), in collaboration with the Mission by telephone and e-mail. Often, final agreement will be achieved after the team has arrived in-country during initial meetings with the USAID officer(s) overseeing the CVA and during the in-country TPM. Once the Mission and the team are in agreement about the final SOW, it should be distributed to all team members and relevant Mission staff.

#### **INFORMATION THAT MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE CVA SOW:**

- What is the purpose of the CVA?
- Where is the Mission in the strategic planning or programming cycle?
- What questions must the Mission have answered in order to proceed with the strategic planning or programming cycle?
- What is the scope of the CVA? Desk study only? Desk study and field research?
- What expertise is required for the CVA? How many people are needed for the CVA?
- How much time is needed/available for the CVA?
- What sites will the team visit? What are the criteria for site selection?
- Whom will the team meet? What categories of individuals, groups, and organizations do they need to meet?
- How much money is needed/available for the CVA?

Given the sensitivity of the topics that CVAs address, it is a good idea for the Mission staff to meet with the US Ambassador and other relevant US Embassy personnel during the preparation of the SOW. In some countries, there may be significant resistance on the part of other USG departments to the idea of USAID engaging in carrying out the CVA or carrying out conflict and peacebuilding activities. Sometimes, this may reflect in part the USG's relationship with the host government. In such instances, the scope of the CVA may have to be negotiated between USAID and the relevant departments or to the satisfaction of the Ambassador. It is also critical to secure permission for the team to travel to various parts of the country – or other countries in the case of a regional CVA – before the team arrives in-country.

It is also prudent for the Mission staff to meet with the relevant host government bodies during the preparation of the SOW. These meetings require considerable forethought and diplomacy. It is essential to inform the host government what the assessment team is doing, why it is being done, and how USAID plans to use the information obtained. Most governments are supportive of work that promotes

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<sup>6</sup> Conflict analysts use a number of terms to define different phases or stages of conflicts. These include positive peace, negative peace, stable, peace, unstable peace. See the Glossary for definitions.

peacebuilding within their respective countries and between them and their neighbors, but the nature of CVAs may also arouse suspicions. These suspicions must be acknowledged and addressed either directly or indirectly, depending on the context.<sup>8</sup>

A critical question that must be answered when preparing the SOW involves the degree of participation of other stakeholders in the analysis and programming processes. Participatory processes generally take more time and cost more money in the short term, but save time and money in the long term. It is important to keep in mind that participatory research and programming continue to be among the best practices in the field of peacebuilding (as well as in the fields of development and humanitarian assistance), and every effort should be expended to ensure that these processes be as participatory as possible given constraints of time and other resources.

#### NAMIBIA: BROAD STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (MS. MONICA KOEP)

USAID/Namibia is producing its second CVA for the new CSP for FY 04-10. By making the CVA development a more integral part of the process of developing the CSP, the Mission intends to build the CVAs' recommendations into the evolving strategy. This goal led the Mission to broaden the approach of the CVA to emphasize the multi-sectoral nature of conflict rather than have a narrowly DG-focused CVA. ~~The Mission structured the CSP process by orienting discussions toward five scenarios for southern Africa drawn from prevailing academic research.~~<sup>+</sup>

The Namibia CVA development process was geared toward ensuring broad legitimacy and acceptance of the findings and recommendations by promoting a widely-owned process that involved various stakeholders. This consultative process was also an early investment in building up the kind of stakeholder involvement that would be critical during the implementation stages. These stakeholders, identified in different sectors, were organized into roundtable meetings in key sectors. Individuals were drawn from groups with whom the Mission was already dealing and those that would likely become involved in conflict management issues. Specifically, these roundtable meetings involved consultants, local government, civil society and USAID staff – all of whom would participate in the CVA process. No Embassy personnel were included, however. These round-tables are now expected to be an on-going process for different types of activities associated with the implementation phase of the country strategy.

In writing the SOW to support the CVA, the Mission included themes from a 'scenario workshop' in which one day was devoted to discussion of each of the sectors and issues (e.g. Environmental issues/ HIV/AIDS) and another day to consolidating the issues into a cohesive set of priorities for research in the CVA. The scenario workshop findings defined the priority areas for the CVA based on comprehensive local knowledge developed from among the convened partners while a consultant helped meld USAID/AFR priorities and processes with local knowledge of USAID Mission staff and local consultants.

~~According to the Namibia Mission representative, elaborate as their process was it still raised a number of issues that need further discussion and for which guidance would be useful. For example, CVAs (and most other conflict analyses) do not examine the sources of resilience and the state of societal capacity to contain conflict; few analytical resources or programming resources are devoted to deepening such capacities. The experience also~~

## PUTTING THE TEAM TOGETHER

There are specific types of expertise that are required in order to successfully carry out the research and writing of a CVA. In broad terms, these are:

- Knowledge of the concepts and problems entailed in conflict and peacebuilding;
- Knowledge of the country and the region, particularly its social, political and economic conditions;
- Knowledge of USAID programs, the strategic planning process, and the programming cycle.

In addition, team members must have interviewing skills, the ability to organize, analyze, and synthesize large amounts of qualitative and quantitative data; cross-cultural and interpersonal skills; and writing skills. Team members must also be acceptable to the USG and to the host country government. It is rare to find all this expertise in a single individual, so teams are generally comprised of several members, one of whom is the designated team leader. The conflict specialist on the team often plays that role, given the central goal of applying a conflict lens to the society and existing policies and programs.

It is recommended that the team be composed of both international and local experts. At least one person on the team should be a professional from the host country. In highly divided societies, it is desirable that local team members represent the major identity groups (ethnic, religious, and regional groups), which may require having more than one local expert. This can be complicated however, and requires that the individual(s) responsible for identifying team members have a thorough understanding of the society.

In Nigeria, for example, parties to conflict represent different tribes, different regions, different religions, and different political parties. It might seem obvious that a team for a hypothetical CVA in Nigeria should include at least one Nigerian Christian and one Nigerian Muslim. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that some people's religion and ethnicity may overlap with their regional origin in some cases but not overlap in other cases. There are both Christian and Muslim members of the Yoruba ethnic group in southern Nigeria. Therefore, if the Christian and the Muslim selected to be on the team were both Yoruba, the team would likely still be perceived to be biased - in favor of the Yoruba and the south. Furthermore, specific individuals may be members of one group, but associated with or aligned with another group, for any number of reasons, such as marriage, business relationships, or political alliances. It is therefore essential to look beyond group membership and consider how specific individuals are perceived in their communities. Similar considerations should go into choosing interpreters.

Finally, the team may also have a member, generally a host country national, who will assist the team with logistics. This role may include setting up interviews, arranging transportation and accommodation, hiring translators and drivers, overseeing printing, photocopying, and similar tasks. Some care must also be taken in identifying this individual, since he/she will have access to the team's findings and written products, and will be privy to intra-team discussions and to some interviews.

Team identity is important because it influences investigator biases, and because it determines the perceptions that key informants and host governments have about the team. Investigator bias will have an impact on what data is collected and on how it is analyzed. Perceptions held about the team also have a significant impact on the quality of the data collected – particularly through interviews - since these perceptions will determine the level of trust that key informants and the host government have toward the team. In addition, the identity of team members may determine whether the team has access to specific regions or groups or individuals. For some of the same reasons, it is desirable that teams be gender

balanced. Ultimately, the perception held about the CVA team could have a crucial impact not only on the quality of the CVA but also on the perception of USAID programs in the country.

Among the most important participants in a CVA are the Mission or Regional Office personnel because they have the most knowledge about the Mission or Regional Office strategy and programs. More importantly, they are the people who will actually design and implement the activities stemming from the analysis and recommendations. It is highly recommended that Missions identify at least one staff person to participate in designing and conducting the research for the CVA.

It is also desirable that the Mission staff person overseeing the CVA and the CVA team members identify from the outset a ‘champion’ for carrying out the research and implementing the recommendations of the CVA report. Ideally, this person will be a senior staff member within USAID or at the Embassy – the more senior the better. The individual should be someone who can and will shepherd the CVA research and recommendations through the USG and the host country government.

## **FACILITATING REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTS**

An initial review of relevant literature is generally conducted before the team’s arrival in-country. However, the team will continue to collect documents throughout the assessment, particularly documents from institutions and organizations whose personnel are interviewed as part of the assessment. In general, this initial review is not a full-fledged literature review; but, in the event that the CVA is only a desk study and no field research is conducted, it should involve a full-fledged review and distillation of all authoritative literature that is relevant to the aims of the CVA.

In either case, this review should consist of mostly primary literature.<sup>9</sup> However, some people prefer to read secondary literature as well.<sup>10</sup> Others believe that this skews the CVA research, and prefer to read the secondary literature only after conducting the field research. It is recommended that a USAID staff member at post and in Washington participate in, or evaluate the desk review, and specifically examine pertinent classified documents that might not be available to consultants not holding security clearances.

There are a number of documents that are *always* an important part of this review. Among these documents are:

- The Country Strategic Plan (CSP);
- Previous Mission assessments, including DG, EG, environment, gender, etc.;
- Relevant Mission program documents, including those for peacebuilding programs;
- Relevant assessments conducted by other donors and implementing partners;
- Relevant program documents from other donors and implementing partners;
- Relevant host country government documents, such as PRSPs and relevant policy and program documents;
- Relevant quantitative data, particularly that relate to violence, armed conflict, humanitarian needs, and human migration;
- Relevant economic and political data (e.g. percentages of sources of foreign exchange from various sectors, percentages of votes for various parties/candidates by location);
- Third-party reports, such as those by human rights organizations;
- Published or unpublished secondary documents, such as conflict analyses from academic journals.

It is the responsibility of the Mission to provide the team with documents that pertain to the Mission itself. It is also recommended that the Mission obtain and provide the team with documents from other donors and implementing partners. Generally, it will be provided in the form of either the websites where the documents can be downloaded or in the form of electronic versions of the documents. Where only

hard copies exist, the Mission should provide them when the team arrives in-country or should mail them if there is sufficient time.

If possible, these documents should be obtained and read by the team before the initial Team Planning Meeting (TPM). The knowledge gained can guide the team in making preliminary decisions about methodology: the analytical framework; the questions to be answered; the programs to be reviewed; the key informant categories, individuals, groups, and organizations to be interviewed; and the sites to be visited. A team that arrives at the initial TPM – and even more importantly, arrives in-country – having already reviewed the documents will be able to utilize their time much more strategically. A useful general rule for CVAs is: the more knowledge of the subject that is gained early on, the more effective the CVA will be.

### **THE INITIAL TEAM PLANNING MEETING (TPM)**

Generally, the initial team planning meeting takes place in Washington, DC, so as to enable the team to meet with key individuals in relevant bureaus and centers in USAID/Washington – such as Africa Bureau, CMM, OTI, OFDA, FFP, PVC, DG; key individuals from the State Department, including the Country Desk Officer(s), and technical bureaus as relevant – INR (information and research), PRM (refugees), DRL (democracy, human rights, labor), INL (narcotics). Ideally, the team should meet with key contacts at academic and research institutions or other individuals with in-depth knowledge about the country and its political and economic circumstances and intra-regional relationships. This often means that only the international team members participate in the initial TPM. Sometimes – and this is highly recommended – the person responsible for overseeing the CVA within USAID will also participate in the initial TPM.

There are a number of topics that must be addressed during the initial TPM. These include:

#### **Products**

- Reviewing and suggesting refinements to the SOW;
- Selecting or developing an analytical framework;
- Refining the research (CVA) questions;
- Identifying the various remaining sources of information that need to be examined;
- Determining specific key informants and categories of key informants;
- Drafting a preliminary outline of the report; and
- Discussing sites to be visited.

#### **Processes**

- Arranging for logistics and administrative tasks;
- Agreeing on individual team members' roles and responsibilities;
- Sharing personal and work habits and preferences; and
- Teleconferencing with the Mission.

## **C. FORMULATING THE CVA METHODOLOGY**

### **ADOPTING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The team leader needs to guide the group through a collaborative and iterative research design process, beginning with the design of the analytical framework. In order to analyze the causes of existing and potentially violent conflict within a given country or region, as well as to identify the capacities and potential for building and sustaining peace, the team needs to be guided by a list of key questions that all become familiar with. Such a list of key questions helps to focus the team members on the various factors

that are most likely to be driving conflict at different causal levels and to avoid being distracted by the multitude of extraneous or trivial factors. Consequently, some framework is essential for determining what questions the team should ask and what data the team should seek.<sup>11</sup>

To assess the status of conflict and peace, the team will generally need to rely on an existing analytical framework or may adapt one or more existing frameworks to the specific context. It is rarely feasible for a team to have time to develop a new framework for a specific context.<sup>12</sup> Because of the size of the research literature on causes of conflict, a few scholars have surveyed as much of it as possible in order to develop summary lists of the main causes that appear to be common to many of the empirical studies. One of the best such frameworks is the USAID Conflict Assessment Framework developed by the Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management. It is recommended that several of these rigorous, research-based frameworks be provided to all team members prior to the initial TPM. Team members can then review them ahead of time and be prepared for discussion of the particular framework to be employed for the CVA at the TPM.

This initial discussion is crucial in order to ensure that the team members share a mutual understanding of the substantive scope and tasks entailed in the field research and have a menu of options from which to pick and choose as they refine the framework for the particular context. Of course, this analytical framework should not be applied rigidly or exclusively. Every CVA team should also remain open to particular contextual factors that may not appear in existing frameworks. Although the team members should continue to adapt and refine the framework as they become more immersed in the field research, establishing this common frame of reference should be a high priority at the outset in order to avoid serious confusion about the focus of the data collection, the data analysis, and the written report.

