Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity

Methodological challenges and practical solutions

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Practice Products for the CCVRI

Improving Measurement in DFID Crime, Conflict & Violence Programming

This document is one of a series of Practice Products developed under the *Conflict, Crime, and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI)*. The full set of products is intended to support DFID country offices and their partners to develop better measures of programme results in difficult conflict and fragile environments.

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Within DFID, the Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department has established a partnership with a consortium of leading organisations in the fields of conflict, security and justice to develop more effective approaches to the use of data in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes that contribute to reducing conflict, crime and violence.

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Document Summary

Title:

Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity – methodological challenges and practical solutions

Purpose and intended use of this document:

All interventions – be they projects, programmes, a sector of work or country operational plans – interact with conflict in some way. Often there are unintended and unanticipated ways these interventions play out in a conflict context. Numerous peacebuilding evaluation reports purport to assess conflict sensitivity, but no actual methodologies for doing this are described within them.

This document gives practical guidance on how to monitor and evaluate that interaction between an intervention and conflict. It includes a discussion of the methodological questions that arise when embarking on a process to monitor and evaluate for unintended interactions with conflict, as well as a range of practical and field-tested tools to enable the reader to do this.

This document should help anyone designing a monitoring or evaluation process for conflict sensitivity – at whatever level s/he is concerned with (country operational plan, sector level, programme or project). It should assist both those within DFID and implementing partners, as it provides guidance that can assist with the methodological considerations and practical dilemmas facing both these groups.

Key questions this document addresses:

What is monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity?
How does monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity differ from monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding or state building?
Should I seek to demonstrate attribution when evaluating conflict sensitivity? How do I determine causality?
Which evaluation criteria are useful in evaluating conflict sensitivity?
What is good enough conflict analysis for monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity?
How can I monitor and evaluate conflict sensitivity at different levels – country operational plan / sector / project or programme?
When reviewing proposals, what should I check for to ensure that implementing partners have plans / systems in place to monitor and evaluate for conflict sensitivity?
What tools can I use for monitoring or evaluating conflict sensitivity?
How do I design indicators to monitor conflict sensitivity?

Key messages/essential "take aways":

The unintended interaction between a project, programme, sector or country operational plan with conflict / tensions *can* be monitored and evaluated, and a range of tools are available for this purpose.

Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity differs from monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding in focus, purpose, and contribution to peace: conflict sensitivity can assess *any* contribution to peace, while peacebuilding is concerned with whether the intervention affects a *key* conflict driver positively.

It is not necessary or feasible to demonstrate attribution in evaluating the degree of conflict sensitivity of an intervention: demonstrating contribution is sufficient.

The OECD DAC evaluation criteria that pertain particularly to evaluating conflict sensitivity are relevance, impact and effectiveness. However these need some adjustments for application to conflict sensitivity, in particular that impact be analysed using contribution analysis as the standard of attribution does not fit well with conflict sensitivity.

Indicators are helpful in monitoring conflict sensitivity but are not the only source of information or evidence concerning conflict sensitivity. Indicators are also not well suited to identifying unintended and unanticipated consequences.

There are four common processes for monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity at any level (country operational plan, sector, programme or project):
- Monitoring / assessment of conflict
- Monitoring / assessment of whether the processes for minimizing negative effects on the conflict context are / have functioned;
- Monitoring / assessing the effects of the conflict on the intervention;
- Monitoring / assessing the effects of the intervention on conflict.

Intended audience of this document (including assumed skill level):

The primary audience of this document are DFID advisers designing or implementing programming or strategies in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS) who wish to understand how their interventions could be or have been interacting with conflict in unintentional ways. The secondary audience are implementing partners in FCAS, for whom the tools may be particularly useful.

The document assumes no prior knowledge of conflict sensitivity. It provides a short explanation of what is conflict sensitivity and when it is relevant. Those who already have a good understanding of conflict sensitivity can skip the introduction and start with the methodological challenges section.

Key topics/tags:

Conflict sensitivity
Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity
Indicators
Tools
Lines of inquiry
OECD DAC criteria

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Cross-references to other documents in the series:

Woodrow, P., (2013) *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security & Justice Programmes: Part I: What they are, different types and how to develop and use them* (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects)

Corlazzoli, V., and White, J., (2013) *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation* (Search for Common Ground)

Corlazzoli, V., and White, J., (2013) *Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict and Fragile Environments* (Search for Common Ground)

Corlazzoli, V., and White, J., (2013) *Measuring the Measurable: Solutions to Measurement Challenges in Conflict and Fragile Environments* (Search for Common Ground)

Goldwyn, R. (2013) *Making the Case for Conflict Sensitivity in Security and Justice Sector Reform Programming* (CARE International)

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is conflict sensitivity?

In situations of conflict and fragility "donors can do harm in almost as many ways as they can do good. Any intervention, policy or position can have unintended consequences."[1] For example a 2002 review of DFID aid to Nepal found that DFID's development programmes risked fuelling conflict because aid was focused in accessible areas; thus there were only limited benefits to the poorest and most conflict-affected areas of the west, and capacity-building assistance benefited elite groups while providing little to excluded groups[2].

Conflict sensitivity is a set of processes that help us recognise the unintended ways our work can contribute to conflict. It involves understanding the conflict (through a conflict analysis), assessing how programming interacts with the conflict, and revising programming in light of this knowledge. DFID is committed to being conflict sensitive, as noted in the Policy Paper *Preventing Violent Conflict*[3].

> "A conflict sensitive approach involves gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context and acting to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of interventions on conflict, within an organization's given priorities/objectives (mandate)"
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> Source: Brown S., Goldwyn R., Groenewald, H., McGregor, J. (2009) *Conflict Sensitivity Consortium Benchmarking paper,* p. 19. http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/publications/conflict-sensitivity-consortium-benchmarking-paper-full-version.

Conflict sensitivity is relevant to all programming in a conflict context – including development, governance, humanitarian, peacebuilding, security and justice sector reform and state building.

1.2 Why monitor and evaluate for conflict sensitivity?

As the DAC's Guidelines on *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility* notes, "[b]eing conflict sensitive and evaluating conflict sensitivity are two imperative dimensions of evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. A clear, critical assessment of an activity or a policy's impacts will cover both intended and unintended consequences and thus offer insights into the sensitivity of the activity under evaluation." It further states, "Conflict sensitivity *must* be incorporated into evaluations of donor engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations."[4] In the Interim Guidance Note *Measuring and managing for results in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations*, DFID highlights the importance of monitoring of conflict sensitivity: "**And we need to monitor to ensure we are avoiding doing any inadvertent harm through our interventions** – for example ensuring that humanitarian or service delivery programmes do not undermine longer term objectives for strengthening state-society relations, or that any intervention does not exacerbate existing patterns of exclusion."[5]

Monitoring the interaction of DFID's programming with conflict is key to identifying possible conflict escalating activities early on and revising them to avoid contributing to violence and tensions. Evaluating

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[1] DFID (2010) *Working effectively in conflict affected and fragile situations – summary note* (London: DFID) p. 5.

[2] DFID (2007) *Preventing Violent Conflict* (London: DFID) p. 29.

[3] The paper states that "[w]e will ensure that development work takes better account of its possible effect on conflict," including in countries in that are not currently affected by violent conflict. DFID (2007) *Op. cit.* p. 28.

[4] OECD DAC (2012) *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results* (Paris: OECD) p. 37.

[5] DFID (2010) *Interim Guidance Note – Measuring and managing for results in fragile and conflict-affected states and situations* p. 3 (emphasis in original).

for conflict sensitivity enables DFID to demonstrate its commitment to violence prevention, and to learn about what conflict sensitive actions work in a specific context.

1.3   What does it mean to monitor and evaluate conflict sensitivity?

Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity refers to two things:
- Monitoring and evaluating the interaction between the intervention and the conflict context, both the way the conflict has affected the project, programme, portfolio or Country Operational Plan (Country plan), and the way the project, programme, portfolio, or Country plan has affected the conflict; and
- Undertaking the process of monitoring and evaluation in a conflict sensitive manner (i.e. ensuring the process of monitoring and evaluation itself does not contribute to tensions).

This guidance relates to the first of these.

Monitoring for conflict sensitivity is broader than collection of data on achievement of intended outputs or progress toward the articulated goal. It requires:
- Processes for data collection on the evolution of the conflict context
- Processes for data collection on how the intervention (country operational plan, sector, programme or project) could be having negative or positive effects on conflict. These can be anticipated (predictable or planned) or unanticipated/unexpected
- Processes for data collection on how the intervention has been affected by and is responding to evolutions in the conflict context
- Assessment of the outcomes of actions to mitigate negative effects or strengthen positive effects of the intervention
- Decision making processes in which the implications for the programme are considered, potentially resulting in adjustments to programming in light of conflict concerns being identified. This may require adjustment of logframes, which can be challenging when adjusting a logframe requires approval by the Secretary of State.

Evaluating for conflict sensitivity is a one-off assessment that takes place usually at the end of an intervention, but also can be done as a mid-term review. It provides an objective assessment of the interaction of the design, implementation and overall results of an on-going or completed intervention with the conflict context. This process does *not* try to evaluate the peacebuilding outcomes of any of these interventions, nor the relevance of the interventions to the key drivers of conflict. This is discussed more fully in section 2.2 below.

A range of tools for monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity in are provided in the Annex. Table 7 explains the utility of each tool for either monitoring or evaluation purposes.

1.4   When does a situation warrant monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity?

Monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity is most relevant and applicable in fragile and conflict-affected states – that is, 21 out of DFID's 28 focus countries. It is critical in situations where open violence is present, or is a very real threat, and can be useful in situations where there are high levels of political tension, such as when elections are upcoming in a context where elections are often tense or violent. Monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity can also provide new insights for any developmental context, as it can help reveal the structural violence in a situation and guide the realisation of rights in a way that prevents backlash from elites.

There may be more contentious projects, sectors, regions or target groups that a DFID country office may choose to focus on to monitor and evaluate for conflict sensitivity. Specific violent events may trigger the uptake of monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity, although it is better if monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are built in from the start of any kind of intervention in conflict contexts.

1.5   What is the difference between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding /state-building?

In *Building Peaceful States and Societies* DFID sets out the difference between peacebuilding and state-building[6]. Conflict sensitivity is relevant to both, but differs from both. While peacebuilding and state-building are fields or types of interventions, conflict sensitivity is an approach for planning, implementation and monitoring that is applicable to *all* interventions, including development, peacebuilding, state building and humanitarian assistance.

Table 1: The difference between conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and state-building

Conflict sensitivity	Peacebuilding	State-building
Conflict sensitivity ensures that design, implementation and outcomes of interventions do not undermine peace or exacerbate conflict, and contribute to peace where possible (within the given priorities).	Peacebuilding aims to achieve peace, by targeting key drivers of conflict.	State-building aims to build the state's capacity, institutions and legitimacy and the political and economic processes that underpin state-society relations.

A conflict sensitive intervention must at a minimum avoid inadvertently contributing to conflict. It should also contribute to peace where possible. However, a conflict sensitive intervention does not need to address causes or drivers of conflict and may not be effective in addressing them. Moreover, even if they are effective in addressing key drivers of conflict, explicit peacebuilding interventions may not necessarily be conflict sensitive. For example, a peacebuilding project that rebuilds destroyed homes to promote the return of people displaced by conflict can create tension by disproportionately benefitting one group (the displaced) and re-introducing them when the remainees are not yet ready for such returns.

Similarly, a state-building intervention may inadvertently contribute to tensions, even while it is effective in strengthening the state's ability to deliver core functions. For example, a state-building project that builds capacity of local institutions to deliver services may inadvertently promote one ethnic group within those institutions by not recognizing the peer pressure on others not to engage in state structures.

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[6] State-building is defined as "concerned with the state's capacity, institutions and legitimacy, and with the political and economic processes that underpin state-society relations. The effectiveness of the state and the quality of its linkages to society largely determine a country's prospects for peace and development." DFID (2010) *Building Peaceful States and Societies – A DFID Practice Paper* (London: DFID) p. 12. Peacebuilding is defined as aiming "to establish positive peace," including measures to address causes and effects of conflict, strengthening capacities to "prevent and resolve conflict", and "supporting inclusive peace processes and agreements." *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

2 Monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity: methodological challenges and considerations

2.1 Key concepts

The M&E of conflict sensitivity involves assessment of both *process* and *outcome*.

Process: Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity involves checking that certain processes are in place to enable conflict sensitivity, such as conflict analysis or the implementation of conflict mitigation strategies.
Outcome: M&E of conflict sensitivity identifies the changes in the conflict resulting from the intervention (either positive, negative or no change), and the changes in the intervention as a result of the conflict.

In the Annex, Tool 1, *Reviewing whether processes to enable conflict sensitivity are functioning*, provides general questions for M&E of the process dimensions of conflict sensitivity. The conflict audit gives a fuller picture of all processes that should be in place to ensure conflict sensitivity, including strategy, policy and institutional norms[7]. All other tools (2 to 12) examine outcomes – how the intervention has affected the conflict (tools 2 - 9) and how the conflict has affected the intervention (tools 2, 3, 10-12).

2.2 Monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity vs. monitoring and evaluating for peacebuilding

There is much confusion in the field of peacebuilding evaluation about the difference between monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity and for peacebuilding. While numerous peacebuilding evaluations purport to assess conflict sensitivity, no actual methodologies for doing this are detailed within them.

At the core of M&E for **conflict sensitivity** is identifying, understanding and preventing the possible negative effects of interventions on conflict. Exploring the possible contributions to peace is a secondary interest, subordinate to the primary interest of avoiding contributing to conflict. For conflict sensitivity, M&E can assess *any* contribution to peace, whether intended or unintended, significant or not; the process does not need to examine whether the intervention affects one or more *key* drivers of conflict positively.

M&E of **peacebuilding** requires a greater focus on peacebuilding outcomes. Peacebuilding interventions have contributions to peace as their objective, and so monitoring and evaluation considers how the interventions affected the *key* causes and drivers of conflict and peace.[8] Unintended outcomes are a secondary concern.

Thus, while the M&E processes for conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding may involve many similar elements (for example, both start from a conflict analysis, and both examine process and outcome) there is a different emphasis in each, with a contingent variation in the extent to which contributions to peace (writ large or writ little) are assessed.

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[7] DFID (draft Sept 2010) *Conflict Audit: How to Note* (London: DFID).
[8] Resources for peacebuilding M&E can be found in 2 accompanying CCVRI guidance papers: Corlazzoli, V., and White, J. (2013) *Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict and Fragile Environments* (Search for Common Ground); and Corlazzoli, V. and White, J. (2013) *Measuring the Measurable: Solutions to Measurement Challenges in Conflict and Fragile Environments* (Search for Common Ground).

Table 2: Monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity vs monitoring and evaluating for peacebuilding

Methods of monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding (working ON conflict)		Methods of monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity (working IN conflict)
Considers achievement of peacebuilding goals *and* unintended outcomes	**Focus**	Considers unintended outcomes Greater focus on monitoring
To Improve intervention's contribution to peace *and* ensure intervention does no harm	**Purpose**	To ensure intervention does no harm (and contributes to peace where possible)
Examines whether an intervention affects *key* causes or drivers of conflict and peace (i.e. peace writ large)	**Contribution to peace**	Examines *any* contribution to peace, including strengthening of small scale connectors (i.e. peace writ little)

For example, if a development project aiming primarily at increasing literacy also integrates messages of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, the M&E process would consider how the intervention may have contributed to increased or decreased conflict or tensions, and the degree to which tolerance and peaceful coexistence messages are understood or taken up by participants in various aspects of their lives. By contrast, if the literacy programme was designed as an explicit peacebuilding intervention, also involving messages of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, the M&E processes would inquiring in more detail into the significance of the attitude changes resulting from the tolerance and coexistence messaging and their relevance to and effect on the key drivers of conflict. For example, are these attitudes significant obstacles to dealing with the drivers of conflict? Are these attitudes driving hostility and recalcitrance on issues in dispute? Were the new attitudes of tolerance widely taken up in society, beyond the participants in the program (providing a new model for interaction or changing social norms)? Or did they lead participants to take actions that addressed the drivers of conflict or peace?

2.3   Inferring causality: attribution vs. contribution

Attribution, with counterfactuals, most closely associated with experimental or quasi-experimental designs, is often held up as the evaluation gold standard to which we must continually strive as the basis for causal inference. For elements of a programme or portfolio that are designed *explicitly* to contribute to peace (e.g. dialogue integrated into returns programming, youth employment programme intended to reduce violence) it may be possible to design an evaluation process, such as experimental or quasi-experimental processes, to assess the degree to which outcomes and impacts on conflict are due to the programme's intervention and attribute results to DFID programmes or policies.[9]

However, there are significant practical and ethical challenges to demonstrating attribution in evaluation of conflict sensitivity.

1. **Demonstrating attribution becomes increasingly tenuous the further the outcomes diverge from the intervention's intent** – The link between development interventions and development outcomes may be reasonably straightforward, even if it is complex. However, in the case of

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[9] For example, a randomized field experiment was used to evaluate a community-driven reconstruction project in northern Liberia. The evaluation set out to test whether community-driven reconstruction projects, or CDR, (involving the introduction of local community development committees and support for them) led to improved social cohesion. The evaluation selected a treatment and a control group through a lottery process conducted among chiefs in public. The evaluation found that the communities that received CDR project exhibited higher levels of social cooperation that those that did not, as measured by a community-wide public goods game. Fearon, J., Humphreys, M. & Weinstein, J. (2009) "Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion after Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia," *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings 2009*, 99:2, pp. 287–291.

conflict sensitivity the concern is mainly with *unintended* outcomes, which, by definition, are not part of the intervention's intent.

2. **Conflict is influenced by multiple factors, and thus the intervention is likely to play a small role, although it could be a contributory one** – A wide range of factors affect tensions. This can make experimental or quasi-experimental designs difficult to implement, as there are so many complex variables that cannot be isolated.

3. **Control groups may not be effective or feasible in conflict contexts** – Conflict is a complex and changing context, where it may be difficult to actually 'control' the key elements of a control group. This can undermine experimental or quasi-experimental approaches.

4. **Experimental/quasi-experimental methods do not assess *how* an intervention caused an outcome** – Where they are feasible, experimental designs can establish whether an outcome or impact is attributable to an intervention, but not how. For conflict sensitivity, understanding the causal mechanisms is important both for deciding how to mitigate any negative effects and improving future practice.

5. **Capturing unintended results is difficult** – Experimental and quasi-experimental approaches, used to demonstrate attribution, do not capture unintended and unexpected results well, as they are unforeseen and so cannot be incorporated into an analysis framework.

6. **The use of control groups poses the risk of actual violence** – Using control groups for whom conflict sensitive measures are not applied runs the risk that interventions may not-so-inadvertently contribute to tensions or violence, as the measures to prevent tensions or violence are not in place. Additionally, where causes of conflict or tensions involve lack of access to resources or discrimination, making a control group aware of its relative deprivation (lack of resource inputs) may result in violent mobilisation, particularly if the lines of division in the conflict overlap with the selection criteria for targeting. This makes the identification of counterfactuals very difficult.

In summary, in most cases it is not possible to attribute negative changes in conflict causes or trends to a particular intervention or to prove that measures taken in programme design to ensure conflict sensitivity directly prevented conflict or tensions. Establishing that measures taken in intervention design to ensure conflict sensitivity *directly* prevented conflict or tensions is thus a very high standard that is likely to be beyond the scope of most evaluations.