#### **CASE STUDY: DESIGNING THE ASSESSMENT FOR NIGERIA/DEVELOPING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR NIGERIA**

During an evaluation conducted for OTI in Nigeria that included a CVA as a component of the research, the team leader used a participatory approach to build consensus at every step of the data collection, data analysis, and drawing up recommendations processes, beginning with the framework and methodology designs.

The team came to the initial TPM having conducted a preliminary review of both the existing conflict assessment models and the literature relating to the causes of conflict in Nigeria. (Nigeria is a country for which there is a voluminous amount of literature pertaining to the causes of conflict. For other countries there may be a severe scarcity of literature.) Based on that review and interviews with Nigeria experts in Washington, DC, the team spent several hours experimenting with potential frameworks for the purpose of organizing the data collection relating to sources of conflict.

During the team's first meeting with the mission, the tentative framework was presented. Viewing the framework enabled the mission to tell which elements among the sources of conflict on which it wanted the team to focus – and on which ones it did not want the team to focus.<sup>13</sup> The mission was also able to offer suggestions for designing the framework so that it could be linked to the program review and, ultimately, the recommendations, in ways that were meaningful and useful for the mission.

As the process of data collection and analysis progressed, and as the recommendations began to emerge from the data analysis, the team met internally and with the mission several times to review and revise the framework, to present the findings to date, and to initially delineate and flesh out the recommendations. This process involved constantly revisiting the framework to ensure that it continued to be based on empirical evidence and that it continued to serve its purpose of guiding the data collection and analysis, and of linking findings and recommendations. The process was concluded only

It is important to remember that the framework developed at the initial TPM is still only a preliminary draft. It should be reviewed and revised in collaboration with the Mission and any team members who were not at the initial TPM, such as Mission personnel or local consultants, during the in-country TPM. In some CVAs, the in-country TPM is the initial TPM. The advantages and disadvantages to this are primarily related to expense, and that is largely dependent on where the team members reside.

## DECIDING ON DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION METHODS

Decisions about data collection will depend on a number of factors. These include:

- Time available;
- Funds available;
- Security conditions;
- Political sensitivities;
- Team members' collective skills;
- Team member and Mission's preferences.

CVA teams typically obtain data from the following types of investigative methods during the field research:

- Individual interviews with key informants;
- Representatives of specific categories of stakeholders;
- Focus groups comprised of specified categories of stakeholders;
- Participant observation – especially of USAID-supported activities, such as peacebuilding training sessions, dialogues, conferences, and similar activities.

It is the responsibility of the Mission to provide a preliminary list of key informants that can be reviewed by the team during the initial TPM. To save time, the Mission can arrange appointments with at least some of the individuals on the list for the first few days of the field research. The latter include individuals for whom protocol requires that the team meet, and individuals whose buy-in is essential for the success of the research and for program implementation. These could include key Embassy personnel, key host government personnel, individuals who could provide the team with access to other key contacts, and individuals with exceptional knowledge of the context.

However, it is the responsibility of the team to expand upon this list vertically (i.e., adding different levels) and horizontally (i.e., identifying different groups of stakeholders) as the research gets underway. Based on the framework, the team should finalize the types or categories and numbers of individuals, groups, and organizations that should be interviewed during the field research. While the context determines the relevant key contacts and categories of individuals, groups, and organizations, some key individuals and categories are almost always interviewed when conducting a CVA. While not an exhaustive list, some of these are:

- Mission Director or Deputy Mission Director (or Regional Mission Director or Deputy Regional Mission Director);
- SO team leaders;
- Ambassador;
- DCM;
- Political Officer;
- Economic Officer;
- Military Attaché;
- Security Officer;
- Highest individual accessible in relevant ministries of host country governments;
- Other donors;
- Implementing partners;
- Civil society organizations (including women's organizations);<sup>13</sup>
- Research and academic institutions;
- Community leaders – official and traditional;

- Religious leaders; and
- Media representatives.

As with the framework, the decisions made about these choices should be reviewed and revised in collaboration with the Mission and any team members who were not at the initial TPM – such as Mission personnel or local consultants – during the in-country TPM. It is important, however, that the team members ultimately decide whom to interview or not to interview. They should be encouraged to reach beyond the usual individuals and groups with whom the Mission normally communicates – and with whom the Mission may not be able to communicate. The exception is when the Mission perceives that the team’s meeting with a particular individual would seriously compromise the safety and security of the team members.

## **D. CONDUCTING THE FIELD WORK**

### **THE IN-COUNTRY PLANNING MEETING**

As soon as the CVA team arrives in the country or countries to be studied, the most important task in conducting the fieldwork is the establishment of a working relationship between the Mission and the team. Communication between the Mission and the team is essential at initial and later points during the CVA process, although it should ideally be continuous. The Mission must be committed to allocating time for meeting with the team. Time spent now will be time saved later. In order for the team to collect data that is useful to the Mission, to conduct a meaningful program review, and to make recommendations that the Mission is willing and able to implement, the team must have information and knowledge that only the Mission is able to provide.

Among the issues and tasks these discussions should cover are:

- Logistical arrangements
- Further clarification of the SOW
- Program information from SO teams
- Revisiting the analytical framework and research (CVA) questions
- Finalizing the data collection methods and the sites to be visited
- Identifying the specific individuals to be interviewed under each of the various categories of stakeholders decided earlier
- Finalizing the report outline
- Establishing procedures for working with the SO teams
- Debriefing(s) schedule (mid-term, final)

### **COLLECTING THE DATA**

The primary data collection activity of a CVA is almost always conducting interviews. These may be individual interviews or group interviews. Once the initial list of key informants has been identified, the next and most important step is developing the interview protocol. By this time the team will have a general idea of what information is needed or what questions need to be answered, and will be ready to articulate and formulate interview questions. They will also be able to make decisions about which key informants can provide answers to which questions and which topics can be broached with which key informants.

The next decision is to determine how team members are going to introduce themselves, the purpose of the research, and the purpose of the interview. It is essential that the Mission and the team make this decision collaboratively, because how the research is described and perceived by the host country

government and other stakeholders can have a profound impact on the Mission's relationships and its ability to carry out its work. In many contexts, for example, describing the purpose as looking for vulnerability to "conflict" may disturb officials and others, whereas describing the focus as "obstacles to development" may be more suitable.

Some key informants will require formal letters of introduction. The Mission will be best placed to know who will require formal letters of introduction, and will prepare the letters and provide them to the appropriate team members. For some interviews, primarily the US Ambassador and senior level host country government officials, it will be necessary for representatives of the Mission to accompany team members to the interviews to make the introductions personally.

Other decisions that will have to be made involve the structure, the substance, and the logistics of the interviews, including:

- Will the interviews employ closed-ended or open-ended questions or both?
- How much time should be allotted for specific interviews?
- What is the best location for specific interviews?
- What is the best time of day or week for specific interviews?
- Which team members should participate in which interviews?
- How many team members should participate in each interview?
- How will team members share responsibility for asking the questions or guiding the discussion in each interview?
- How will team members share responsibility for recording the findings of each interview?
- How will team members share or report the findings of each interview to the entire team?

## **FIELDWORK CAVEATS**

The process of conducting research for a CVA sometimes presents dilemmas that do not necessarily arise in a conventional sectoral assessment and in more stable countries. The reason is that the causes and consequences of conflict may include corruption; organized crime; armed opposition groups; human rights violations perpetrated by governments and other groups; illegal arms, drugs, or human trafficking; and a host of other illegitimate or illegal actions and activities and other sensitivities. CVAs are sometimes carried out in countries experiencing violent conflict in one or more regions. These may represent barriers or even threats to the investigative process.

The team should always consult with the Mission about where it is safe and where it is unsafe to travel. Talking to the Security Officer can sometimes serve not only to alert the team to risky areas but also inform them further about the conflict environment. Sometimes, the team may be unable to obtain permission from the Embassy or the host country government to travel to specific areas. As frustrating as this may be, the team should always comply with such restrictions.

In addition to refraining from traveling to dangerous or restricted areas, the team should be judicious about putting itself in danger by appearing to be too interested in or to know too much about illegitimate or illegal actions and activities. One of the greatest challenges for the CVA team involves the collection and management of sensitive information. The team must constantly ask itself whether it is crucial to obtain specific information if the pursuit of such information will unnecessarily raise suspicions about the purpose of the CVA, will jeopardize USAID's relationship with the government, or will place the team or its contacts in danger. A balance must also be struck between the need to gather meaningful information, and the need to obtain and maintain the participation and buy-in of the government and other stakeholders.

Other ethical dilemmas may also present themselves during the course of a CVA. Occasionally a key informant will provide sensitive information that only they could possess. A judgment will have to be made when writing the report whether to include that individual's name in the list of contacts or whether or not to include the information in the report.

Researchers sometimes get caught up in the excitement of uncovering controversial information. It is important to remember that a CVA is not an inquisition, and the interview is not an interrogation. Sometimes key informants 'lobby' the researchers either to gain a mouthpiece for their view of the conflict or situation in their country or to gain access to USAID funds for their organization. Maintaining a balanced perspective is an ongoing challenge when conducting research in highly charged situations.

The interview is also an opportunity. The act of posing questions itself begins the process of social change. The interview can begin the process of obtaining buy-in from stakeholders. Therefore articulating questions and adopting an interview style that are elicitive rather than prescriptive, and collaborative rather than adversarial, can be a catalyst for constructive responses to conflict and positive approaches to peacebuilding.

#### **SOUTH AFRICA: ~~ON THE SPOT ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY~~ FOCUSING A CVA ON CURRENT PRIORITIES**

The South Africa Mission conducted a CVA in FY01-02 at a time when Mission management was very sensitive to conflict issues and did not rate the Republic of South Africa (RSA) as "most vulnerable." Given the strategy review, the South Africa CVA focused on how to assist government at the local level and how to address crime, which had emerged as the most immediate threat to economic and social life. The CVA activities and follow-up strategy focused on working with civil society, which was dealing with managing local conflicts on a daily basis. Rather than established political parties or governmental institutions, it was the community groups and especially churches that took a leading role in managing conflict that arose in communities. However, the larger "national" transition-from-apartheid related conflicts (such as those that emerged from evidence presented at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) remained unaddressed especially as victims sought compensation or follow up action from government. Moreover, the role of the private sector has been critical-crucial to but limited in the conflict management process in South Africa. The CVA team therefore sought to promote the private sector's role in addressing possible triggers or interventions to prevent conflict.

The question of access to resources, especially given the enduring inequality of levels and quality of services delivered by ~~the~~ local governments, was one issue that USAID South Africa considered a threat to peaceful relations. Although the level and quality of service delivery to the townships was previously very low, there had been improvements by incorporating the townships into service centers such as in Pretoria, where services levels and standards are higher due to historic factors. However, due to enduring poverty and unemployment, violent crime remains a big threat to democracy in South Africa. This situation poses-posed a serious threat to DG and other sector programs in South Africa as social violence induces instability in economic and social activities and could very easily escalate into political violence, as happened in regions such as Kwazulu-Natal in 1993-1994.

The situation has remained more stable for electoral processes and competition in that political conflict has been contained and managed through legitimate electoral processes and electoral violence has been low. <sup>4</sup> There have been two successful general elections (i.e. 1994 and 1999), including national, provincial, and local government elections. Given the development of democratic institutions in South Africa over the last decade, the current Mission's position is that fundamental gains have been consolidated in electoral democracy and thus USAID will not provide any assistance to electoral activities. However, the lack of a strong, credible opposition party remains a concern for the development of democracy in the country. Several minor political parties exist but they have small constituency bases when compared with the current ruling party – they therefore pose no challenge or credible countervailing power.

Finally, the coordinated voice of civil society of the late pre-transition and early transition period (1990-1995) no longer exists and civil society remains in a state of flux since most of its leadership has been absorbed into government or business. While civil society has made great strides in some sectoral issues – e.g. HIV/AIDS – it has been less successful on other issues, such as land reform, where the conflict potential is much more immediate given events in Zimbabwe. In addition, civil society's role in policy remains marginal and its watchdog role has severely eroded due to the departure of experienced leaders into politics, business or government. In other conflict areas, the CSO role in moderating voices and demands and in mitigating violence is widely recognized in South Africa. For instance, civil society organizations are credited with establishing a new level of tolerance such that when a person dies in contentious circumstances (e.g. police custody, racially or ethnically-toned confrontation, etc.) there is no longer the kind of violent uproar and retaliatory action of the late apartheid and early post-apartheid periods. Such achievements can be credited to local peace and development organizations which have contributed to a decrease in destabilizing public outbursts by training community leaders and building levels of tolerance for different political views and values and for due process.

## **ANALYZING THE DATA**

Every team member will have different work styles and every team will work together differently. However, it is recommended that team members meet at regular intervals to monitor the data collection process to make adjustments to the interview protocol, particularly the specific questions that need to be answered, and to adjust the list of key informants and categories of stakeholders who are to be interviewed. The team should also meet regularly to provide each other updates on their findings, to undertake a joint analysis of the findings, to discuss the implications of the findings for the recommendations, and to engage in a joint process of developing the recommendations. This is rarely a linear process, but does require frequent interaction to revisit and refine the emerging findings, the analysis, and the recommendations.