"The rigorous quantitative methods associated with impact evaluation and randomised control trials are considered not feasible in many situations of conflict and fragility (although useful experiments are underway at the programme level). Still, it is particularly difficult to apply such methods to high-level questions of peace and conflict across various interventions at country level or to assessments of overall donor engagement in a conflict setting. Where causality cannot be reliably determined using rigorous methods, evaluators may present plausible explanations for their conclusions regarding impact, though limitations should be made explicit."

Source: OECD DAC (2012) *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility – Improving Learning for Results,* p. 68.
http://www.oecdilibrary.org/docserver/download/4312151e.pdf?expires=1363366396&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=D570FFF6654B097EFCFCC91D1D1BD481

Given that conflict sensitivity seeks to minimize negative effects and maximize positive effects where possible it is sufficient to establish whether an intervention *contributes* to further tensions or to conflict de-escalation, and *how* it contributes. *Contribution analysis* can help DFID managers come to informed arguments about the contribution of DFID's intervention to observed conflict escalation or de-escalation.

Theory-based and case-based approaches, such as contribution analysis, theory-based evaluation, or process tracing, may better help DFID managers come to informed conclusions about the contribution of DFID's intervention to observed positive negative effects. *Contribution analysis*, for example, seeks to verify an intervention's theory of change while taking into account other factors by developing a 'contribution story' through identification and gathering of evidence on the logic of the links in the theory of change, assumptions and other factors affecting outcomes. *Process tracing* similarly sets out to unwrap the causal links between an intervention and outcomes by tracing and comparing sequences of events constituting the process of change and subjecting the evidence to a series of tests to determine causal inference. These methods are better suited to analysing how causal factors combine and what the contribution of an intervention may be, and for identifying the contributions of interventions to unintended outcomes or impacts, even if they are not as good at estimating the quantity or extent of the contribution. See Tool 9, *Assessing Contribution*, for further detail and references on these methods.

> "[E]mphasis on 'contributory' causes is . . . consistent with the broad consensus that development aid interventions work best in combination with other non-aid factors. A contribution-based logic is also consistent with the complex and multi-dimensional nature of many contemporary development interventions."
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> Source: Stern, E. et al. (2012) *Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluation – Report of a study commissioned by the Department for International Development* Working paper 38 (London: DFID) p. 12

2.4   Evaluation criteria for conflict sensitivity

In evaluation of development cooperation, the *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*—including *relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability* and *impact*—are widely used,. They have been adapted for peacebuilding interventions in the DAC's guidance, *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility*. Here these criteria are further adapted for conflict sensitivity. For conflict sensitivity, three OECD DAC evaluation criteria are of primary importance: relevance, effectiveness and impact.

The OECD DAC defines *relevance* in peacebuilding programming as the degree to which the objectives and the activities of the intervention address the driving factors of conflict, and helps link the objectives (implicit or explicit) of an intervention with the conflict analysis[10]. For conflict sensitivity, the evaluation criteria of relevance and appropriateness involve consideration of how responsive an intervention has been to the conflict context. If the intervention adjusts to the changing conflict context, then it is enabling relevance and appropriateness[11] to the conflict context. Several tools are helpful for this purpose, including: Tool 2, *Indicators*; Tool 3, *Checklists*; Tool 10, *Scenarios*; Tool 11, *Comparative conflict analysis*; and Tool 12, *Timeline*.

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[10] OECD DAC (2012) *Op. cit.,* pp. 65-66.
[11] The criterion of appropriateness refers to the degree to which the activities pursued are tailored to local needs and to the conflict context. *See* UNDP (2009) *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* (New York: UNDP), Section 7.4; OECD DAC (1999) *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies* (Paris: OECD DAC) p. 22.

The OECD DAC defines *impact* as the wider results of the project, including positive and negative, direct or indirect, intended and unintended.[12] Earlier guidance has highlighted how understanding impacts "should involve looking at conflict sensitivity"[13]. As highlighted above, demonstrating attribution does not suit evaluation of conflict sensitivity well (see section 2.3 above, Inferring causality: attribution vs contribution). An assessment of unintended outcomes, even without proof of causality, can provide valuable information for redesign of a project, programme, sector or country strategy). The 2012 OECD DAC guidance on *Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility* also includes contribution analysis. For example, key questions under impact include: "How has the situation changed over time, and what is the contribution of the intervention to those changes?"[14]

This guidance suggests that *impact* can be evaluating using a broader range of impact evaluation designs (such as contribution analysis and process tracing) that draw on different ways of inferring causation than experiments and do not 'prove' that the intervention caused the effect. Several tools are helpful for this purpose, including: Tool 4, *Examination of resource transfers and implicit messaging*; Tool 5, *Conflict sensitivity principles*; Tool 6, *Comparative case studies*; Tool 7, *Review of theories of change*; Tool 8, *Assessing Contribution*; and Tool 9, *Feedback mechanisms*.

The OECD DAC uses *effectiveness* to assess whether an intervention has met its intended objectives, and in peacebuilding, where the stated objectives may not directly be related to peace and conflict, how the immediate and secondary outcomes related to peacebuilding and conflict dynamics[15]. Conflict sensitivity is implicitly part of the DAC's definition of effectiveness, insofar as it suggests consideration of what the effort did to manage conflict-specific risks. Effectiveness with respect to conflict sensitivity would look specifically at whether the intervention identified and managed conflict-related risks (the effects of the conflict context on the intervention). Several tools are helpful for this purpose, including: Tool 5, *Conflict sensitivity principles*; Tool 6, *Comparative case studies*; Tool 7, *Review of theories of change*; and Tool 8, *Assessing Contribution*.

Table 3: OECD DAC evaluation criteria as applied to peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity

OECD DAC evaluation criteria application to peacebuilding		OECD DAC evaluation criteria application to conflict sensitivity
Do objectives and activities address key drivers of conflict *and* are responsive to conflict?	**Relevance**	Is the intervention responsive and adjusting to conflict context?
Have intended objectives met with respect to peacebuilding and immediate or secondary outcomes' relation to peacebuilding and conflict dynamics?	**Effectiveness**	Are conflict mitigation measures effective in managing conflict?
What are the effects, intended or unintended, medium or long-term, on the wider conflict dynamics, i.e., key drivers of conflict and peace?	**Impact**	What are the effects, intended or unintended, on tensions, vulnerabilities, grievances, connectors and capacities for peace?

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[12] OECD DAC (2012) *Op. cit.*, pp. 13, 67.

[13] OECD DAC (2008) *Guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities – working draft for application period* (Paris: OECD DAC) p. 42.
[14] OECD DAC (2012) *Op. cit.* p. 68.
[15] *Ibid*, p. 66.

2.5   The blurring of evaluation and monitoring

Traditionally monitoring has been conceived of as an on-going data collection and analysis process to inform and adjust programming, while evaluation has been conceived of as a sporadic review, mid-way or at completion of an intervention, to determine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or answer some other evaluation question. However, the key concerns and inquiries associated with evaluation are increasingly being picked up within monitoring mechanisms such that evaluative inquiry is being conducted on an on-going basis during the course of an intervention. In complex environments that are dynamic and uncertain, and where there is disagreement on how to promote change, evaluative inquiry within monitoring processes can provide needed real-time feedback on the nature and relevance of the outcomes of the program, while providing opportunities for programme adaptation and evolution. This does not obviate the need for formative or summative evaluations; these can capture and assess the degree to which the interventions have been responsive to the environment, and ensure accountability of interventions for conflict sensitivity.

2.6   Evidence and indicators

There is a very strong emphasis on the use of indicators in DFID and the wider development sector. Indicators can provide useful data to identify both changes in the conflict and possible interactions with conflict. Guidance for developing conflict sensitivity indicators can be found in Tool 2 (*Indicators*) in the Annex. In summary, at all levels conflict sensitivity indicators include both conflict and interaction indicators, and at the project level also implementation indicators (i.e., those indicators that a monitoring system would usually include).

However, indicators are not the only source of information for understanding interactions with conflict, and in many circumstances may be of limited value. Exploring unintended and unanticipated outcomes is not well accomplished through indicators, which help assess what we had anticipated, not what we had not anticipated. To identify the unintended and unanticipated effects of a programme or policy, ***open-ended inquiry*** with a range of targeted and non-targeted groups is a more appropriate methodology. Any indicator-based methodology should therefore be supplemented by feedback mechanisms that are more open-ended. See Tool 9, *Feedback Mechanisms*, for more information on open-ended inquiry processes.

Consequently, indicators and evidence should not be synonymous; indicators can be one form of identifying relevant evidence, but are not the only form, and for conflict sensitivity indicators should be supplemented by other feedback mechanisms that gather information about unanticipated effects in particular.

3 Conflict analysis for monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity

3.1 What is 'good enough' conflict analysis for monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity?

Conflict analysis is key to monitoring and evaluation of conflict sensitivity:

- Conflict analysis serves as a baseline of the conflict context, providing the key reference point for the situation prior to the intervention;
- Conflict analysis should strongly inform the intervention design & re-design, and is therefore important to analysis of relevance and appropriateness;
- Conflict analysis is required for on-going evaluative inquiry in monitoring the intervention;
- Conflict analysis provides a point of comparison for the endline or the point of measurement, enabling identification of unintended outcomes that escalated conflict or tensions.

What constitutes 'good enough' conflict analysis will be different at different levels, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Good enough conflict analysis at country operational plan, sector and project / programme levels

Level	Good enough conflict analysis
Country operational plan level	A broad understanding of conflict dynamics and the key drivers of conflict is needed. Conflict sensitivity then involves an assessment of how strategic decisions interact with the conflict factors identified.
Sector level	An understanding of how the key issues/driving factors of conflict play out in that sector is needed. For example, in the education sector it may emerge that all teachers are drawn from one ethnic group as they are better educated, that history teaches a very one-sided view of the past, or that antagonism to another group permeates language and literacy teaching. These are issues that relate to individual projects, but can be identified at a sector level, and need to be recognized within individual projects or programmes within that sector.
Project / programme level	A more nuanced understanding of the conflict at a micro level is needed. The Do No Harm framework[16], identifying what divides and what connects people in a context, is one valuable tool for such an endeavour. The analysis at a sector level and at a macro level is pertinent to assessing how an intervention can interact with conflict but not adequate to assess a project's conflict sensitivity. Conflict analysis at the sector level can also be helpful to inform design choices and indicators at the project/programme level, by identifying issues that affect a range of projects in the sector.

Experience suggests that using a structured tool or combination of tools to conduct the analysis is useful to enabling conflict sensitivity. Such an analysis can be accomplished through applying the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Fragility framework (or its equivalent). However, this may require considerable time and resources. There are options for more rapid processes that may produce 'good enough' analyses for purposes of monitoring conflict sensitivity. These include facilitated workshops among multiple stakeholders in the country, rapid interview processes or a desk study, drawing on multiple analyses that have been conducted by other agencies. In section 4.5 key lines of inquiry for conflict analysis are documented, if a more rapid process is being pursued.

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[16] The Do No Harm framework is described at: http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/docs/DoNoHarmHandbook.pdf.

Conflict is dynamic, and therefore monitoring conflict sensitivity requires on-going monitoring of the conflict context. Indicators for conflict are discussed in Tool 2, *Indicators*.

Evaluation of DFID assistance in Afghanistan

The 2009 evaluation of DFID's assistance in Afghanistan noted that *"political economy and conflict analysis were not undertaken, and therefore did not underpin the strategic choices made."* The evaluation observed that the failure to conduct conflict analysis led to key assumptions that were inaccurate about how service delivery and improved capacity would improve political legitimacy, and led DFID to give less attention to accountability in its portfolio.

Source: Bennett, J., Alexander, J., Saltmarshe, D., Phillipson, R., Marsden, P. (May 2009) *Country programme evaluation Afghanistan.* http://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/47107291.pdf.

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4 Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity at different levels

4.1 Key components for monitoring and evaluating the conflict sensitivity at all different levels

For DFID country offices conflict sensitivity is relevant at the country operational plan level, sector level programme and project level. There are four common processes across all these levels:

- Monitoring / assessment of conflict (see Tool 2, *Indicators*)
- Monitoring / assessment of whether the processes for minimizing negative effects on the conflict context are / have functioned (see Tool 1, *Reviewing whether processes to enable conflict sensitivity are functioning*)
- Monitoring / assessing the effects of the intervention on conflict (see Tool 2, *Indicators*; Tool 3, *Checklists;* Tool 4, *Examination of resource transfers and implicit messaging*; Tool 5, *Conflict sensitivity principles*; Tool 6, *Comparative case studies*; Tool 7, *Review of theories of change*; Tool 8, *Assessing Contribution*; and Tool 9, *Feedback mechanisms*)
- Monitoring / assessing the effects of the conflict on the intervention (see Tool 2, *Indicators*; Tool 3, *Checklists*; Tool 10, *Scenarios*; Tool 11, *Comparative conflict analysis;* and Tool 12 *Timeline*)

4.2 Country operational plan level

At the country operational plan level DFID can examine the conflict sensitivity of the strategic decisions, including the overall choice of instruments, the sectoral and geographical focus and choice of partners. Monitoring and evaluation at the country operational plan or portfolio level is more than simply the sum of the individual projects: projects can be successful in their own terms while contributing to conflict at the macro level, as the cumulative effects of interventions playing out in a national level conflict may not be so obvious at a project level but may be much more obvious at a portfolio level. For example, in Sri Lanka during the conflict with the LTTE, donors tended to provide humanitarian relief to the LTTE controlled areas, and development aid to the Government controlled areas. This further enhanced the economic disparity between the two regions, inadvertently fuelling tensions. Each individual project could have been very successful in its own terms, but the cumulative effect was conflict escalating.

4.3 Sector level

At the sector level we are concerned with monitoring and evaluating strategic decisions and budgetary allocations in sectoral approaches (e.g., Sector-Wide Approaches, Programme Based Approaches, etc.). Sector-level monitoring and evaluation can also assess the conflict sensitivity of DFID's own portfolio or programmes in the aggregate within a particular sector. The aggregation issues highlighted above also require consideration.

4.4 Project and programme level

At the project and programme level we are concerned with how the design and implementation of specific activities could be contributing inadvertently to tensions, or missing opportunities to contribute to peace. This requires analysis at the level of project/programme activities.

4.5 Key lines of inquiry across all levels

The following table (Table 5) summarises key questions for monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity across all levels. Core lines of inquiry common to all levels (country operational plan, sector, programme / project) are supplemented by specific questions for each level.

Table 5: Key lines of inquiry at different levels

Conflict analysis	
Lines of Inquiry common to all levels	What are the causes of violence / tension?
Lines of inquiry specific to country operational plan level	What are the trends in key drivers of conflict / peace? What actors oppose change? How has their influence evolved? What are the perceptions of the government's legitimacy? What are perceptions of progress in the peace process?
Lines of inquiry specific to sector level	What are the trends in the sector-related conflict issues? *For example, if unevenness in police responsiveness and in arrests and convictions of people committing crimes against minorities has been identified as a conflict issue, one needs to track trends in perceptions of security, in police responsiveness, in inter-group assaults and convictions.* What are the perceptions of the government's legitimacy and effectiveness in this sector?
Lines of inquiry specific to programme / project level	What are the trends in sources of conflict or tensions in the project / programme area? What are the trends in the opportunities or capacities for peace in the project / programme area?
Relevant tools	*Conflict analysis tools are not incorporated into this guidance*

Effects of the intervention on the conflict	
Lines of Inquiry common to all levels	Has the distribution of resources exacerbated conflict: does it favour (or is it perceived to favour) one group over another? Does the distribution of resources exacerbate horizontal inequalities or processes (e.g., exclusion, corruption, elite capture) that fuel conflict? Does the injection of new resources allow existing resources to be freed up to pursue belligerent aims? Does the focus or modalities of the intervention undermine government capacities or responsibility for governance and conflict resolution? How effective have mitigation measures been?
Lines of inquiry specific to country operational plan level	What signalling effects does the choice of pillars, strategic priorities and partners have in relation to the conflict? What incentives does the country operational plan give to government or non-state actors to engage in violence or behave in ways that worsen tension, grievance or drivers of conflict? Are there gaps in coverage (within DFID's country operational plan and with other donors) that increase tensions or aggravate grievances?
Lines of inquiry specific to sector level	What are the effects of the sector strategy and allocated resources on the sector-related drivers of conflict or tensions? *For example, are certain groups marginalised in access to supported services? Is there corruption that undermines legitimacy and reinforces inequality?* What signalling effects has the choice of priorities and partners within a sector, and mode of engagement, had? *For example, has there been a willingness to overlook issues of corruption?*
Lines of inquiry specific to	How have programme / project choices regarding where to work,

programme / project level	partnerships, beneficiaries, procurement, staff and timing affected key sources of tension and opportunities for peace in the area? Has behaviour by staff / partner organisations sent implicit messages that reinforce dynamics of conflict (e.g., impunity, discrimination, non-transparency, lack of respect, hostility / aggression, etc.)?
Relevant tools	Tool 2 *Indicators* Tool 3 *Checklists* Tool 4 *Examination of resource transfers and implicit messaging* Tool 5 *Conflict sensitivity principles* Tool 6 *Comparative case studies* Tool 7 *Review of theories of change* Tool 8 *Assessing contribution* Tool 9 *Feedback mechanisms*

Effects of the conflict on the intervention

Lines of Inquiry common to all levels	Have any developments in the conflict made any parts of the intervention inappropriate to the conflict context? Are underlying assumptions still valid? What elements of the conflict challenge the effectiveness of the intervention? What trends in the conflict have interfered with implementation of the project / programme or achievement or sustainability of the outcomes? How might the conflict affect the safety and security of staff, partners, beneficiaries, and wider stakeholders? What measures have been taken to reduce risks of the conflict undermining the intervention, and how effective have they been? What are the perceptions of the beneficiaries and wider stakeholders of DFID and its implementing partners? How has the conflict affected the safety and security of the staff, partners and beneficiaries of the project / programme?
Relevant tools	Tool 2 *Indicators* Tool 3 *Checklists* Tool 5 *Conflict sensitivity principles* Tool 7 *Review of theories of change* Tool 10 *Scenarios* Tool 11 *Comparative conflict analysis* Tool 12 *Timeline*

5   What to check for when reviewing project proposals

Much of the project-level data on conflict sensitivity is likely to be collected through monitoring and evaluation by DFID's implementing partners. It is therefore important to ensure that conflict sensitivity processes are integrated into project design and M&E mechanisms. From the outset, conflict sensitivity should be specified clearly in all calls for proposals / tenders. When reviewing a specific project proposal, the following checklists can help identify if conflict sensitivity has been addressed adequately.

Table 6: Checklists for ensuring conflict sensitivity has been addressed

Proposal review – check for the following:
Is there any discussion of conflict sensitivity in the assumptions and risks column of the logframe? (Beware of projects that simply place all conflict issues in the risks section of the logframe and do not appear to find ways to handle them)? Or is it mentioned elsewhere in the proposal/report?
Is there any explanation of conflict analysis that has already been undertaken (potentially quite limited at proposal stage) and how this has informed project design?
Does the monitoring and evaluation process include plans for monitoring the conflict context and the interaction of the project with the conflict?

Project start up / implementation – check for the following:
Is a full conflict analysis to be conducted at start up (if not undertaken in design phase), and is this is factored into the timeline, budget and training plan? Where full conflict analysis was undertaken at the design stage, this may require updating.
Are there any indicators on conflict - project interaction?
Is there any reference to 'operating context and conflict sensitivity monitoring' in reporting?
Is there a mechanism for complaints and/or feedback from the beneficiaries and the wider community about the project?
Does the work-plan include time and space for reflection on conflict sensitivity issues? For example, is conflict sensitivity incorporated into regular meetings about the project? Has a specific moment been designated to review the operating context and discuss potential revisions in light of conflict (this could be according to time, or to a specific change in the conflict context)?
Does/will the evaluation design include analysis of project – conflict interaction?