## **DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of the CVA with regard to the sources of conflict and the existing capacities for peaceful management of conflicts provide the basis for making recommendations to the Mission. The basic concern here is: in view of the specific conflict sources and peace capacities that were uncovered through the conflict vulnerability assessment, what programs may already be addressing them effectively, what gaps exist, and what program changes or new interventions are needed? It is usually beyond the capacity of CVAs to do an in-depth assessment of the impacts of individual programs on conflict and peace. Thus, those tasks are discussed in Part II in more depth as part of the process of designing and implementing conflict-sensitive programs and strategies. However, CVAs should go as far as they can beyond identifying the sources of conflict and peace to make at least preliminary recommendations about their apparent implications for the Mission's programming.

## **MAPPING AND MATCHING**

A useful way to quickly identify where specific changes in existing USAID programming may be needed is to “map” the problem focuses of the existing USAID development programs and “match” those focuses against the causes of conflict identified by the CVA.<sup>14</sup> This mapping and matching can identify where USAID programs already may be reducing the causes of violence and bolstering peace capacities -- whether consciously and intentionally or not -- and also where gaps exist and thus new initiatives might be warranted. Because most major USAID programs are likely to have some bearing on the causes of conflict identified by a CVA, it is important to look at *every* active program sector as to its positive or negative effects on conflict sources or peace capacities, rather than assuming that some program sectors are more relevant to conflict than others.

Table II-A illustrates in a hypothetical case how such an exercise could bring to light whether certain illustrative conflict causes might uncover programming gaps and potential areas for new program efforts. As shown in the right column, several existing programs at least appear to be addressing three of the causes of conflict that were identified by the CVA (see left column). However, no USAID programs are addressing the conflict risks stemming from limited minority representation in government or the corrupt, ineffective police force. Thus, the report should point out these gaps and advise where and what kinds of programs might fill them.

**TABLE I-B: MAPPING WHETHER USAID PROGRAMS MATCH THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

WHAT ARE THE CONFLICT CAUSES IDENTIFIED BY THE CVA?	IS A USAID PROGRAM ADDRESSING THIS CAUSE?
Executive branch domination (An institutional risk factor) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliant judiciary</li> <li>• Weak independent media</li> <li>• Divided, ineffective political parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner A's judicial development</li> <li>• Internews media strengthening</li> <li>• Partner B's parliamentary program</li> </ul>
Limited minority representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Corruption and lack of accountability at local and national levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal Reform Project</li> <li>• Local Governance Initiative</li> <li>• Tax/fiscal reform and decentralization</li> <li>• Regulatory Reform</li> <li>• SME Regulatory Reform Project</li> </ul>
Weak, ethnically segmented civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Society Support Centers</li> <li>• Partner C's Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society</li> <li>• Grants program</li> </ul>
Corrupt, ineffective police force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>

## WRITING THE REPORT

At the initial TPM, the team will have produced a draft outline of the CVA report and each team member will have taken responsibility for writing specific sections of the report. Some of these may change after the research has been conducted as new information requires a modified outline, and as individual team members gain knowledge about specific topics. Some individuals may be in a better position to write some sections than others. Generally, the team leader will be responsible for putting all the pieces together.

Ideally, an initial draft of the report will be written before the team leaves the country. This initial draft may be no more than a list of bullet points with the main findings and the main recommendations. It is recommended that the team debrief the Mission and present these findings and recommendations, before the next draft of the report is submitted to the Mission for review. This will save both the team and the Mission time spent writing and reviewing a report that does not meet the Mission's needs.

The Mission may also wish the team to make a formal presentation to a larger audience before leaving the country. This presentation may include members of the US Mission to that country, representatives of the host country government, other donors, and implementing partners. This may be the case if the Mission is already engaged in or planning to engage in collaborative planning with other stakeholders. It may also be called for if the Mission has requested that the report include recommendations not only for USAID, but also for other donors, the host government, and/or implementing partners. These occasions provide further opportunities for engaging audiences in ways that can encourage their buy-in to the assessment.

A critical decision will involve how to handle sensitive information in the report and in oral briefings. It is important to find a balance between a report that can be distributed to and utilized by a wide range of stakeholders, and a report that has been sanitized to the point that it contains little useful information. In some cases, it may be desirable to prepare two reports – one for external distribution and one for internal

or selective distribution. When writing the report, great care must be taken to ensure that the document remains unclassified. The report may include a supplement that contains classified information for internal use only.

# PART II: CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAM DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

As presented in Part I, the CVA has applied a specified framework of questions to identify immediate and more basic sources of existing or potential violent conflicts in a country or region, as well as the capacities for peace. It has also done a quick “mapping” of the existing USAID programs and judged whether they appear to be helping to reduce those sources of conflict or to strengthen the capacities for peace. Based on these analyses, the CVA makes recommendations for action to the Mission or other intended users of the CVA report.

Once the CVA report is complete, the Mission or Regional Office should then use it to inform the design and implementation of its programs, projects, and activities and the country strategic plan. As introduced earlier, the basic idea of conflict-sensitive programming is that there should be specific logical and operational implications of the findings of a CVA for the programs that Missions and Regional Offices design, implement, monitor, and evaluate. Because the CVA has undertaken only a quick review of existing programs in order to make its recommendations, the second major stage in conflict-sensitive programming involves a more complete, in-depth examination of existing programs and the formulation and implementation of specific changes where needed to respond to the findings of CVA, including possibly adding new programs.

The central aim in designing a conflict-sensitive program and/or strategy is that it decreases or eliminates the causes of violent conflict or that it increases or builds the capacities for peace. Program designers need to look at the causes of conflict and peace as identified by the conflict vulnerability assessment and consider what changes to existing activities and/or new activities can have an impact on them. The criteria for designing successful interventions are the “reducers” of the causes of a given conflict and the “magnifiers” of the causes of peace that are operating in that particular conflict.

Ideally, this stage begins when all sectoral diagnostic assessments such as conflict as well as DG and other assessments have been completed and the Mission is developing its country strategy, and thus simultaneously, its SOs, IRs, and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Program planners are advised to approach the process of designing a conflict-sensitive program and strategy ideally by considering what *should* be done before considering what *can* be done. Then they can turn to *whether* and *how* what *should* be done *can* be done. Given limited resources, the *how* of programming is best addressed by first carefully designing USAID programs in a conflict-sensitive manner and also collaborating with other actors to divide responsibilities for different interventions.

Accordingly, this Part lays out the tasks in moving from CVA findings and recommendations to formulating and implementing conflict-sensitive programs and overall multi-program strategies. Drawn from experience in Africa and other regions in conflict analysis and peacebuilding programming, this guidance also can inform the preparing of concept papers, the parameters cable, and writing scopes of work (SOWs) for request for proposals (RFPs) and requests for applications (RFAs). To respond to the CVA, this stage of conflict-sensitive program design and implementation involves the following steps and issues:

1. Designing Program Changes: What specific conflict-sensitive modifications in the existing programs, or additions through new programs, are needed, if any?
2. Strategy Development: How can the programs be combined and sequenced so as to form a coherent, multi-sectoral approach to reducing conflict and building peace?
3. Encouraging Multi-Partner Engagement: In addition to USAID programs, which other USG and other actors can be encouraged to focus needed programs on the conflict causes and peace capacities?
4. Implementing Programming Changes: Can the old or new programs be feasibly implemented so as to be conflict-sensitive under the existing political and resource context, and if so, how should they be implemented?

The following sections outline the steps through which USAID programs can begin to break into the chain of events that fuel conflict. The examples presented are not exhaustive and do not include many important areas of intervention. They are meant only to illustrate some of the ways programs might be modified in environments of conflict and some of the issues that need to be considered.

## **A. DESIGNING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMS**

### **ASSESSING EXISTING PROGRAMS**

It is crucial to follow up the mapping and matching exercise described in Part I with a more detailed look at each of the programs that appear to be addressing sources of conflict or capacities of peace. Just because a program is ostensibly directed at a problem area that has been identified as a conflict cause does not necessarily mean that the program is in fact actually affecting that conflict cause. Consider the importance of whether the programs are appropriately targeted, geographically and/or in terms of population categories. For example, a youth employment program in a region that is not at high risk for violence may be a good development program, but unless it is geared toward youth who have an incentive to participate in violence, it is not doing conflict management. As a result, to determine whether a program that is addressed to a conflict cause is in fact affecting it in the way desired, requires a closer look at several dimensions of the program.

Hence, the first major task in designing conflict-sensitive programming is to consider what, if any, specific conflict-sensitive modifications may be needed in existing programs. Many facets of those programs may determine whether they are effecting a given cause of a conflict. These aspects include the program's timing, geographic location, specific target groups, magnitudes, distribution of benefits, hiring practices, and several other aspects. The concrete operational changes that might be needed in existing programs may include, for example:

- Increasing or decreasing support for existing programs
- Expanding or reducing program activities
- Terminating specific programs
- Restructuring program activities
- Changing program locations
- Changing target populations
- Changing implementing partners
- Changing program staff

## DESIGN CRITERIA FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY

The central issue to consider is whether existing programs are adequately addressing and influencing the identified causes of conflict and capacities of peace. This analytical process can begin by a thorough evaluation of the following questions:

- Are programs addressing the causes of conflict? If so, which ones?
- Are programs building or strengthening the causes of and capacities for peace? If so, which ones?
- Are there causes of conflict or causes of peace that are not being addressed?

More specifically, certain conflict-sensitive criteria can be applied to a program design. These design criteria help to identify whether specific causal linkages are operating between the features of a program and the causes of conflict and capacities for peace. The best way to ascertain in a given situation whether existing programs are currently helping the cause of conflict reduction and building peace is to “test” it through applying the criteria by which to judge success. For example, a program may be able to reduce a key cause of the conflict if it:

- Contributes to the development of structures and processes for handling grievances, disputes, and conflicts through peaceful means
- Contributes to a culture of peace, reinforces important societal values, and tackles ethical norms conducive to peace.
- Connects to interventions at other levels from community, sub-regional, national, regional, and international.
- Supports people to resist, or directly thwarts, violence and provocations to violence
- Contributes to people’s security and sense of security

As seen here, USAID programs might aim to address the structural causes, the proximate or accelerating causes, or the triggers of a conflict (See Appendix II).

By the same token, programs can strengthen peace capacities that may operate on all those levels. Employing a positive approach builds on local peace capacities in that it focuses on what contributes to peace in a situation, not only on what contributes to conflict. A positive approach is not meant to suggest that the causes of conflict can be ignored, or that it is unnecessary to focus on solving those problems. It simply means that an important place to start in designing interventions lies with what already may be working well in a given context.

In short, program designers should be explicit about at which level or levels of causality programs are expected to have an impact. As discussed more fully under implementation below, they must also ask themselves whether it is feasible for USAID to have an impact at the level which they are designing programs to address.

## AVOIDING HARM

It is important to consider whether existing programs are “doing harm” by worsening the sources of conflicts or weakening the capacities in society for managing them in a peaceful manner. To consider how development action can worsen conflicts, it is useful to consider the policy instruments that aid agencies typically employ in the course of development work and how they may contribute to conflict. Some of these common interventions include:

- Technical economic advice, such as those relating to fiscal and monetary policies
- Promoting centralization or decentralization of governmental authority in various contexts

- Allocating resources geographically, through the sites selected for social or economic development assistance or the type of economic development assistance, in ways that may privilege one geographical location over another
- Influencing the uses of revenues from natural resources, such as fossil fuels, minerals, forests, and water in Africa
- Privatization, especially if the economic opportunities generated are not or are not perceived to be transparent and/or equitable

Inadvertently, such routine USAID and other donors' program decisions may be causing harm in terms of conflict and peace. Unfortunately, conventional opinion or program distribution surveys, for example, often may be "conflict-blind" because they do not detect such adverse impacts. For example, they do not disaggregate their data in terms of the ethnic, religious, racial, regional or other relevant group identities that have often been the most critical constituencies for or parties to conflicts. Gender and Development (GAD) and certain ethically-sensitive approaches to assessment, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, may provide more sensitive tools for assessing whether programs are conflict-reductive or conflict-promoting.

### **PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

To get a firm handle on such impacts, ideally, peace and conflict impact assessments (PCIA) should be carried out prior to program design and implementation. That way, conflict and peace criteria can be brought to bear on the details of programs. A PCIA is a comprehensive, in depth method for determining the effects of an intervention specifically on conflict and/or peace. PCIA marry the relatively new goals of conflict and peacebuilding with the long-established methods of program evaluation, in order to apply conflict and peace impact criteria to development programs. PCIA evaluate an actual or proposed action (program, project, etc.) in terms of whether it does/can actually decrease or eliminate the causes of the conflict or increase or build capacities for peace. Done at this stage, PCIA are used to gauge the prospective impacts of programs being considered, and thus *before* they are put into operation.

However, unless PCIA already have been completed by the time that these design tasks arise, it may be too difficult or costly to do them for all the programs in a Mission's portfolio before deciding what program changes are needed. Nevertheless, over time, the findings from such conflict-sensitive PCIA-type program evaluations will accumulate. These can be filed and synthesized into case histories documenting what kinds of interventions are successful under different circumstances.

### **DESIGNING NEW INTERVENTIONS**

Since it is unlikely that changes in existing programming alone will adequately address all the major causes of conflict or capacities of peace identified in a CVA, another task is to suggest new areas and methods of intervention into the conflict situation. The range of programs that might possibly be appropriate in a given conflict situation is very broad. Program designers should feel encouraged to consider innovative options that may lie outside the normal scope of a Mission's existing program portfolio (see textbox).