In addition to ensuring that monitoring and evaluation systems in the project proposals themselves are adequate to generate data that can be reviewed and analysed for conflict sensitivity, the Country office may need to provide technical and financial support for integration of conflict sensitivity into design, monitoring and evaluation of projects implemented by partners (including government). This may include:

- Financial support and technical expertise for capacity-building in conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity for staff and partners (and where relevant community representatives);
- Financial support for participatory monitoring and/or feedback mechanisms;
- Financial support for conducting and/or updating a conflict analysis at the start of the project and reviewing it as part of monitoring activities. Joint conflict analysis among several partners could be beneficial both from a cost perspective and in terms of the quality of the analysis.

Additionally, a clear process is needed for reviewing and changing strategies when major interaction issues are identified.

Annex

Toolkit for monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity

Following are a series of tools to assist monitoring and evaluating for conflict sensitivity. They are compiled from the experience of people monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity. Almost all of them have been field-tested.

The choice of tool will depend on:
- Whether the intent is to monitor or evaluate
- Whether the intent is to assess process or outcome
- Whether the intent is to analyse effects of the intervention on the conflict, or of the conflict on the project
- What level of analysis is needed (country operational plan, sector, programme or project).

Table 7 (following) categorises the tools according to all these different variables, explaining their relative utility, and should be the starting point for identifying the right tool for purpose.

Table 7: Utility of different tools for different levels

	Tool	Analysis of what?	Country operational plan	Sector	Programme	Project
1	Reviewing whether processes to enable conflict sensitivity are functioning	Processes *Monitoring or evaluation*	Suitable for country operational plan level – checklist for country operational plan processes, evaluation of implementing partners conflict sensitivity processes	Not suitable for sector level, as process review should occur at the level at which decisions are largely taken – either country operational plan or programme / project	Suitable for programme level – programme / project process review	Suitable for project level – programme / project process review
2	Indicators	Conflict on intervention and intervention on conflict *Monitoring*	Indicators can be developed for the country operational plan level	Indicators can be developed for the sector level	Indicators can be developed for the programme level	Indicators can be developed for the project level
3	Checklists	Conflict on intervention and intervention on conflict *Monitoring or evaluation*	Not suitable at this level	Risk management checklists can be used at the sector level	Suitable at the programme level - known flashpoints and root causes of conflict checklist, and risk management checklist	Suitable at the project level – known flashpoints and root causes of conflict checklist, and risk management checklist
4	Examination of resource transfers and implicit messaging	Intervention on conflict *Monitoring or evaluation*	Suitable for this level - generic questions for the Country operational plan level are provided in this annex	Not suitable for sector level – generic questions are too blunt, while detailed analysis such as the Do No Harm framework are too complex	Suitable for the programme level – the Do No Harm framework, rather than generic questions, should be used to identify programme specific resource transfers and implicit messaging	Suitable for the project level - the Do No Harm framework, rather than generic questions, should be used to identify project specific resource transfers and implicit messaging
5	Conflict sensitivity principles	Intervention on conflict *Monitoring or evaluation*	Principles approach was designed for operational plan level	Suitable for sector level	Review of conflict sensitivity actions identified at design stage – designed for this level	Review of conflict sensitivity actions identified at design stage – designed for this level
6	Comparative case studies	Intervention on conflict	Suitable at the country operational plan level, and also for multi-donor evaluations	Limited suitability at sector level – case studies are resource intensive and require a wide sample to	Not suitable at programme level– case studies are resource intensive and require a wide sample to provide useful	Not suitable at project level– case studies are resource intensive and require a wide sample to provide

			Evaluation	provide useful insights	insights		useful insights

	Tool	**Analysis of what?**	**Country operational plan**	**Sector**	**Programme**	**Project**
7	Review of theories of change	Intervention on conflict *Monitoring or evaluation*	Suitable at country operational plan level	Suitable at sector level	Suitable at programme level	Suitable at project level
8	Assessing contribution	Intervention on conflict *Evaluation*	Suitable at country operational plan level	Suitable at sector level	Suitable at programme level	Suitable at project level
9	Feedback mechanisms	Intervention on conflict *Monitoring or evaluation*	Suitable for assessment of the cumulative long-term impact of assistance across all donors in that country	Suitable for the assessment of the cumulative impact of assistance in a specified sector across all donors in that country	Suitable at programme level	Suitable at project level
10	Scenarios	Conflict on intervention *Monitoring*	Key drivers of change method and MERV method - Designed for country operational plan level	MERV method could be used at sector level	MERV method can be used at programme level	MERV could be used at project level
11	Comparative conflict analysis	Conflict on intervention *Evaluation*	Suitable for the country operational plan level, and also for multi-donor evaluations	Limited suitability for sector level – scale of intervention may not be significant enough to influence more macro level conflict variables	Requires a programme-specific baseline conflict analysis	Requires a project-specific baseline conflict analysis
12	Timeline	Conflict on intervention *Evaluation*	Suitable at the country operational plan	Suitable at sector level	Suitable at programme level	Suitable at project level

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Tool 1   Reviewing whether processes to enable conflict sensitivity are functioning

Certain processes are key to conflict sensitivity A process review will assess whether they are functioning properly. A process review does not reveal unintended effects. A process review does *not* involve a conflict analysis.

1.1   Checklist for the Country operational plan processes

The following checklist enables assessment of whether conflict sensitive processes are occurring / have occurred.

Table 8: Process checklist - Country operational plan level

Monitoring	Evaluation
When and how regularly was the conflict analysis updated?	Was a conflict analysis conducted and updated in response to changes in the context? What steps were taken to ensure its utility, validity, sufficiently inclusive etc.?
How has the operational plan been changed or revised in light of the conflict analysis?	What is the evidence that the conflict analysis has informed the country operational plan?
	How has the operational plan been changed or revised in light of on-going conflict analysis? *For example, a strategy to improve women and girls education may focus on building girls' schools, but may need to change approach if conflict increases security threats to girls attending schools.*
	How often is the conflict analysis referred to in the operational plan?
What processes are in place to analyse/reflect on how the chosen pillars/strategic priorities could escalate tensions or violence at a macro level? *For example, could targeting a specific group or region be having inadvertent conflict escalating effects?*	What analysis/reflection was undertaken of how the chosen pillars/strategic priorities could escalate tensions or violence at a macro level?
	How has this analysis informed a revision of the country operational plan?
What processes are in place to assess the conflict sensitivity of possible partners and factor this into decision making?	How were partners selected? How did the conflict sensitivity of partners factor into that decision making?

1.2   Process review of implementing partners

Where much aid is channelled through implementing partners (NGOs or private companies), each partners' operationalization of conflict sensitivity should be reviewed to ensure they are in place and functioning appropriately. This would involve assessing not just whether processes are in place, but the quality of the processes – for example, analysing the conflict analysis for whether it is 'good enough', or whether key issues identified through conflict monitoring are informing project re-design.

1.3   Review of the application of conflict sensitivity measures

At a programme or project level, a process review can assess whether measures to enable conflict sensitivity, identified through a conflict analysis, are operational. For example, if the project involves the development of local content for radio, and an editorial board is set up with a clear policy on identification and handling of material that could incite hatred or give destructive perspectives on events/issues, then the process monitoring could involve checking how many radio items were edited as a result of the editorial board acting on this policy.

Review of Conflict Sensitivity of Norwegian NGOs' Development Assistance in Nepal
The Norwegian development assistance agency (NORAD) commissioned a review of the level of conflict sensitivity among Norwegian NGOs in Nepal as part of its own efforts in supporting its partners' development of greater capacity in conflict sensitivity. Based on a review of project documents, evaluation reports, interviews with Norwegian organizations and Nepali partners, as well as field visits, the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs in terms of conflict sensitivity and its operationalization in the choice of partners, staff and the organisations' code of conduct was assessed.

Source: Ingdal, N., Singh, A., and Holtedahl, J.P. (2007) *Report on Conflict Sensitivity of Norwegian NGOs' Development Assistance in Nepal* (Oslo: Norwegian Agency For Development Cooperation)
http://www.norad.no/en/tools-and-publications/publications/publication?key=109625

Tool 2   Indicators

Indicators can provide useful data to identify both changes in the conflict and possible interactions with conflict. However, they are not a panacea. They are not well suited to providing information about unanticipated and unintended consequences – as by their very nature indicators must be designed *a priori*, and thus are unlikely to capture the unanticipated. Furthermore, indicators can help identify whether a conflict sensitivity problem exists, but in many cases they will not be adequate for determining causality, nor identifying actions to mitigate the problem. In some cases, the indicators taken in isolation might be misleading. For example, in Kosovo, indicators of improvement in the security situation (# of incidents of violence, # of minorities traveling alone on the roads) did not reflect the fact that many minorities had changed their own behaviour to avoid certain areas; the reduction in violence reflected actions by minorities to reduce their own risk (e.g., reduced contact with the 'other' population), but hostility and perceptions of insecurity remained high.

Disaggregation
Indicators can be used at all different levels – from country operational plan to project level. At all levels it is crucial to **disaggregate data**, in particular to reveal any differences across the line of division. Disaggregation should segregate populations according to group (ethnic / religious / sex / other division), region and gender. Such disaggregation can enable standard indicators to provide information on potential distributional effects of a strategy and highlight potential negative effects (e.g., primary school enrolment, access to water, etc.).

How disaggregated data can highlight the conflict insensitive outcomes of interventions
In Kosovo, international assistance to the development of effective justice and police institutions had good results; the performance of these institutions improved according to well-accepted indicators. However, cultural norms and pressure on Kosovo Albanians not to testify against members of their own group meant that more Serbs were being convicted than Albanians, leading to an increase in tensions. Disaggregation of conviction rates might have flagged this issue early on.

Source: CDA (2006) *Has Peacebuilding Made A Difference In Kosovo? A Study of the Effectiveness of Peacebuilding in Preventing Violence: Lessons Learned from the March 2004 Riots in Kosovo* (Cambridge, MA and Pristina: CARE and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects). http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/cdapeacebuildingreportkosovo_Pdf4.pdf.

Types of indicators
At all levels, indicators should include **conflict indicators** and **interaction indicators**.

The **conflict** indicators reveal the changes in the conflict context, providing information on how tensions and conflict issues are evolving. They should be developed from the priority issues in the conflict analysis and tailored according to issues particularly pertinent to the intervention under scrutiny. Worsening or improving trends in conflict indicators should trigger inquiry into whether any aspect of the intervention is contributing to those trends.

The **interaction** indicators track the dimension of the intervention that might be affected by the conflict, or might affect the conflict. They should reflect the key issues highlighted in the conflict analysis. They can be organised according to the direction of effects:
- Conflict on intervention – e.g., has the intervention adjusted to the changing conflict context?
- Intervention on conflict – e.g., has the intervention caused changes in the conflict context?

These indicators should consider who *actually* benefits from the intervention (employment, contracts, aid recipients, even benefits from theft and corruption), as well as perceptions of the intervention from across different groups – both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

At the programme and project level there are also **implementation indicators**. These provide information on the extent to which the project is moving toward achieving its objectives. These are the indicators that would be included in any project monitoring and evaluation. They also provide a basis for assessing whether outcomes are positively or negatively affecting the conflict, as well as whether the conflict is affecting the project's ability to achieve its objectives. In some instances, these indicators will provide relevant direct information on conflict sensitivity, especially if they are disaggregated by group or geography. For example, if a conflict analysis reveals that tensions between communities A and B are increasing, a project indicator of % households in the district reporting access to sufficient food for their family's needs, disaggregated by community, can provide information on whether and how a food security project might be conflict sensitive.

Perception-based indicators

Understanding perceptions, particularly when they are disaggregated by stakeholder group, is essential for understanding the effects of strategies and programmes on the conflict. They have the potential to yield richer information on whether and to what extent outcomes may be sources of grievance, as well as more opportunity for disaggregation of priority groups and identifying how differences in access to resources, benefits, services, etc. among groups might be related to conflict. Data on perceptions of people inside the country is especially important, in that it reflects how changes in institutional, structural or political factors are viewed and provide information on whether these changes may lead to more or less conflict behaviour.

Data collection

As noted at the start of this guide – the monitoring and evaluation process itself needs to be conflict sensitive. Therefore, questions about perceptions of whether an intervention may be benefitting one group disproportionately have to be handled with care. While this guide does not address these process concerns, it is important to design the data collection process itself so that it is conflict sensitive.

2.1   Country operational plan

At the country operational plan level indicators allow the Country office to make reasonable inferences about changes in the key factors, issues or actors in the conflict and the way DFID's operational plan and its portfolio of programming in the country may contribute to them. They should collect 'objective' data on the allocation and distribution of resources, on achievement of intended outcomes, as well as more qualitative data on perceptions of the issues and of DFID.

An example

The following scenario-based example illustrates the process of developing indicators to monitor the evolution of the conflict and the interaction of the conflict with a country operational plan. Following a war in which Kugans successfully rebelled against Moyang discrimination and oppression, South Kugan has become *de facto* independent of the control of the Moyang government, but not recognized as independent. However, a small Moyang population (20%) remains, scattered throughout the South Kugan region and still loyal to the Moyang government. DFID's country operational plan focuses on providing support to the establishment and professional development of a South Kugan police (which did not exist previously). In addition the plan attempts to promote stability in South Kugan by providing economic/financial incentives for multi-ethnic cooperation and promoting the inclusion of minorities in local government and the police.

A wide range of possible indicators is suggested in Table 9. The number of actually selected indicators would need to be proportional to the scale of the DFID investment. In some situations it may be possible to aggregate indicators being monitored by implementing partners, reducing the financial costs of monitoring.

Table 9: Sample indicators and means of verification for monitoring conflict sensitivity of the country operational plan

Monitoring the conflict		
Lines of inquiry (based on key drivers, dividers, connectors)	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
What is the level of inter-ethnic hostility and tension in South Kugan?	# incidents of inter-ethnic violence, including physical attacks and attacks on property Perceptions of security (e.g., how safe to travel alone…)	Police/Peackeeping mission reports Survey
To what extent are minorities excluded or discriminated against in South Kugan?	# minority moving out of South Kugan # and % minority in responsible positions in local government and police # minority running for office in local elections	UNHCR records South Kugan local government records, police records Interviews, survey
To what extent are competing visions of a resolution of the status of South Kugan being resolved? To what extent is frustration building?	# people who express frustration with current situation, and with international mission, disaggregated by group, region and gender	Survey
Effects of conflict context on country operational plan		
Lines of inquiry	**Indicators (strategy areas and intervention)**	**Means of verification**
To what extent do increasing tensions impact on willingness and ability of minorities to participate in governance structures?	% people who cite increased tension as reasons for withdrawing from or not participating in South Kugan governance structures or programmes	Interviews
To what extent are armed Moyang loyalists putting pressure on police and local government structures?	# incidents targeting police or local government structures, including physical attacks and threats of violence	Interviews, review of media reports
To what extent is anger at international community affecting willingness of people to participate in programs and security of staff?	Incidents of violence against international officials, disaggregated by organization (both perpetrating and target organizations)	Police, peacekeeping operations' documentation
Effects of country operational plan on conflict context		
Lines of inquiry	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
To what extent does a focus on multi-ethnic projects/ cooperation lead to the exclusion of any key stakeholders?	Distribution of assistance by geographic region/ ethnicity - # beneficiaries by group, region, gender - # contracts by group, region, gender	DFID and implementing partner documentation
To what extent are minorities marginalised within police and local government? To what extent do language and other barriers (eg. education, group pressures) prevent minorities from qualifying for or applying for positions?	# and % minority in responsible positions in local government and police (as above) disaggregated by differing powers (especially in elite forces, such as those that carry arms or who have additional powers) Perceptions of trust between ethnic groups within police and local government	Police records Survey

To what extent does an ethnically mixed police contribute to building trust amongst the broader community?	% Kugans who perceive ethnic Moyangs to be sincere in desire to participate in governance	Interviews/surveys
	% population reporting that an ethnically mixed police force contributes to enhanced co-operation and trust among communities	Survey
	All disaggregated by group, region and gender	
Are the police perceived as fair, and providing protection for minorities?	% population who perceive police to be fair	Survey / Interview
	% population who believe they will receive help from police when needed	Survey / Interview
	% population who feel safe	Survey
	All disaggregated by group, region and gender	
To what extent is country operational plan choice to support police and local government seen as siding with Kugan side in conflict?	% Moyang who perceive international assistance to favour Kugan positions	Survey/interviews

2.2   Programme and Project level

At the programme / project level indicators allow the Country office to make reasonable inferences about changes in the key factors, issues or actors in the conflict – particularly in the geographic area pertinent to the programme / project, and the way the programme / project may contribute to them. Just as with country level indicators, they should collect empirical data on the allocation and distribution of resources, on achievement of intended outcomes, as well as more qualitative data on perceptions of the issues.

An example

Table 10 illustrates the development of conflict indicators at the project level. The analysis for this example is adapted from the work of the Diocese of Maralal in Northern Kenya, where there were deep divisions between Samburu and Pokot pastoralist communities (and Turkana in some areas) in the region targeted by the project, which involved frequent cattle raiding and violent clashes and tribal culture by young people carrying out the raids. The project aimed to generate youth employment particularly through livelihood and income generation activities.[17]

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[17] See Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) *How to guide to conflict sensitivity* (London: Conflict Sensitivity Consortium) pp. 9-11. http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/content/how-guide.

Table 10: Sample interaction indicators and means of measurement for monitoring conflict sensitivity at the project / programme level

Monitoring the conflict		
Lines of inquiry (based on key drivers, dividers, connectors)	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
What is the level of tension / hostility between Samburu and Pokot over access to land and livelihoods?	# of incidents of violence between Samburu and Pokot	Survey / Interview
	Incidence of cattle raiding and # of cattle stolen	Survey / Interview
		Survey
	% who report tension with other group in target area	
Monitoring implementation		
Lines of inquiry	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Are there increasing opportunities for youth employment?	# youth participating in project	Project documents
	# youth receiving / completing vocational training	Project documents
		Project documents
	# youth who find sustainable employment	
Is youth unemployment decreasing?	% youth 18-30 unemployed	Survey
Effects of conflict context on project		
Lines of inquiry	**Indicators (strategy areas and intervention)**	**Means of verification**
Are project staff able to travel to all project areas?	# days staff have been unable to travel to project areas due to security concerns	Security records of project office
Effects of project on conflict context		
Lines of inquiry	**Indicators**	**Means of verification**
Is there increasing trust between communities participating in livelihood and income generation projects?	# of incidents of violence between Samburu and Pokot (as above)	Survey / Interview
		Survey
	Perceptions of trust between communities participating in joint livelihood and income generating activities	
To what extent is the project perceived to benefit one group over another (and reinforcing lines of division)?	% of Samburu and Pokot perceiving the project as benefiting both communities	Survey
	Disaggregated by group, and by beneficiary / non beneficiary groups	
Is project procurement favouring one group over another?	% of Samburu and Pokot perceiving the project procurement as benefiting both communities	Survey
	Disaggregated by group, and by beneficiary / non beneficiary groups	

Adapted from The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) *The how to guide to conflict sensitivity* (London: The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium).

2.3   Sector

Where there is a range of projects within a sector it should be possible to generate some comparable indicators across the sector, to allow for aggregation at the sector level.

Tool 3   Checklists

One method of monitoring projects and programmes involves regular review of a set of questions, sometimes with similar lines of inquiry to those that would be used for indicators, but without the formal establishment of a baseline or formal collection of data. The questions inquire about potential negative effects and possible risks (including security risks). Checklists are not a stand-alone monitoring tool for conflict sensitivity, as they do not adequately determine conflict sensitivity. They therefore should be complemented with another tool.