**INNOVATIVE REINTEGRATION PROGRAM:  
WILDERNESS PROJECT (NATIONAL PEACE ACCORD TRUST IN SOUTH AFRICA)**

Young people who are former enemies from the same community are brought together on a seven-day 'Transformation Trail'. The project aims to contribute to the building of a culture of peace in the community by addressing individual healing, reconciliation between opposing groups, and re-integration with the community. Conventional types of therapeutic intervention appeared unsuccessful because of the young people's suspicion of authority figures, the fear of having to reveal their role in the killings, and the perception that therapy is for 'mad' people. Wilderness Therapy was seen to be sufficiently robust. The physical obstacles, challenges, achievements and their parallel psychological equivalents are dealt with in terms of the same process. The Trail includes a night in sacred Bushmen caves - a site of healing trance dance. To reframe the community's perception of the criminalized young people, the project draws on a tradition of millennia that affords heroic status to individuals returning to a community from the wilderness. After the Trail, participants become involved in an ongoing support programme comprising informal counseling, life skills workshops, job and entrepreneurial-skills training. Participants have grouped together to form small businesses. Some earn their living as Trail assistants. An informal club was established, allowing youths to continue building relationships and become involved in cultural activities and community development projects (Robertson 1999).

To illustrate the great variety of programs that might be appropriate, it is useful to list as in Table II-A some of the more obvious kinds of programs that have already been used to address conflicts by USAID and other actors. The menu is not complete but only suggestive of the multi-sectoral options that may be applicable in conflict situations, if tailored in particular ways to fit each context.

**Table II-A:  
A Menu of Sectoral Conflict Mitigation Programs**

To address structural socio-economic causes:

Economic and Social Development Instruments

- Infrastructure rehabilitation projects
- Community development projects
- Conditional economic aid
- Targeted anti-poverty programs
- Economic sanctions
- Enterprise development
- Micro-credit programs
- Basic social services (health, education)
- Grassroots dialogues
- Scientific or functional cooperation

Humanitarian Instruments

- Humanitarian relief aid
- Conditional relief assistance
- Refugee and IDP assistance
- Reintegration programs
- Humanitarian law and codes of conduct
- International humanitarian law advocacy and promotion
- Refugee education and job training

To address proximate political and institutional factors:

Human Rights Instruments

- Reporting and dialogue regarding human rights standards (e.g., UN Treaty Bodies)
- Special country and thematic *rapporteurs*
- Technical cooperation for human rights capacity-building (e.g., human rights education, specialized training for judges, army and police)
- National human rights institutions
- Visits of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
- Human rights monitoring
- Civilian volunteer witnesses
- Indigenous dispute resolution processes
- International Commissions of Inquiry
- International Criminal Court
- International War Crimes Tribunals
- Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
- Special Commissions and Inquiries
- Human Rights Ombudsmen
- Domestic NGO watchdog organizations

Political Development, Governance and Education Instruments

- Democratic institution capacity-building

- Election observation and assistance
- Legislative assistance
- Judiciary reform
- Legal reform
- Peace commissions and committees
- Executive capacity-building
- National conferences and civil society assemblies
- Peace education in schools
- Peace campaigns
- Peace and reconciliation radio
- Civic education

To address accelerators and triggers:

Diplomatic and Judicial Instruments

- Special envoys
- Good offices
- Enquiry
- Conciliation
- Mediation
- Negotiations
- Unofficial political/policy dialogues
- Peace commissions and committees
- Confidence and security building measures
- Conciliatory gestures
- Methodical crisis consultations
- Fact-finding missions
- Civilian volunteer witnesses
- Political observers
- Arbitration
- Institutionalized collective bargaining
- Judicial settlement
- Non-violent action methods and training

Military Instruments

- Preventive disarmament
- Small arms controls
- Arms embargoes
- Demobilization
- Preventive deployment
- Confidence and security building measures
- Security sector reform

The inventorying of possible options can be very well served by a careful reading of the several program toolkits that USAID/CMM is developing for different sectors. To assist Missions in identifying what kinds of approaches and specific programs might be best suited for certain causes of conflict and in designing appropriate conflict-sensitive programs, USAID/CMM is developing a set of issues-oriented menus of especially promising approaches. The purpose of the toolkits is to present concise introductions to the linkages between, on the one hand, typical problem and programming areas out of which conflicts can arise, such as land, youth, oil, mineral, forests, livelihoods, gender, local government, and religion, and, on the other hand, the options and USAID program offices and technical staff might choose for conflict-sensitive programmatic interventions. The content of the toolkits is based on field experiences, best practices and lessons learned by USAID and other members of the development community and is presented in user-friendly formats for both generalists and sectoral experts who do not have backgrounds in peace and conflict programming. In addition, the toolkits will provide survey indicators for assessing the peace and conflict impacts relevant to specific sectors, and further organizational and individual resources to consult and their contact information.

## **KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Programs can target causes of conflict and capacities for peace at the international, regional, national, sub-regional, or community levels. Usually, the sources of conflicts arise from several of these levels simultaneously, and it is the interactions between these levels that drive a conflict to expand in scope and to increase in intensity. The main entry point of some programs is regional or national level decision-makers; others target mid-level actors, such as city officials, members of the media, religious leaders, business leaders, or academics; and still others target community level actors and/or individual households. To be effective, interventions will ideally aim to have an impact at several of these levels: program effects may be expected to “trickle down” or “trickle up.” In any case, it is important that there is clarity about the programs’ actual and potential impacts at these various levels.

A related design issue often overlooked is the scale of a conflict. As shown in Appendix II, conflicts may operate primarily on different local, national and regional political levels or scales, although factors at the other levels may contribute. A key question is: In view of the scope of a conflict, what should be the scope of the various intervention(s) intended to address it? In a given country or region, violence may occur repeatedly in a single local geographical area; it may be widespread throughout a country or region; or it may occur at different locations at different times. “Boomerang” conflicts are conflicts in which the occurrence of violence in one location leads to violence in other locations throughout a country or in a neighboring country that have parallel identity groups residing in them. In Nigeria or South Africa, violence between ethnic groups in one city often results in violence between the same ethnic groups in other cities. Also in Africa, local and national conflicts are often cross-border, meaning that they occur in the adjacent sub-regions of two or more countries. The conflicts that occur in the ethnic Somali-inhabited, adjacent sub-regions of Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia are an example of cross-border conflicts. Although such violence may occur in specific locations, the causes of the conflicts may be located elsewhere – in the capital city, in a neighboring country, or in the global arena.

However, the scope of the conflict does not necessarily dictate the scope of an intervention. It is generally not necessary, desirable, or possible to implement programs in every location in which violence occurs. Whenever possible, programs can be implemented in the locations at which the contributing causes of the conflicts are located, as well as in the locations in which its manifestations in violence occur. “Boomerang” conflicts may require strategic programs in key locations, which if resolved there, will have a positive “boomerang” impact in other locations. Cross-border conflicts may require coordination between two or more USAID country offices, coordination between two or more governments (which

USAID can facilitate), or coordination between two or more partners or stakeholders located in two or more countries.

As mentioned in Part I and elaborated in Appendix II, whether specific interventions are appropriate also depends greatly on the point in the conflict cycle at which they would come into play. Different phases of peace and conflict call for different priorities in the types of programming that are likely to be most cost-effective. For example, in conditions of sustainable peace, existing peace capacities can be identified and bolstered, and development programs can be vigilant in avoiding any tendency to worsen the conditions that generate conflict. In a latent conflict or pre-violent conflict phase, programs can focus on building peace capacities and mechanisms for handling emerging conflicts, disputes, and grievances through peaceful means, while simultaneously tackling the structural causes of conflict. In a manifest violent conflict phase, programs have the greatest challenges. They will be most effective if they simultaneously contribute to ending violence and tackling the structural and relational causes of the conflict in addition to addressing any resulting humanitarian crises. For violence itself creates new grounds for further violence, as relational causes of conflict compound and complicate structural causes of conflict. In post-conflict and recovery settings, programs will have to focus on rebuilding institutional structures in ways that will create sustainable peace and on rebuilding and reconciling relationships between formerly antagonistic segments of the population.<sup>15</sup>

Seizing the opportunity to prevent latent conflict from turning into manifest or violent conflict deserves particular attention. By investing resources strategically to prevent violence from occurring in the first place, or from escalating significantly in intensity and scope, from threatening the basic integrity of states, or from spilling over into neighboring states, it is possible to prevent the necessity of spending far greater resources later.

## **B. DEVELOPING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE STRATEGIES**

As discussed so far, mainstreaming conflict-sensitive programming means addressing the causes and consequences of conflict through designing the particulars of individual programs. By extension, it means examining each program sector, one after the other, and thus enhancing the potential of each sectors' contribution to peace. In this way, conflict and peacebuilding goals can be mainstreamed throughout USAID's portfolio.

Every USAID Mission funds activities that have at least some impact on the causes of conflict and the causes of peace and it is important to apply a 'conflict lens' to every sector, rather than assuming that some sectors are more relevant than others. In making program specific changes, it is important to remember that the conflicts being addressed in a CVA are often very complex. They do not occur simply because people are unhappy or greedy, or simply because a country happens to have guns flowing in, or simply because valuable minerals might encourage or sustain violence. Nor do they happen everywhere state and social institutions are weak or perverse. Usually, major conflicts happen when causes found at multiple levels come together and reinforce each other. They are ultimately the result of particular congruencies of chronic grievances, political and economic competition, irresponsible political leadership, weak and unaccountable institutions, particular provocative events, and global and regional forces. Thus, the causes of conflict can be found to impact every sector of society in some way.

For example, identity-based conflict is generally based on egregious, chronic inequalities between groups that permeate every aspect of life in society, including economic, political, and social. In Africa, such inequalities tend to be based on tribal or clan identities, and are often the legacy from colonial policies that promoted one or more tribes or clans over others or from the political or economic life of a country having been dominated by one tribe or clan for long periods following independence.

Consequently, such inequality will have an impact in the sectors in which USAID and other international donors and NGOs work, including democracy and governance, agriculture, health, education, and so on. Although the priorities will depend on the nature, locus, and stage of particular conflict situations, conflict and peacebuilding programming should be multi-sectoral, in order to address the causes and consequences of conflict in each sector and to enhance the potential of each sector to contribute to peace. Effective interventions cannot be based on activities that focus on a single dimension of conflict, such as ethnic tensions or political exclusion. Nor can they usually be based at a single level, for example at the community level or the national level, since gains in one area may be so easily undermined by setbacks in another. It is important to think about how problems manifest themselves at all of these levels, and how solutions can be strengthened or built at each.

Viewing development, transition, and humanitarian assistance through a ‘conflict lens’ means recognizing that every decision and every activity, whether at the macro level, through policies, or the micro level has the potential to contribute to conflict or to peace. While policy and operational decisions can create winners and losers, conflict-sensitive programming can enhance the possibility of arriving at win-win decisions.

## SCALING UP

Acting effectively also requires constructing an overall strategy in which “the whole is greater than the parts.” Most policy-oriented conflict analysts now recognize that effectiveness occurs only when appropriate *combinations* or *packages* of particular measures have been taken. None is likely to be effective in isolation from other interventions. While a sector-by-sector design process is undertaken to ensure that the existing programs address causes of conflicts and peace capacities and new ones are added to fill any gaps, the overall aim should be to achieve a unified “package” of measures that covers all the bases – i.e. that addresses all the short and longer term forces that are driving the conflict and the viable processes that can help manage it, as identified in the CVA. Without this integrated approach in mind when designing a strategy, it is possible that separate activities may work at cross-purposes, and thus undermine each other, even though individually they may be conflict-sensitive in their own ways.

To illustrate the need for achieving impacts at the overall aggregate level, it is useful to mention the findings from research that has sought to determine which mixes of programming approaches may generally maximize the effectiveness of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Practitioners from a wide variety of organizations working in the areas of peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance, and development were asked by Collaborative for Development Assistance, Inc. which approaches they believe are the most effective. The replies were classified along two basic dimensions: a) whether they targeted *more* people or *key* people (thus corresponding roughly to the political scales of conflict listed in Appendix II; and b) whether they aimed to influence *individuals* or *society* more broadly (thus corresponding to the sources of conflict listed in Appendix II). The different approaches were placed in the appropriate category, as shown in the chart below.

	MORE PEOPLE	KEY PEOPLE
Individuals' personal attitudes and behavior	Distance learning modules for skills training	Problem-solving dialogues for top political officials
Society's structures and processes	Media projects	Legal assistance for accessing a government ministry's services

None of the approaches in the boxes was judged to be effective if used alone. For example, any work that stayed with an individual or personal focus remained there. Similarly, work with a few elite individuals that was not linked to broader processes affecting larger numbers also was relatively incomplete. It was concluded that movement from one box to another was what began to demonstrate effectiveness.

## **SEQUENCING**

The development of an appropriate strategy also requires attention to the sequencing of various interventions. Programs differ greatly in terms of the timetable through which they can be expected to achieve their goals. Which of the programs aim to build long-term sustainable peace for the next generation? Which aim to build peace and prevent conflict in the medium-term, such as by building and consolidating the rule of law within five years? Which aim to prevent violence in the short-term, for example, by establishing community dispute resolution or peace committees, or by engaging potential conflict entrepreneurs within two years? Do any aim to work directly with international peacekeepers or security forces to attempt to bring about an immediate end to violence and limit overall casualties of violence? Whether interventions are to be applied concurrently or sequentially will depend not only on the stage of the conflicts, but also the available resources.

## **LESSONS LEARNED IN EFFECTIVE CONFLICT PREVENTION**

As a guide to the kinds of packages of measures or mixes of programs at different levels that may constitute effective holistic strategies, USAID practitioners can draw on the accumulating policy research that has examined and compared several actual efforts at conflict prevention or post-conflict peacebuilding. Although not generally used so far by development practitioners in developing mission strategies, this work has proceeded for some years at the macro-level, rather than starting as most existing evaluation does at the program or project level. Thus, some research has looked at cases where several international actors have carried out in a given country various conflict prevention activities that include several types of development, diplomatic and other policy instruments. There are two case-study literatures on these multilateral engagements -- one focused on potential conflict situations where no recent conflict has occurred; and the other on post-conflict.