Regional and Social fund for Palestinian Refugees and Gaza Population

This project developed a set of contextualized questions that consider negative outcomes, as well as monitor the outcomes of the conflict on the project and on staff security. Questions include:

- Do political or religious actors try to hijack activities?
- Does the Fund or partner's activities for refugees place non-refugees at a disadvantage?
- Do staff members or partners fell more insecure?

Each question is answered on a scale of 'no reaction' (no negative outcomes or risks or they are not important or relevant) to 'action' (relevant and important outcomes or risks that should be documented and reported immediately to team leader in order for action to be taken). The project advisor of each field location fills the checklist on a weekly basis and sends it to the Impact Monitoring Focal Point. When filling this checklist the project advisor takes into account risk and conflict related aspects and developments on camp, field and international level.

Source: Unpublished project implementation documents

3.1   Known flashpoints and root causes of conflict checklist

There are several known flashpoints that are common to most programming. These include:

- **Targeting** - When targeting is based on technical criteria, such as greatest vulnerability/poverty, or organisational mandates (serving refugees and IDPs, e.g.), assistance may inadvertently be distributed to one side of the conflict and reinforce patterns of exclusion.
- **Location** - Geographic focus or bounds of a project area can coincide with lines of division in conflict or specific ethnic, economic, political or religious groupings, and lead to actual and perceived bias in distribution of aid.
- **Land ownership** - Interventions that require land in a fixed location have more potential for conflict than others: for example, water supply, irrigation, and agriculture have more potential for conflict than solar panels.
- **Decision making processes** - These can be particularly difficult where consensus-based decision making can become hostage to inter-group tension, or if the dynamic leads to one group dominating decision making agendas or processes.
- **Challenging cultural norms** - Interventions frequently challenge cultural norms. These may relate to decision making processes at the community level, attitude towards women and girls, or accepted and ingrained power relations.
- **Staff and partners** - Who staff are and whether they represent any particular group in the conflict can cause tension. In addition, staff / partner behaviour that demonstrates respect, inclusion, listening, etc. tends to have positive results both on relationships between the agency and communities (and facilitate programming) and on conflict.
- **Procurement** - Many organisations have procedures for procurement designed to ensure cost-effectiveness, prevent corruption and promote good governance. These can sometimes

inadvertently escalate conflict. For example, where a project procures goods can contribute to conflict dynamics, especially if the supplier is associated with one party to the conflict, or if procuring from outside the project location is perceived as (or actually is) undermining the local economy.

Generic questions can be developed to probe these issues periodically through implementation, as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11: Checklist for known flashpoints

Known flashpoints	Possible questions
Targeting	Do targeting criteria coincide with lines of division of specific ethnic, economic, religious or political grouping? What tensions exist concerning targeting? Do people understand and accept targeting criteria? Are targeting criteria being appropriately applied?
Location	Do the geographic boundaries of our project coincide with lines of division? Are there perceptions of bias in aid distribution?
Land ownership	Are there ways our programming has become enmeshed in conflict over land claims?
Decision making	Did those involved in decision making represent the communities? Has power been shared in decision making, or have certain actors dominated decision making?
Challenging cultural norms	What cultural norms are being challenged by the intervention? Who supports these changes and who opposes them?
Staff and partners	Who are our staff and partners? Do we/they represent any particular group in the conflict? What are the perceptions of our staff and partners?
Procurement	Who are we procuring from? Do they represent any particular group in the conflict? How is our procurement affecting the local economy? How is this affecting the conflict?

Additionally context and project specific questions can be developed relating to the impacts on root causes of conflict – such as around control over resources, discriminatory practices, manipulated polarisation of groups. These would be identified through the conflict analysis. Following is an example of what this could look like.

Table 12: Sample checklist for root causes

Root causes	Possible questions
Manipulation of ethnic composition / forced relocation	Has working with IDP communities legitimized or helped make permanent their forced movement? (Reinforcing the effects / objectives of conflict)?
Control of resources	Has group X's claims to resources been strengthened through the project?
Corruption	Have corrupt practices been reinforced through the project, or have good governance practices been used and demonstrated?

3.2   Risk management checklists
Risk management processes sometimes use checklists of questions to assess how a conflict has affected the ability to operate. These types of checklists consider only one-way outcomes (conflict on intervention) and are suited to the project, programme or sector level.

The key elements to consider are:
- Have assets been destroyed or looted?
- Has there been reduced efficiency or effectiveness?
- Has the project lost relevance?
- Has project impact been reduced?
- Has coverage been restricted?
- Have linkages and coordination been affected?
- Have there been any reputational impacts?

Tool 4   Examination of resource transfers and implicit messaging

Two useful lines of inquiry to examine aid's effects on conflict are resource transfers and implicit messaging. Resource transfers refer to the tangible and intangible things international assistance brings to a country: money, skills, status, legitimacy, etc. Implicit messaging refer to the ways in which the country office might provide this aid and interact with the government and other stakeholder that direct people's mindsets toward or away from conflict.

Table 13: Questions to examine resources transfers and implicit messaging of Country Operational Plans

Resource transfers and implicit messaging – Country Operational Plan level	
How are the benefits of aid being distributed? Is there real or perceived bias or benefit for one group over another?	- Are resources concentrated in particular geographic areas? Does this overlap with conflict cleavages? *For example, if an agency only works in a region where troops are stationed, and this is a region of one ethnic group, it may send an implicit message that all aid is destined for one group. Similarly, in Kosovo In the mid-2000s, assistance was provided primarily in multi-ethnic areas, while mono-ethnic areas remained relatively neglected. This meant that key actors—war veterans, many of whom lived in mono-ethnic regions—were excluded from much aid, leading to resentment and increased tension.* - Are resources/programming targeting particular populations (e.g., vulnerable people, IDPs, etc.)? Do targeting criteria inadvertently result in assistance going to one group in conflict? *For example, in Angola people who fled the conflict to Zambia received aid when they returned, but those who spent the war years in the country received nothing. This created frustration and divisions between returnees and remainees.* - Are resources being stolen or diverted? Does this benefit one party in conflict, provide resources for prosecution of war or reinforce governance practices that are sources of grievance? *For example, in Somalia militia often taxed food aid at rates of 20 - 50%.*
What incentives is aid providing to conflict actors?	- Are resources encouraging conflict actors to continue to pursue own interests outside legal frameworks, or do they encourage them to enter the legal framework and express dissent through non-violent means?
Is direct budgetary support being used? If so, how does it interact with conflict?	- How is the government allocating resources, including areas of concentration and areas of neglect? How does this overlap with lines of cleavage? - Does budgetary support (DBS) free up resources for the government to pursue conflict-generating or escalating action? - Is DFID perceived as supporting policies and practices by the government that are conflict-generating or sources of grievance? What leverage does DFID have through DBS? What engagement with the government on issues of conflict sensitivity exists? - Is DFID support perceived as legitimizing actions by the government that are sources of grievance?
What is the balance between basic service delivery and other areas, such as governance? How does this interact with conflict?	- What is the balance of the portfolio in relation to the conflict dynamics – does it address some of the causes / drivers of conflict? Does it work around the causes / drivers of conflict? - Are resources / programming concentrated in a particular sectoral area? Could this be reinforcing conflict dynamics?
Does the overall choice of the pillars/strategic	- How is it perceived by different actors? - What is the equity of different benefits? - Which actors are primarily being engaged with? if you only work with the state or

priorities have any signalling effects regarding the conflict, and if so, how?	only at a subnational level what does this communicate? *For example, in Afghanistan, the maintenance of a strategy of support to the central government and state building has been questioned over time, as it became clear that the state was unable to foster the social and political cohesion needed to build its legitimacy. An evaluation of DFID's country programme to 2009 questioned whether international donors were "becoming part of the problem rather than the solution" by "financially backing and conferring legitimacy upon Kabul-based central institutions perceived by many as predatory and corrupt," rather than limiting their investment to provincial programmes with a more direct impact on poverty.*[18]
Does the choice of partners or delivery mechanisms interact with conflict? How?	- Does it have a signalling effect of DFID support for a particular point of view? *For example, the multi-donor evaluation of international assistance in Sri Lanka found that from 2002-2004, strategies were strongly aligned to the government, but there was little awareness of the political risks of delivering aid through a state that is a party to the conflict and supporting the economic and political agenda of a government that represented only a portion of the political spectrum.*[19] - Does the choice of delivery mechanism allow implementers to undertake sufficient analysis and build appropriate relations at the community level?
How does the portfolio relate to what other donors are doing/other resource flows? How does this interact with the conflict?	- Are there imbalances - gaps in some areas and over concentration in others? *For example in Lebanon during the 2006 war, international assistance could not go to 60% of the villages in the South because of the prohibition on aid to Hezbollah-controlled areas. A Lebanese NGO director commented: "This is like you are blinding yourself! You alienate a portion of the community. There is a careless approach to conflict and it is harmful."*[20] - Are issues left neglected (either because the context makes them to difficult to tackle at that time, or because of inadequate analysis or coordination among donors)? Do gaps in coverage reinforce grievances or escalate conflict? - Are assumptions about how aid can influence conflict based on sound analysis or on weak assumptions?

At the project or programme level the Do No Harm framework can be applied. Using the Do No Harm framework will provide a structure for analysing the possible interactions between a project and conflict context using the lines of inquiry on resource transfers and implicit ethical messaging. The Do No Harm handbook provides a detailed description of the Do No Harm framework: see http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/docs/DoNoHarmHandbook.pdf.

[18] Bennett, J., Alexander, J., Saltmarshe, D., Phillipson, R. & Marsden, P. (2009) *Country Programme Evaluation Afghanistan*, DFID Evaluation Report EV 696 (London: DFID) p. 19.
[19] Chapman, N., Duncan, D., Timberman, D. & Abeygunawardana, K. (2009) *Evaluation of Donor-Supported Activities in Conflict-Sensitive Development and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka* (Donor Peace Support Group and OECD DAC).
[20] CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2009) *Field Visit Report: Lebanon* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects) p. 21.