Conveniently, efforts have been made to synthesize the findings of this literature into useful guidelines for developing effective conflict-sensitive portfolios. The conclusions in this work can be used as a kind of “checklist” to determine how well a Mission’s strategy “stacks up” in terms of having the appropriate overall mix of elements and in a plausible sequence. Critical intervention factors that help to avoid escalation of conflicts into violence have to do with *when* preventive action is taken, what *kinds* of action are taken, *who* takes action, and *how* action is taken.

To illustrate, the following discussion pulls together some of the preliminary contingent generalizations on what mix and sequence of interventions is likely to be effective for preventing violence to erupt in potential violent conflict settings. Serious intra-state political tensions and issues will tend to be addressed more peacefully and avoid escalation into violence or armed action to the extent that the following factors are present:<sup>16</sup>

### **FEATURES OF THE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY**

1. Timely, early action is taken when tensions are emerging, or immediately after initial outbreaks of violence, but before significant political violence or armed conflict occurs.
2. Engagement prioritizes the objectives of preventing violence, managing open disputes, and building encompassing institutions -- i.e., direct and structural prevention -- in contextually-appropriate mixes and sequences, preferably tied in with some domestic political or peace compact. In particular:

- Behaviors and actions that threaten immediate loss of life and destruction are deterred or stopped before more fundamental constitutional issues and socio-economic conditions are addressed. Ensuring a minimum level of order and security is a priority before preventive action can achieve other social or political goals such as development and negotiations can make much progress.
  - Support and protection is provided to buttress or create formal governing institutions by incorporating the leaders of the main contending groups in power-sharing, in rough proportion to their influence in the society. But this should not simply reinforce either an exclusionary governmental structure or an anti-state political opposition. Conditional aid is used as an incentive to promote and reward peaceful management of political issues.
  - This early diplomatic action is robust rather than half-hearted and equivocal, and targets vigorous positive and negative inducements on the conflicting parties' leaders and their rank and file, such as targeted sanctions and threatened military deployment. It also needs to include ongoing mediation or facilitation of the particular political and policy disputes that inevitably arise so they do not escalate into destabilizing confrontations.
  - Early engagement is also even-handed: it does not solely promote the cause of the weaker parties in the conflict but also addresses the fears and insecurities of dominant parties.
  - Legitimate and responsible state organs and the security forces are assisted to provide public services widely and professionally. These measures enable the state to become the host of peaceful give-and-take politicking over public policy and the settling of basic constitutional issues and the vehicle for providing public services that benefit the general population.
  - These short-term direct prevention efforts are followed shortly by visibly vigorous structural prevention actions that credibly are tackling more fundamental issues. In particular, programs to increase employment and income are started promptly.
  - Economic reform measures aimed at encouraging public sector efficiency and markets, thus possibly reducing the size of government, are timed to factor in their possible impacts on reducing essential services and increasing social strains and inter-group disparities.
  - Opportunities to join regional security alliances and trade cooperation are pursued as crucial incentives for reinforcing an internal climate of popular and elite support for building legitimate and peaceful states.
  - Outside formal government, a broad-based constituency for peace is mobilized to the extent possible. Peaceful "people power" campaigns are supported through training opposition leaders in non-violent tactics and non-incendiary rhetoric, but that exert significant pressure on incumbent leaders to take peaceful, responsible actions or retire from office.
  - Over time, a politically active but independent civil society is encouraged that cuts across society's politicized identity groups, that is not solely interested in politics, is primarily interested in delivery of public services, wealth creation and business activities, and that thus has a vested interest in stability and prosperity.
2. The preventive action thus applies an appropriate mix of sufficiently vigorous (conditional) carrots, (unconditional) support, actual or threatened sticks, diplomacy to create contact and communication for negotiating space, and other modes of influence to bear on the most important short and long-term sources of conflicts and players. Hence, a sufficient number and type of governmental and non-governmental actors must implement international preventive engagements, so as to provide the range of needed prevention instruments (mediation, deterrence, institution-building, etc.) and resources needed to address the leading short and long-term sources of the conflict. Any single international actor or action can rarely prevent violent conflicts.
  3. Early multi-faceted action is concerted and consistent, rather than scattered or contradictory. Various domestic and international actors form a critical mass that visibly demonstrates a significant commitment to non-violent change.

4. The engagement is supported politically and in other ways, or at least tolerated and not blocked or undermined by major regional or world powers.
5. The engagement is generally viewed as legitimate by being carried out under the aegis of the UN or a regional organization involving the states affected.

#### **FAVORABLE CONTEXTUAL FEATURES**

Other crucial factors to take into account that affect the degree of difficulty in conflict prevention have to do with the regional, national, and local settings:

1. Relations between major political groups have been peaceful in the recent past.
2. At least some major factions in the government invite in international assistance or are amenable to it. Moderate leaders from each of the contending communities are already in positions with governing authority and in regular contact, have formed political compacts, and show some ability to manage societal disputes and carry out public policies that benefit all communities, including providing for physical security.
3. Those countries close to the immediate conflict, such as neighboring states and refugee hosts, are neutral or promote its peaceful resolution, rather than taking sides politically or militarily.
4. Diasporas support peaceful resolution or at least are not highly mobilized behind contending groups, and thus do not aid and abet coercive or violent ways to pursue the conflict or lobby their host governments to take a partisan stance toward it.

## **KENYA: WORKING WITH A TRANSITIONING REGIME TO ENSURE NON-VIOLENT ELECTIONS**

At the end of President Daniel arap Moi's tenure in 2002, the environment of pre-election Kenya was characterized by violence, entrenched ethnic tension, and both latent and open conflict over land. High stakes, extra-constitutional and anti-democratic actions increased the dangers of election-related violence. A stagnant economy, a contentious constitutional reform process, a government radio monopoly, and weak democratic institutions also exacerbated these dangers. In addition, there was speculation that the ruling party might find a way to delay the elections or change the constitution to maintain President Moi in office. Historically, the police, the Attorney General (AG) and the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) reportedly lacked willingness to take appropriate action to prevent such extra-constitutional steps or contain violence.

Going into such an electoral environment, the goal of USAID was to promote peaceful democratic election in order to facilitate a stable transition. The USAID Mission staff decided that they could best achieve this objective by supporting monitoring and reporting on violence in a timely and accurate manner and follow up by convincing the AG and ECK to act on the reports. Such monitoring would need to cover both the historically problematic and hotly contested hot spots, but at the same time avoid any appearance of bias on the part of the monitors. To avoid a perception of bias, a coalition of six Kenyan NGOs joined to implement a substantial violence monitoring program funded by USAID. They formed a trust to manage and oversee a joint Central Depository Unit (CDU) on election violence and installed active monitors in all provinces ten months prior to the election.<sup>1</sup> The CDU also disseminated information targeted to the ECK, the media, Members of Parliament, diplomats, and law enforcement agencies.

The program resulted in a uniform reporting tool that was used and adopted by others. The CSOs greatly benefited from each other's experiences and the perception of bias was limited by the collaborative decision-making that characterized the CDU's operations. The CDU was viewed as the key source of information on electoral violence and intimidation as its data were widely quoted and its personnel interviewed on television. In the Mission's evaluation, the CDU positively impacted the ECK by providing the Commission with the concrete information on which it could base its enforcement actions, thus contributing to a reduction of potential violence. (For example, the ECK threatened to disqualify parties and candidates credibly tied to violence now much more easily traceable.) The diplomatic community also used the CDU data to press for more aggressive action by the government, political parties, and other institutions to contain pockets of violence that erupted in the pre-election season. The program also enhanced the availability and debate/discussion of information/opinion polls on the elections and also in the building of trust between the ECK, political parties, and the media.

## **INTEGRATING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE STRATEGIES INTO STRATEGIC PLANS**

Program designers then need to relate their plans to an existing strategic plan of the Mission. USAID Strategic Plans represent a commitment to a set of Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Intermediate Results (IRs) to be accomplished by a Mission or Regional Office. USAID recognizes both Standard Strategic Plans and Interim Strategic Plans. Standard Strategic Plans are used in politically and economically stable countries and regions for sustainable development environments with new or continuing programs. Interim Strategic Plans may be used for transition environments with new or continuing programs, for countries experiencing political, economic, or military instability, and for crisis and post-crisis settings.

In making its recommendations, CVA teams are encouraged to fold as many as possible into a Mission's existing SOs. While some countries may need (or be willing to consider) a stand-alone special objective the central goal of conducting conflict assessments is to demonstrate how traditional development and humanitarian assistance can be used to address the various causes of conflict. In general, programs should be designed to adapt appropriate existing development, transition, and humanitarian assistance activities to address the causes of conflict and to build and/or strengthen the capacities for peace. Nevertheless, in some countries there may be a need for a stand-alone Special Objective (SO) for conflict and peacebuilding.

## **SCENARIOS**

In highly volatile contexts, Missions may choose to employ scenario-based planning in order to be able to respond rapidly to changes in the overall country situation or particular areas. Scenario-based planning enables Missions to engage in crisis intervention in rapidly escalating situations or to seize opportunities presented by rapidly improving situations. For example, the deployment of international peacekeeping

troops generally brings about swift and significant changes in USAID's operating environment. The following are the different types of scenario-based planning available to Missions:<sup>17</sup>

- Country scenarios help plan for how the USAID program might respond to large changes in an uncertain country environment. This could include, for example, war versus no war scenarios, alternative programs for different political or economic outcomes, or improving and deteriorating scenarios versus a current set of conditions.
- Programming scenarios may include different levels or types of programs in relation to changes in the country scenarios. Changes to the program could include the number and formulation of Objectives, Results Frameworks, the staff mix and levels, operating expense levels, program funding accounts and levels, or the Strategic Plan timeframe.
- Trigger events. If the Strategic Plan includes contingencies and alternative responses, the Strategic Plan should also include future events that would cause a special review of the program, or a previously agreed upon change in program direction in reaction to evolving country conditions or changing budgets.
- Crisis modifier. Some Operating Units in crisis-prone countries, or countries facing long-standing emergencies, have developed creative approaches to dealing with particular uncertainties that they face in strategic planning. In such countries, it is possible to include a "crisis modifier" clause in the Strategic Plan to help streamline the planning and implementation processes. The clause would allow for a redirection of resources when circumstances warrant it.

#### ZIMBABWE: SCENARIO-BASED PLANNING

The Zimbabwe CVA process relied on scenario-based analysis and program planning. Conducted in January 2003 for a humanitarian assistance strategy, the assessment/planning exercise developed three scenarios with respective response modalities in programming. Given the volatile situation in Zimbabwe, the CVA team determined scenario-based planning would be the most useful assessment and programming tool. Each scenario analyzed various political, economic, legal and social factors and developed indicators that could be used to track the situation, allowing the Mission to determine on which scenario to base the Mission response.

The Mission developed the scenarios in collaboration with a core group of seven to eight external advisors and analysts that had been selected by civil-society organizations. The Mission's CVA team held discussions with this core group to define the possible scenarios as well as appropriate policies for each. This group also assisted the Mission in determining which scenario was most likely at any given time and tracking the transition from one scenario to the next. Given their integral involvement in defining both the scenarios and the sets of recommendations appropriate for each scenario, this group basically "owns" the DG program, including the integrated conflict assessment and action plan.

The Mission determined three scenarios as described below.

a) Collapse: This scenario is the stage the group agrees the country is approaching, as indicated by the severe macro-economic crisis such as the hyperinflation rate (at 400%-600% in 2003), shortages of fuel, power, essential goods and services, and acute poverty rates of 62-85%. Other indicators suggesting collapse or a fast trend towards collapse are the increased and intensified rivalries between parties, the use of youth militias to solve political disputes, the collapse of confidence in state institutions and especially the serious emasculation of the judiciary.

The response to such a scenario would focus on three primary areas:

• Institution building: CSO capacity building, support to opposition groups and parliament (where the most credible and somewhat effective opposition and progressive thought remains even under extreme duress)

• Victims of violence: documenting atrocities, exposing perpetrators of human and economic rights violations and supporting forums for information sharing on human and economic rights; and

• Rule of law: promoting equitable application of the rule of law and supporting the observance of civil and political rights.

b) Improvement-transitional period: This scenario would be indicated by major transition events such as a leadership turnover, systemic change toward greater openness, halting collapse and violence, and a reversal of economic collapse.

*Continued on next page*

## ZIMBABWE: SCENARIO-BASED PLANNING ~ CONTINUED

The response to such a scenario would include support to:

- Transitional Agenda: Prevention of violence (violence monitors)
  - Promote media freedom
  - Repeal repressive legislation (POSA, etc)
  - Provide limited economic assistance
  - Promote constitutional reform
  - Promote electoral law reform
  - Reform prison system
  - Strengthen electoral process
  - Polling agent training
  - Training of election observers/monitors
  - Leveling electoral playing field

c) Post-election: This scenario represents the most optimistic outcome and would escalate Mission support to take advantage of the opportunity for consolidating democratic institutions and practice. Such a scenario would be in evidence if the regime or its successor indicates a willingness to install fundamental reforms enhancing democratic governance (including holding free elections) and economic stability and growth. Mission support for such a scenario would include:

- Rebuilding Civil Society
  - Building a new society and decentralization
  - Race, culture, ethnicity and citizenship programs
  - Reconciliation, justice, peace-building and human rights observation
  - Constitution and rule of law program
  - Accountability/transparency institutions
- Restructuring Government
  - Restructuring the role of the state
  - Civil service reform and capacity building
- Strengthening Parliament
  - Support to committees and legislative process

## ENCOURAGING MULTI-PARTNER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Mainstreaming conflict and peacebuilding through well-designed and well-targeted programs in all sectors of USAID programming is needed in order to maximize scarce resources, reduce conflict and build peace. USAID Missions and Regional Offices should work closely with other USAID units providing assistance in a given country or region, such as the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) or the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Even if many conflict-sensitive USAID programs are combined to create holistic strategies, however, they cannot meet all of a country's possible needs. Resource constraints limit the number of activities that an individual aid organization can undertake.

There are problems that contribute to conflict and/or are consequences of conflict that lie outside of USAID's mandate but are within the mandates of other US government agencies. These include security sector reform, organized crime, small arms trade, human trafficking, international migration, terrorism, transitional justice, and other issues. While USAID can address some of the structural and proximate causes that create these problems, such as relative and absolute poverty, it is often outside USAID's mandate to attempt to handle the problems themselves. In these instances, USAID may collaborate closely to ensure that there is complementarity between its programs and those of other US government programs, such as those conducted within the Department of State or the Department of Defense.

One of the most agreed-on conclusions of the accumulating research on the effect of donor and other programs on major political or violent conflict is that more than one program and donor is needed to

achieve discernible impact. Specific programs may be effective in achieving their particular objectives, but the overall conflict situation may continue to deteriorate. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of programming, organizations must engage in *macro-evaluation*, as opposed to *micro-evaluation*, and evaluate more than just a single organization's individual programs. This can be done at the design stage prospectively, as well as at the evaluation stage retrospectively.

As a result, it is important for aid organizations and others to divide responsibility, based on their respective comparative advantages. As USAID is usually only one of many potential partners in a country or region, both local and international, engaged in conflict and peacebuilding programs in a given country or region, a division of labor across sectors or geographical regions may be advisable. Multi-leveled and multi-timeframe programming is more likely to be accomplished not only by mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding into all relevant USAID sectors' programs, but also by dividing responsibilities for different timeframe goals with other partners. This is especially important, as there may be specific interventions that are necessary for sustainable peace, but that USAID is unable to implement due to constraints on its mandate. For example, in a country in which elections tend to act as a trigger for inter-communal violence, USAID can work with Elections Boards to establish procedures that reduce the possibility of violence, but it cannot provide certain types of support to the police that may be needed to manage violence. For this type of assistance, USAID should reach out to other organizations capable of meeting this need.

USAID should work with bilateral donors, such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). International and US NGO implementers of USAID programs as well as advocates for different constituencies can also be partners. Additionally, host countries are important partners, although sometimes they may also be parties to conflicts. In most countries in Africa, the USG signs an agreement with the host country, although there are some exceptions. Finally, local NGOs can also be both partners and representatives of different constituencies, which may or may not also be parties to conflicts.

USAID is often extremely well positioned to play an important role in encouraging other organizations to contribute to peace and managing and mitigating conflict. In contexts in which USAID has a bi-lateral agreement with the host-government and in which the host-government lacks the political will to change or address specific conflict generating policies or actions, USAID and other donors can use their leverage to pressure governments to change or address those policies or actions. Such pressure is generally much more likely to be effective if it is applied in collaboration with other donors and stakeholders.

When thinking about collaboration with other partners it is important to put to recognize that different partners have different long-term and short-term goals, different principles and preferences about how to reach those goals, and differing constraints on what trade-offs are acceptable in the short and long term. They may also have different assumptions about what is possible, desirable, or morally permissible to achieve in the social world vis-à-vis peacebuilding and conflict management and mitigation. Partners will their have different national or faith-based cultures and will have different organizational cultures. Such differences will not necessarily mean that partnership is undesirable or impossible, but require that partners have to be explicit about their goals and assumptions, the ways in which there is convergence and divergence, and the implications for partnership. Inter-organizational research suggests that one of the best ways to foster collaboration is to engage the various organizations at the beginning in a joint assessment of a problem – in this case, the sources of conflict in a country. Thus, donors and others should arrange wherever possible to conduct initial assessments using the same framework, and work through the other steps in conflict-sensitive programming as well.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- 4.1. An initial stakeholder analysis is necessary so that the strengths and weaknesses of all potential partners can be analyzed. While some partners have few resources, others may lack capacity or strategies, and others differ in their perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the conflict parties. These assets and liabilities must be carefully considered when assessing partner candidates (CIAA, 2000).
- 2.2. A good relationship between external and internal partners is essential to the success of any intervention. Usually, the local partner will accept the intervention strategy of outside partners simply because they are in need of the resources, but this often leads to unsustainable interventions. It is therefore best if both sides are clear about their respective interests and values (Mott Foundation, 1999).
- 3.3. For external agencies, it is crucial to work with the right local partners. These partners usually work as gatekeepers, facilitating communication between external donors and local peace actors. However, while they are helpful in selecting and supporting local actors, they can also obstruct communication, effectively preventing the local actors from direct interaction with the donor.
- 4.4. Finding the right local partners is essential. Experience of the last years has shown that certain groups are particularly well suited for effectively negotiating the challenges of conflict transformation and peace building.<sup>+</sup>  
**WHERE IS THIS REFERENCE?**
- 5.5. Usually, the best way to select people and organizations is to leave the selection to them. One method of selection is simply to make inquiries of those involved in a particular intervention area, asking them who are the relevant actors and which of them would they recommend inviting for a planning exercise. This questioning is often the beginning of a process that has intrinsic value and that maximizes ownership for all involved.
- 6.6. Selection criteria should be applied with priority given to local groups. Groups should: support peaceful conflict transformation; operate within the country; demonstrate self-initiative; have a willingness to make a substantive contribution to project work; represent the entire spectrum of society (multi-ethnic, gender-balanced, and multi-sector); maintain independence from governments; approach conflict transformation in a peaceful manner; and

## PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Participation of stakeholders in every phase of the programming cycle from assessments to evaluation has long been recognized by USAID as best practice in development and humanitarian assistance. This principle also applies to conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding programming. While it is generally agreed that the principle of collaboration represents the ideal, it is often difficult to implement in reality. This difficulty may be because the process of participation does not usually start until the programming process has progressed too far for those involved to be willing or able to exert a meaningful influence. Participation should start at the assessment phase in order to be effective. In the case of conflict-sensitive programming that means it must begin with the CVA.

## IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMMING CHANGES

Once the Mission or Regional Office has decided on appropriate programming changes, an obvious related step is deciding whether these changes are feasible and specifically how and when to implement them, so they operate as desired. Programs must not only be focused on the specific causes of conflict and peace capacities, they must also be sufficiently capable of realizing their intended impacts. Implementation thus involves marshalling the necessary financial, human, and organizational resources and determining what tasks are required and who will carry them out.

## CHOOSING IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Regardless of the phase in the strategic planning cycle of the Mission or Regional Office, multiple stakeholders from within the Mission, the US Mission to the country, the host government, other donors, and implementing partners, can be involved in different phases of the programming cycle. Wherever possible, it is crucial to support local capacities to analyze conflict, to operate programs, and to conduct applied research to learn what does and does not work in particular contexts. Local ownership of these processes is the first step towards ensuring the sustainability of peacebuilding interventions. Local interveners and parties to conflicts must learn to analyze conflict and design and implement conflict management and peacebuilding programs themselves, if peace is to be sustainable.

When choosing implementing partners in deeply divided societies, there is a need to be cognizant of how civil society is either reinforcing or bridging fault lines between groups. This may require looking beyond civil society organizations that are “approved” by the state to those who represent voiceless sectors. It also means avoiding promoting causes that may simply provoke the state to crack down on society in backlash, for that could easily lead to a destructive spiraling of violence. Special efforts should be made to identify and support organizations that cross ethnic, economic, or political fault lines.

Some parties with whom programs engage may be legitimate while others may be viewed as less legitimate parties. While USAID and other partners traditionally work with like-minded organizations and institutions, if sustainable peace is to be achieved in conflict settings, it may also be necessary to work with parties to the conflict who are not traditional partners or who are not necessarily like-minded. In these contexts, the decision to engage with the parties must be made in collaboration with the US Mission to that country and with USAID/Washington. In sum, given the sensitive nature of conflict-sensitive and peacebuilding activities, it is important to consult with the US Embassy and USAID/Washington, DC before proceeding too far along in the planning process.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH USAID POLICIES AND PROCESSES**

Other important questions relate to USAID’s operational environment. Ultimately, it will be the answers to these questions that will determine whether or not the recommendations emerging from the CVA can be acted upon.

- At what stage of the strategic planning cycle is the Mission or Regional Office?
- Are there resources to implement the recommended activities or suggested modifications to existing activities? Are there any windows of opportunity for funding?
- What are the Mission’s or Regional Office’s existing programs?

Some feasibility criteria have to do with established restrictions arising from USAID programming policies. For example, it needs to be ensured that programs:

- Lie within USAID’s mandate and USG current policy framework
- Have available funding
- Can be accomplished through USAID funding mechanisms, within a feasible timeframe
- Utilize USAID’s comparative advantages
- Are feasible in view of host country capacities
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Do not involve issues that are within the mandate of the US Department of State or the US Department of Defense

# PART III. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING

## A. M&E FOR CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING

To conduct M&E for conflict-sensitive programming, program planners need to apply the methods of M&E, but in ways that are sensitive to the particular characteristics and constraints of conflict-affected contexts.

*Monitoring* is a method for tracking and assessing the performance of program or project activities in relation to their intended objectives while they are still being implemented. Its aim is to help to decide whether changes in the activities should be made. *Evaluation* also assesses performance but after a program or project has been completed. Its aim is to see if the programs or projects have achieved what was expected of them and what factors explain those results. Evaluations can focus on the *process* of implementing that activity or on its *outcomes*, or on both. For long-term programs or projects, those conducted for five to ten years, a mid-term process or outcome evaluation may be carried out. Monitoring and evaluation are both used for understanding and managing performance.

USAID has used monitoring and evaluation to contribute information and analysis for a Mission's Results Framework (RF). An RF is a system for monitoring and evaluating the results of activities, which it accomplishes by:

- Collecting and analyzing performance information to track progress toward planned results;
- Using this performance information to inform decision-making about programming and resource allocation; and
- Communicating the results that were attained and/or not attained so that Missions and other stakeholders can learn from the experience of applying programs.

USAID Missions or Regional Offices have used Performance Management Plans (PMPs) as a tool for planning and managing the process of assessing and reporting progress towards achieving their Strategic Objectives (SOs). A completed PMP will define at least one performance indicator to measure progress towards the SO, and at least one performance indicator to measure progress towards each Intermediate Result (IR) in the Results Framework. Each performance indicator will include baseline levels and targets to be achieved over the life of the SO. Normally, A PMP should:

- Include a calendar of performance management tasks;
- Provide baseline values;
- Specify the source of the data and the method for data collection;
- Specify the schedule for data collection;
- Describe known data limitations of each performance indicator; and
- Describe the quality assessment procedures.

These basic USAID methods and procedures for M&E can be applied to programs operating in conflict-affected environments in order to assess their impacts in reducing conflict and building peace. But using these methods and procedures for measuring performance in conflict-affected settings requires special attention to the particular measurement criteria that are meaningful in those conflict contexts and to the practical challenges for gathering and interpreting performance information. The following sections address these two challenges.

## **B. WHAT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA SHOULD BE ASSESSED?**

The first consideration is what criteria are appropriate for monitoring and evaluating program performance in conflict contexts. As discussed earlier, the basic aim of conflict-sensitive programming is to shape USAID's existing programs or new ones, wherever appropriate, so they reduce the causes of conflict and strengthen the capacities for peace. Some of the goals USAID sets, such as democracy and economic growth, derive from its general policy objectives and may or may not contribute in specific contexts to the goals of reducing conflict and building peace. In some conflict contexts, achieving these established development goals may be compatible with the goals of reducing conflict and building peace; however, in many other situations, the former goals may be incompatible with the latter. Programs may have no effects on conflict and peace, or worse, their achievement may actually generate conflict or weaken capacities for peace.

For example, economic reforms used in developing countries to stimulate economic growth have been criticized for impairing peace processes in post-conflict societies. It has been argued that structural adjustment programs should be applied only if and when they demonstrably contribute to post-conflict peace processes ["peace conditionality"], but not simply on their own terms. Another example is holding majoritarian elections in ethnically-divided societies, which can increase inter-group tensions even further

Consequently, it cannot be automatically assumed that overall policy goals and associated programs can be achieved in conflict environments as easily or quickly as in more stable contexts. In fact, a "one size fits all" approach can lead to failed programs or even worsen the situation. Certain overarching policy goals may need to be postponed or adjusted to take into account what is possible, helpful, and sustainable in post-conflict environments in particular. Furthermore, because of the political and economic stakes involved in conflicts, operational decisions related to local staff, local partners, local contractors, geographical locations, and the timing of activities may have as significant an impact on the success of monitoring and evaluation activities as they do on the success of program implementation.

To measure program performance in conflict situations, M&E criteria and indicators should measure whether program efforts are serving conflict and peace goals, at the times when it is most appropriate to do so. This means looking at programs through a different lens -- a conflict and peace lens -- than if M&E were only focused on particular established project, program or sectoral objectives. Conflict-sensitive M&E impact criteria, and corresponding IRs if not SOs, are needed.

Because conflict management is a relatively new goal for USAID and other development organizations, specific M&E criteria that are appropriate to use for measuring achievement of conflict and peace goals have not been developed extensively. However, European donors and the UN have developed many helpful tools that are being adapted for USAID's purposes. The formulation of M&E techniques for the specific purpose of assessing development programs' impacts on conflict and peace has been pursued under the rubric of "peace and conflict impact assessment" (PCIA).

As described in Part II, a PCIA is a method for determining the effects of an intervention on peace and conflict, and the effects of peace and conflict on the intervention. PCIA's marry the relatively new goals of conflict and peacebuilding with the long-established methods of program evaluation in order to apply

conflict and peace impact criteria to development, humanitarian assistance, and transition, as well as programs that are explicitly conflict resolution or peacebuilding. PCIA is simply another name for M&E that takes an interest in measuring impacts on conflict and peace in particular - as opposed to established development goals such as reducing poverty or democratization. Part II described the role that a PCIA can play in program design.

## **ARE PROGRAMS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?**

A frequently asked question in relation to evaluating programs aimed at conflict reduction and peacebuilding is: Have programs - whether they are aimed at prevention during the pre-conflict phase, at management during the crisis phase, or at reconciliation during the post-conflict phase – had the desired impacts in conflict prevention, the cessation of violence, or improved societal relationships?

Part of the answer can be found by referring to the initial CVA discussed in Part I. The CVA includes an analysis of the causes of conflict and the causes of peace. If the program has succeeded in decreasing or eliminating one or more causes of conflict or in building or strengthening one or more causes of peace, there is a good chance that the program has made a contribution towards conflict prevention, conflict management, or reconciliation. Consequently, the specific indicators that should be used to measure the conflict and peace performance of programs and projects should be formulated by referring back to the particular causes of conflict and the causes of peace that emerged in the CVA. These indicators will measure whether particular interventions are having desired impacts on the causes of conflict and/or the “causes of peace” (peace capacities).

Accordingly, illustrative examples of conflict-sensitive impact criteria include:

- Behavior – is conflict behavior reduced or prevented (e.g. violent incidents, contributing funds to armed groups, joining armed groups)?
- Attitudes and perceptions – have inter-group attitudes and perceptions that can increase the risk of conflict improved? Are the projects encouraging more positive perceptions and attitudes and reducing inter-ethnic distrust or prejudice between the ordinary members of contending ethnic groups, such as by creating or strengthening direct contacts and working relationships?
- Political and governing processes and policies – were organizational and procedural capacities to manage conflicts strengthened? Do the projects help to create or strengthen legitimate, integrative institutions and procedures (old or new, formal or informal) that can manage public affairs for all citizens and can channel future emerging disputes and conflict issues into peaceful processes for resolution? Has the enforcement of norms such as civil and political human rights been bolstered?
- Underlying conditions – were basic socio-economic conditions that can predispose areas to potential conflicts reduced?

## **C. HOW CAN M&E BE CONDUCTED IN CONFLICT SETTINGS?**

### **CHALLENGES OF CONDUCTING M&E IN CONFLICT CONTEXTS<sup>7</sup>**

Several factors having to do with the nature of conflict contexts make the designing and conducting of monitoring and evaluation in conflict contexts different from doing M&E in other more stable environments. These characteristics of conflict settings have a significant impact on USAID’s and other partners’ programs, as well as the conducting of M&E in those contexts. Among the constraints that pose methodological difficulties for monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings are the following:

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<sup>7</sup> This section draws in part on comments provided by the presenters in an USAID/OTI-sponsored workshop on M&E in conflict contexts, March, 2004.

1. One severe constraint is the lack of information or lack of access to information. In divided societies, baseline data, such as census data, have political implications, and thus the processes of data collection and data analysis can become politicized. Ethnic, religious, or gender differences may pose monitoring challenges. In such contexts, the validity of government and other sources of data may be questionable.
2. When states fail, the institutional infrastructure that supports data collection may be one of the first systems to collapse. For example, Somalia has had no national level baseline data collected since the overthrow of the government in 1990. The only such data that exists for Somalia are previous studies carried out by multilateral organizations and donors. While Somalia may represent an extreme case, similar situations exist in other countries for particular time periods or particular geographical areas.
3. Dangerous security environments are one of the greatest constraints to carrying out monitoring and evaluation in a setting where violent conflict is still active, or just beneath the surface. Insecurity may be a result of landmines, killing or kidnapping of assistance workers, the possibility of being caught in crossfire between combatants, and other circumstances. This insecurity may severely limit access to certain geographical areas, to certain groups of people, and often goes hand in hand with poor transportation and communications infrastructure. It also greatly distorts the information that may be provided by informants who are interviewed.
4. Because of the instabilities and insecurities in conflict situations, programs are unusually susceptible to powerful and volatile external factors, such as changes in the security situation. This may require programs to be flexible and to frequently change their operating procedures and even program/project objectives.
5. Monitoring is relatively straightforward if there are consistent and measurable outputs and outcomes. However, monitoring transition or post-conflict programs often involves measuring much more subtle factors, such as changes in political activity and highly symbolic and emotional attitudes as well as actions and behaviors that are often deliberately covert.
6. The pressures to act quickly may also limit the opportunity for doing monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings. The constant threat of insecurity may limit the window of opportunity for doing data collection to short-term actions. Similarly, the programming cycle timeframe for humanitarian assistance as well as certain quick start-up transition programs is generally much shorter, so there may be greater emphasis on the 'action' stage of the programming cycle, at the expense of the 'reflection' stage. This limits the opportunity to create a program feedback loop.
7. Although it is often possible to find a correlation between program activities and macro-level change, it is generally difficult to demonstrate causation, again because of the fluidity of the situation and the possible presence of many other actors in a sector or related sectors. This makes it more difficult to attribute the results to a single program.

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR M&E IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS**

1. In conflict settings, monitoring and evaluation must identify changes in the context and measure impact of the program or project on the context – its impact on peace and conflict. Indicators must therefore be developed for these factors.<sup>8</sup> Standard program evaluations do consider whether

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<sup>8</sup> The toolkits being developed by USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) not only address the relationship between conflict and peace to specific sectors (e.g., conflict and youth, natural resources, local governance, human rights, valuable minerals, and forests.) They also include generic indicators to measure the impacts of programs in these sectors on conflict and on peace.

programs have some intended impact on their environments (outcomes), and also whether that environment in which programs operate may have some influence on those observed outcomes (contextual shaping factors). But in many of the conflict-prone contexts in which traditional evaluations are carried out, evaluations tend to assume that the environment in which the programs operate is relatively stable and regularized: a government and private sector are assumed to be in operation. However, in post-conflict and other transitioning country contexts with political instability and polarization, economic disarray, and inter-group animosities, such an environment cannot be taken for granted. Instead, this environment is still in the process of being created. Moreover, the programs that are to be evaluated are themselves being used to construct that overall stable environment – governance, politics, social relations, and civil society (nation-building) -- not just to produce particular immediate outcomes *within* a more or less fixed environment. The social, political, and governance environment is simultaneously the *context* of the program and an intended *target* of its activities. Given these broader peacebuilding aims, evaluations must look -- more broadly for effects than is usually the case -- to the overall elements and dynamics of the context in which the program operates, and for impacts of the program on those factors.

2. While being informed of general conflict-sensitive criteria, monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings must also interpret outcomes and impacts in terms of a *context-specific analysis*. What is an impact indicator of increased peace in one context may be an indicator of increased conflict in another. For example, the presence of refugees and internally displaced persons and decisions regarding the purchase and sale of livestock, cultivation of fields, food storage or sale, and cash management, may indicate different conditions of peace or conflict. In one context an action such as the sale of livestock, may be an indicator of increased conflict -- unlike cash or gold, livestock cannot be moved across the terrain or across borders. However, in another time and place, the sale of livestock may be an indicator of decreased conflict -- it means people are putting their assets into cultivation, which is more permanent and less transportable than livestock. Thus, there is no substitute for updated knowledge about the specific program or project location to know which indicator is valid in a particular time and place.
3. Because of the complexity and volatility of conflict contexts, it is also important to develop monitoring and evaluation designs that assess *unplanned and unintended, as well as intended, consequences* of programs and projects. Scenario-based programming facilitates this because it requires the development of different indicators for varying contingencies. Traditional evaluations tend to assume that the environment in which the programs being evaluated operate is relatively stable and unchanging. While USAID's Results Framework does not measure the unintended impacts of programs and projects, there are monitoring and evaluation models that might be adapted and incorporated into the Results Framework for application in conflict settings.
4. Monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings must be *multi-sectoral* to be effective. The causes of conflict and the capacities for peace can always be found in a variety of sectors. Ideally, programming will be multi-sectoral, which, in turn, will require multi-sectoral monitoring and evaluation. Thus, monitoring and evaluation in conflict contexts cannot be solely concerned with the impact of programs and projects on a single aspect of the environment.
5. Monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings must be *multi-leveled*, as the causes of conflict and the capacities for peace occur at various levels. These levels should be considered in three different areas. First, distinctions should be made geographically, with consideration given to programs and impacts on the national, regional, community, and even household levels. Secondly, it is important to include various levels of society, from the elite to groups formed at the grassroots. Finally, causality should also be analyzed on multiple levels, from the structural level to the level of triggers and accelerators. Programming may target a specific level, but ultimately its impacts must be multi-leveled.

M&E is usually only conducted at the micro levels of an activity, program, or sector, and measures the particular aims of existing activities or projects -- as if success in those terms also means success in macro-peacebuilding. But effective performance of these discrete efforts in their individual terms may or may not add up to effectiveness in achieving the essential overall conflict and peace goals. Even if they achieve particular program or project objectives well does not mean they are being effective in overall conflict-sensitive terms. (“Each of our projects was evaluated to be successful, and the country was going to hell!”) Thus, monitoring and evaluation in conflict settings must measure the impact of the intervention at different levels. A hierarchy needs to be developed that is composed of criteria showing how particular programs contribute in their individual ways toward the broader conflict and peace goals that are listed above.

6. Such macro-level M&E also needs to adopt measures that correspond to overall goals that are appropriate and realistic for different stages of conflict. For example, all post-conflict goals and objectives are not likely to be achievable simultaneously and immediately. Some may be needed before others are possible. Although there is no single recipe, there is a considerable body of case-study and multi-case research that has focused in recent years on the basic effectiveness of international policies/programs in post-conflict environments, and it suggests that certain goals may need to be phased in at different post-conflict stages. The sequencing of these priorities generally works best. Something like the following sequence is generally found to have the best chance of promoting stable progress toward sustainable peace and beyond, and to avoid a return to violence:
  - “security first,” such as through effective police and law enforcement;
  - political agreements, such as power-sharing;
  - strong effective government agencies for delivering basic services;
  - legitimate government, so that it is not easily challenged, such as one reached through democratic or representative processes;
  - economic growth to reduce poverty and begin to raise incomes; and
  - inter-group reconciliation.
7. Despite the difficulties of using the usual methods in conflict settings, M&E is still essential. To bridge the gap, monitoring needs to be approached in a more flexible as well as frequent manner, with more weight given to rapid and qualitative methods and efforts made to utilize any remote monitoring systems that may be available.
8. By the same token, collaborative approaches are more likely to get a better measure of impact and maximize resources. Ways to conduct collaborative monitoring and evaluations with other partners can assess the impact not only of USAID’s programs and projects, but of the collective impact of USAID’s interventions combined with those of other partners.
9. The M&E system should include specific ways to feed the results of monitoring and evaluation into the programming cycle in the form of lessons learned and best practices that will inform subsequent programming decisions.

#### DATA COLLECTION IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS

USAID/Mozambique made the following recommendations for performance monitoring during the period of transition from war to peace, in which it confronted a lack of transportation and communication infrastructure, lack of data, and insecurity.

- Select a small number of representative sites that can be visited safely
- Mobilize existing staff to form a small multi-sectoral team, with a mix of local and international staff, that schedules regular visits to each site
- Develop a simple multiple-sectoral ‘site visit guide’ or reporting format

- Take lots of 'before and after' photographs
- Insist on prompt trip reports and circulate them widely
- Organize periodic all-Mission meetings to discuss trends and implications to trip findings

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I ~ ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AFR/SD	Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development
AG	Attorney General
BPBS	Bureau Program and Budget Submission
CA	Conflict Assessment
CBJ	Congressional Budget Justification
CDU	Central Depository Unit
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Network
CMM	Conflict Management and Mitigation
CPDG	Conflict Prevention, Democracy and Governance
CPMR	Conflict Prevention, Mitigation, and Response
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
CVA	Conflict Vulnerability Assessment
DAA	Designated Approving Authority
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DG	Democracy and Governance
DP	Development Planning (Office)
DRL	Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (technical bureau)
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade
GAD	Gender and Development
GDO	General Development Office
GHA	Greater Horn of Africa
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IGAB	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Dept. of State
INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
IR	Immediate Results
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	Managing African Conflict
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDO	Planning and Development Office
PICA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
PMP	Performance Management/Monitoring Plan
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan

POSE	Point of Service Evaluation
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Department of State
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RCSA	Regional Center for Southern Africa
REDSO	Regional Economic Development Support Office/USAID
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposals
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SO	Strategic/Special Objectives
SOW	Scope of Work
TPM	Team Planning Meeting
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USG	United States Government

# APPENDIX II ~ CONFLICT CAUSES, STAGES, AND SCALES

## The Causes of Conflicts

Major conflicts in a society do not occur spontaneously, even at the local level. Although the precise timing of outbreaks of intra-state conflicts is usually unpredictable, they are not random events that suddenly befall societies with no causal antecedents. Analysts of conflict have produced a huge literature that seeks to identify through systematic research the principal causes of intra-state conflicts. This research has gone on since at least the early 1990s and continues to be refined. The two principal research methods used in this literature have been large “n” (number) statistical studies and single or multiple case studies. The first approach looks for statistical correlations between conflict indicators (e.g., numbers of people killed) on the one hand, and various possible explanatory factors that are associated with those outcomes on the other hand (e.g., population density). The second approach looks in-depth at one or a small number of cases of particular countries that have been in conflict in order to identify the causes evident in those cases. Both are empirical methods insofar as they systematically search for evidence to test explicit hypotheses about cause-effect relationships, and each approach has its advantages.

The two methods tend to lead to somewhat different emphases in their conclusions, respectively, between the more “slow-moving” fundamental and long-term factors – which tend to be historical, economic and environmental in nature – versus the more “fast-moving” immediate and short-term dynamic factors – which tend to be more political, institutional and behavioral in nature. Because these differing emphases will have rather different policy implications, both kinds of factors need to be examined for their significance in any given CVA focus. Also, because the types of conflicts that this research has looked at have been variously defined or labeled as civil wars, civil conflicts, ethnic conflicts, failed states, complex humanitarian emergencies, secessionist struggles, and genocides, these different “dependent variables” sometimes lead to somewhat different explanatory factors or emphases. Nevertheless, when all these studies are surveyed and compiled, what becomes evident is that there is considerable consensus on the range of factors that tend to produce intra-state conflicts of various kinds.

Because conflicts tend to arise from several kinds of interacting long-term and short-term factors, each with differing action implications, analysts typically list the various causal factors under four main headings:

**Background factors** are broad pervasive historical or global trends and natural facts that may make societies more susceptible or vulnerable to conflict although they do not cause it. Examples would be past inter-group violence or repression combined with a highly mountainous terrain and porous borders and other geographic and resource features that make it easy to import arms without government hindrance. Due to a number of historical and political factors, certain causes and characteristics of conflicts in Africa are continent-wide and thus constitute important background factors. Such factors include: ethnic groups living on both sides of national borders, differing ethnicities within borders, and colonial and Cold War

policies that set ethnic group against ethnic group and country against country. It is critical to undertake CVAs in Africa bearing in mind these broader geographical, social, cultural, and historical contexts. These factors also include major historical periods when global systemic forces are threatening to change a society's existing social order, hurting some groups and benefiting others and thus creating clashing interests. Such global influences have included, for example, the breakdown of communist governments in many nations beginning in the late 1980s, and in Africa, after the Cold War, the withdrawal by the superpowers of financial and military assistance to their ally governments.

**Structural conditions**, or so-called “root causes,” are basic and pervasive underlying social and economic conditions within societies that affect large numbers of people and tend to persist over long periods. These are more controllable than the background factors, although difficult to change. They provide fertile ground for other causal factors and thus increase the risk of conflicts in developing societies, but they, too, are not sufficient in themselves to lead to violence. Examples would be:

- High population density;
- Dramatic shifts in ethnic group proportions;
- Ecological deterioration;
- Low level of economic development and high poverty;
- High levels of unemployment, especially among men;
- Rapid economic decline;
- Social structures divided into a small number of groups with several differing characteristics;
- Chronic inter-group material inequalities, including those arising from public policies; and
- External kinship affinities with groups in neighboring countries.

**Accelerators** are resources, organizations, institutions, and processes that work upon the structural factors in order to increase their practical significance. A complex process is required to interpret, channel, and link a society's structural conditions with group interests and to mobilize the population to take collective action such as violence (or peace). These intermediary processes and institutions will affect whether groups can be politicized and mobilized to take action and whether that action is peaceful or violent. Key factors include:

- Political organizations such as parties based on group identities;
- Resources to organize and supply political or armed movements, especially funding and weapons;
- Governing institutions and policies that encourage corruption and rent-seeking, thus sapping the ability of the government to serve the public and inviting forceful challenges;
- Divisive leaders who seek to exploit diverging ethnic and religious loyalties;
- Political elite conflicts and competition within factions that encourage extremism;
- Weak, ineffective security forces that cannot deter violence;
- Absent or weak international engagement to provide incentives for moderation; and
- Regional threats to security and lack of communication and relationships among the governments in a region.

**Triggers** are relatively sudden acts or events that act as catalysts in igniting a crisis or conflict and can provoke violence, such as the assassination of a leader, discovery of widespread election fraud, or a political scandal. For example:

- Political leaders' unilateral, provocative public behavior, such as bellicose rhetoric;
- Repressive security forces that respond harshly to peaceful protest and thus provoke more violence;
- Highly symbolic acts that destroy esteemed cultural or religious property or disrupt such events;
- Specific acts of violence such as assassinations of leaders; and

- Sudden price or subsidy changes sparking demonstrations that weaken government legitimacy or provoke state repression.

None of these risk factors will necessarily cause violence individually or even together with others. Several factors are needed, but the probabilities of violence increase the more these factors are present, are significant, and coalesce in particular places and times.

## THE LEVELS OF HOSTILITY

The more that accelerators and triggers are present, the greater is the level of open hostilities that are expressed by a conflict. Thus, conflicts evolve through their own life cycles or histories, marked mainly by the level of these hostilities. The following typology describes a continuum of conflict stages, some of which are peaceful and some which produce violence.<sup>9</sup>

### LATENT CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

- *Stable peace*: Mutually beneficial exchanges occur among a variety of more or less equal groups and institutions. Legal, political, and policy disputes follow accepted rules and procedures. Disputes may become major controversies that receive wide public attention, cause contentious debate, and raise the political temperature, but they operate through existing institutional processes. Non-violent public demonstrations are an example, for they are not physically coercive and ordinarily represent legitimate political activity, even though they may exhibit some excesses.

### LATENT DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

- *Structural conflict*: The basis for social conflicts is largely unacknowledged, and the outbreak of overt violence may be remote, if it ever does occur. But basic interests of communities and groups are in conflict with each other due to chronically inappropriate policies and practices that lead to economic deterioration, reinforce divisions among groups, suppress or exploit certain groups (“structural violence”), and deprive society of collective methods for solving problems. Thus, in the absence of agreed procedures, the most powerful interests take harmful unilateral action against others.
- *Unstable peace*: Signs of growing alienation, emerging tensions, social divisions, and active disengagement become more open. But government actions may deny specific groups the ability to carry on political action by closing their offices, media censorship, bans, outlawing gatherings and demonstrations, and arbitrary arrests, harassment, or deportations. Intense disputes suggest that existing institutions and processes for handling conflict are under strain or threatened.

### MANIFEST DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

- *Crisis*: A higher level of overt tensions, group polarization, confrontation, overt suppression, and possibly some low-level physical violence. Political confrontations may occur in the form of walkouts, boycotts, sit-ins, mass violent demonstrations and other irregular political activity that reflects the absence or deterioration of regular political and policymaking processes. These situations often elicit special, *ad hoc*, extra-institutional channels for negotiations.
- *Limited violent conflict*: Sporadic violent clashes possibly causing some deaths, such as electoral violence and ethnic riots, political violence through assassinations, kidnappings, disappearances, bombings, isolated attacks on government installations, and ethnic cleansing.

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<sup>9</sup> Differing stages of conflict, such as emergence, escalation, de-escalation, (re)construction, and reconciliation, have been adopted as an organizing framework by recent conflict textbooks (Kriesberg 2003; Miall et al. 1999).

- *Armed, or militarized, conflict:* Active and continuous use of deadly force by organized guerrilla groups and/or armies, such as in civil wars.

Conflicts may shift from latent to open conflict and from constructive to destructive and back again. Latent conflicts may escalate to open conflicts of various intensities, these levels may eventually de-escalate, reach a settlement and be followed by a re-stabilization phase. We can thus find intra-state conflicts at all these various stages, based on the degree of visible coercion or physical force through which conflict is pursued.

Many features of conflicts change as they move through these stages. The more hostile and lasting the conflict becomes, new stakes are created in the conduct of the conflict itself. The issues in dispute change and ramify, protagonists adopt differing loyalties and identities based on changing interests, and additional parties may enter the fray. Thus, the policy utility of distinguishing such stages is that they generally call for very different kinds of interventions. Some levels of conflict are more amenable to outside influence than others. Generally, the greater the level of open physical hostility between major organized interests, and the more sustained its use, the more difficult it is to reduce a conflict or keep it from continuing, other things being equal.

Laying out the antecedent stages of violent conflicts also points to moments for international action when positive measures of preventive peacebuilding can be more feasibly and effectively undertaken. These measures might include democratization promotion, measures to reduce corruption and professionalize state agencies, market reforms, and other programs, where they will not destabilize societies but foster peaceful change.

## CONFLICT SCALES

Another key dimension for responding to intra-state conflicts is their scale or scope. Destructive and violent intra-state conflicts may vary from small and localized to convulsive, nation-wide civil wars. To get a better sense of the variety of policy options to address conflicts and their comparative utility, it is essential to appreciate these different sizes or scales. Scale refers to the geographic and political levels of a conflict and thus the kinds and sizes of the parties that tend to be involved. Conflicts can occur between two or more sovereign states (regional and inter-state), within states (intra-state), and between or within local communities (local), including those within a country or across borders:

- Global: among several states in several regional theatres;
- Regional: among several states in the same region;
- Inter-state: between two states;
- Intra-state;
- National: among two or more groups or forces over the definition and form of the same state;
- Localized: solely among or within groups in the same local geographic area;<sup>10</sup>

More specifically, national intra-state conflicts recently have included: insurgencies to disrupt or oppose central regimes (e.g., Philippines, Macedonia); inter-group violent conflict over access to jobs, education, subsidies, etc. (e.g., Sri Lanka); violent struggles between political elites, factions, or political movements for control of, or over policies of, the state (e.g., Burundi, Rwanda, Cambodia); sectarian movements seeking disruption or overthrow of secular regimes (e.g., Algeria, Indonesia); separatist or autonomy or irredentist conflicts to gain political control over subnational jurisdictions (e.g., Ethiopia-Eritrea, Serbia,

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<sup>10</sup> Both national and localized conflicts might occur only within state boundaries or spread across state boundaries. National conflicts can take localized forms of the larger conflicts.

Georgia). Localized intra-state conflicts usually involve inter-communal conflicts over access to land, water, pasture, and other scarce natural resources (e.g., Northern Kenya).

These conflict scopes are also a crucial consideration for policymakers because they tend to involve differing population sizes, channels for articulating interests and organizing collective action, geographical spaces, and degrees of destruction, and thus, their tractability for those trying to reduce them. Generally, the higher the level of open destructive intra-state conflicts, the more people required to wage them, the more people killed and displaced, and the more destructive their impact. Two pastoral tribes engaging in cattle-rustling with spears entail a more manageable problem (unless many such localized conflicts are occurring throughout a country), than would government and rebel armies deploying mortars, tanks, and airplanes against each other. The latter will usually be much more difficult to alleviate and terminate.<sup>11</sup>

As obvious as the importance of the levels and scales of hostilities may seem, the discussion and implementation of interventions in intra-state conflicts often ignore these crucial considerations of whether the interventions' scale of activity and potential scope of influence correspond in any proportional way to the scale of the conflict at which they are directed. Table II.2 combines all the conflict dimensions discussed above in order to show the many forms and faces of intra-state conflicts that international and domestic actors may choose to address, and gives examples.

**Table II.2: Differing Degrees of Conflict on Two Dimensions: Stage of Hostilities and Scale**

<i>Scales at which conflict occurs</i>	Stages of Hostilities (Extent of use of physical force)				
	Constructive Conflict	Destructive Conflict			
	Stable peace	Latent	Unstable peace	Crisis	Violent conflict
<b>(Global)</b>					
<b>Regional</b>	Competition for world markets				
<b>Inter-state</b>	Legal disputes over cross-border environmental hazards Adjudication by Hague World Court	Unilateral attempts of states to control territory and borders, water, or energy resources. Country monopolies on vital non-renewable natural resources	Neighboring country rhetorically champions the cause of a "kin group" that is a minority in a targeted country	Border confrontations and occasional incursions against perceived security threats	Country provides harbor and arms to an insurgency against its neighbor; Inter-state wars
<b>National</b>	Non-violent demonstrations over unpaid wages, Presidential and parliamentary elections	Coercive maneuvering between competing elites over control of state assets. Jailings of members of legitimate political parties	Agitation by sub-national territories for autonomy or secession	Occasionally violent street demonstrations and police crackdowns	Civil war between government and "rebels"
<b>Local</b>					
<b>Transborder</b> Inter-communal Intra-communal	Competition for tourism, central government aid Disputes over location of waste dumps	Competition by two or more villages on two sides of borders over a common river Rivalry/discrimination among ethnic or religious groups for land and jobs	Abiding distrust between ethnic groups in two adjacent countries Local authorities always favor one political faction over others	Inter-ethnic demonstrations in several localities	Violent inter-ethnic clashes
<b>Within country</b> Inter-communal Intra-communal					

<sup>11</sup> However, because civil wars have been increasingly targeted on civilians, they may cause more deaths than inter-state wars, and they may require more time and resources for post-conflict reconstruction.

# APPENDIX III ~ REFERENCES AND HYPERLINKS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

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USAID in Africa: Conflict Web: Resources

<http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/conflictweb/resources.html>

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<http://www.fewer.org/>

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Land and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention. Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation/Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/United States Agency for International Development.

Minerals and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention. Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation/Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/United States Agency for International Development.

Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention. Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation/Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance/United States Agency for International Development.

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