Tool 5   Conflict sensitivity principles

5.1   Country operational Plan level

Some DFID Country offices have used conflict sensitivity principles to evaluate the ways in which their operational plans and programmes are conflict sensitive. This method involves translating the issues and dynamics identified in the conflict analysis into principles that should inform programming. These are well suited to the operational plan level. While conflict sensitive principles would be best identified at the outset, they can be used at any time to evaluate conflict sensitivity both in design and in practice, as benchmarks against which operational plans and programmes can be compared.

Conflict sensitivity and evaluation of DFID's portfolio in Nepal

From 2001 onwards DFID Nepal undertook a process aimed at ensuring that its programme was conflict sensitive at all levels:

1) A Strategic Conflict Analysis (SCA) was undertaken, including the identification of root causes and driving forces of conflict.
2) The SCA was then used to guide a Programme-Level Conflict Assessment in which DFID programmes were reviewed.
3) The results of the Programme-Level Conflict Assessment were then used to update the SCA.
4) 'Principles of engagement' or 'conflict-sensitive principles' were developed and used to shape DFID country strategy. These led to changes in policy, including greater emphasis on 'direct delivery', analysis of the involvement of marginalised groups in DFID programmes and public audit in which the objectives and finances were presented for discussion by all stakeholders. The principles were applied across all DFID programmes.
5) The principles were then used to review strategic decisions, including chosen instruments, chosen entry points, and choice of the pillars/strategic priorities.

Source: Practitioner interview

OECD DAC multi-donor evaluation Sri Lanka

The multi-donor evaluation In Sri Lanka identified that donor strategies tended to address the consequences of conflict, rather than the root causes, which were identified as revolving around state power and power sharing[1]. The interventions were assessed not to have focused on the root causes, while still being conflict sensitive. Donors adjusted their strategies (after 2005) in light of developments in the conflict, and increasingly were applying conflict sensitive principles, such as equitable allocation of resources, building trust between communities, and inclusion of all stakeholders, to guide strategy and programme development[1].

Source: Chapman, N., Duncan, D., Timberman, D., and Abeygunawardana, K. (2009) *Evaluation of Donor-Supported Activities in Conflict-Sensitive Development and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka – Main Evaluation Report* (Donor Support Group, Sri Lanka and OECD DAC). http://www.oecd.org/countries/srilanka/44138006.pdf.

5.2   Sector level

The approach can also be applied at a sector level. The same steps described in the Nepal example above were applied in a multi-agency conflict sensitivity analysis of the Disasters Emergency Committee funded tsunami response in Sri Lanka.

5.3   Programme or Project level

Where actions were taken to revise the project in light of a conflict analysis in the project design stage, and these actions are noted, these conflict sensitive actions can be evaluated for appropriateness through consultations with a wide group of stakeholders. This method is very similar to the principles method (tool 5.1) except that in the principles method the principles are derived *after* the intervention,

whereas in this method there must have been an explicit analysis of conflict sensitivity, and actions to mitigate conflict defined, prior to implementing the project / programme.

This method relies on the assumption that conflict sensitive actions were implemented in the intervening period. It is a method that does not involve the use of conflict analysis.

Evaluating the use of the Do No Harm tool in Nepal
The use of the conflict sensitivity tool Do No Harm by CARE in Nepal generated a list of principles that guided all programming. For example, all interventions would use public auditing, and a code of conduct was developed for staff. These were later evaluated for appropriateness through consultation with affected and interested parties.

Source: CARE Nepal, CARE International UK, CDA and CARE Sri Lanka (2010) *A review of CARE Nepal's use of the Do No Harm framework (executive summary)*.
http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/casestudy/dnh_carenepal_executive_summary_Pdf.pdf.

Tool 6   Comparative case studies

Where there has been a large-scale outbreak of violence, but there have also been islands of peace that did not participate in the violence, comparative case studies between areas can be developed to understand whether and how interventions contributed to violence prevention (or escalation). These do not provide counterfactuals in the true sense of the word, but do help with understanding causality. Studying variables or theories in the context of a case and/or comparison across cases can provide insights into the context and the anticipated and unanticipated effects of the interventions on the context, along with other factors. While this is most effective in evaluating peacebuilding programming, it can also be used for conflict sensitivity, as the method can identify unintended negative consequences of interventions across different cases.

Has peacebuilding made a difference in Kosovo?
This study examined the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions in Kosovo in preventing violence, using the March 2004 riots as a key yardstick. Having identified the key factors that enabled communities to withstand violence in March 2004, it then compared these with peacebuilding interventions being implemented in these areas to test whether these interventions supported the prevention of violence. It identified unintended conflict or tension escalating consequences of the peacebuilding programming – i.e. conflict insensitive peacebuilding. In particular it highlighted errors in the theories of change underpinning these peacebuilding interventions

The methodology of the study involved several components:
1) Analysis of the nature of inter-ethnic violence, through collection of statistical data (from police and OSCE) from 2002-2005, and workshops with practitioners and policy makers to explore forms of violence, how it is experienced by communities and joint analysis and hypothesis development about absence of violence; trends and nature of violence.
2) Identification and collection of information about peacebuilding programming, and categorization by theory of change;
3) This information informed the selection of 7 field based deep narrative case studies covering communities with varied experience of the 1998-1999 conflict, differing levels of inter-ethnic violence prior to March 2004, and differing levels of peacebuilding activity. Multiple data collection methods were used, primarily document review, one-on-one interviews and small group discussions. Researchers from both the Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian communities conducted over 200 interviews covering the 7 locations. These went through an initial analysis, and narratives were developed which were then taken back to Kosovo and the US for further collaborative analysis.

Source: CDA (2006) *Has Peacebuilding Made A Difference In Kosovo? A Study of the Effectiveness of Peacebuilding in Preventing Violence: Lessons Learned from the March 2004 Riots in Kosovo* (Cambridge, MA and Pristina: CARE and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects).
http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/cdapeacebuildingreportkosovo_Pdf4.pdf

Tool 7   Review of theories of change

Theories of change are descriptions of how we think change will come about, they describes the intended activity, and the expected result – the assumptions that underpin interventions. Theories of change are testable hypotheses of how the planned actions will contribute to achieving the desired results. Research into theories of change can highlight not only ineffective interventions, but also where projects are inadvertently contributing to conflict or tensions.

7.1   Country operational plan and sector levels

Reviewing assumptions at the operational plan level can help reveal where cumulative programming may worsen conflict, even if all programmes or projects that are undertaken in pursuit of the sector strategy or country operational plan themselves are conflict sensitive. Evaluation using approaches that examine theories of change—such as comparative case studies (tool 6), contribution analysis (tool 8) and theory-based evaluation—can determine whether the assumptions or theories may have been wrong or had unexpected results.

DFID Afghanistan

DFID strategy for Afghanistan (2002 to 2007) depicted Afghanistan as a 'post conflict' country, with a stable government at the helm, and support focused on an emerging government and state building. However the categorisation of 'post conflict' was increasingly challenged by 2007. Questions were raised over the conflict sensitivity of this in the 2009 Country programme Evaluation:

> *"By financially backing and conferring legitimacy upon Kabul-based central institutions perceived by many as predatory and corrupt, were international donors becoming part of the problem rather than the solution?"* (Section 3.9)

> *"DFID's assistance to revenue-raising through taxation has been effective and efficient, but DFID did not articulate the strategic challenge of how to foster a 'social contract', a tangible demonstration of representative democracy. If not balanced with clear evidence of benefits elsewhere in the system, taxation alone risks reinforcing public opinions of a predatory state."* (Section 3.7)

Source: Bennett, J., Alexander, J., Saltmarshe, D., Phillipson, R., Marsden, P. (May 2009) *Country programme evaluation Afghanistan* (London: DFID). http://www.oecd.org/countries/afghanistan/47107291.pdf.

OECD DAC Multi-donor evaluations South Sudan and Sri Lanka

Multi-donor evaluations of both South Sudan and Sri Lanka highlighted how there had been an assumption that a 'peace dividend' would flow from development programming. However, this was not the case. In the Sri Lankan context there were assumptions in the aid community that the peace dividend would resolve political differences and encourage a settlement, however peace had to be based on a political settlement as protagonists from different sides of the conflict were suspicious of large inflows of foreign assistance.

Source: Bennett, J., Pantuliano, S., Fenton, W., Vaux, A., Barnett, C., and Brusset, E. (2010) *Aiding the Peace - A Multi-donor Evaluation of Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities in Southern Sudan 2005–2010.* http://www.oecd.org/countries/southsudan/46895095.pdf.

Chapman, N., Duncan, D., Timberman, D., and Abeygunawardana, K. (2009) *Evaluation of Donor-Supported Activities in Conflict-Sensitive Development and Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka – Main Evaluation Report.* http://www.oecd.org/countries/srilanka/44138006.pdf.

7.2   Programme and Project level

A multi-country consortium project developing light touch methods to evaluate theories of change engaged in deep analysis of what is needed to create results in a specific context, including where interventions contribute to conflict.

CARE and International Alert - Researching theories of change in Nepal, Uganda and DRC

The process involved a careful examination of all intended results within a results hierarchy, and their corresponding theories of change. Particular emphasis is required to clarify imprecise terms (such as 'capacity building' or 'empowerment') and identify inaccurate elements of the results hierarchies.

A light touch theory based evaluation approach was developed and piloted in 19 projects. The process involved:

- Reviewing the conflict analysis to determine relevance
- Undertaking outcome evaluation
- Developing a research plan using the grid below

Theory of change	Lines of Inquiry - questions	How does the theory of change contribute to its related results in the results hierarchy?	What is your evidence of the result being achieved?	Did the activities and lower- level results indeed lead to the anticipated higher-level results?	Were there changes in the context?	What other external factors could have contributed to the result?	What could have made this theory of change and / or the results more successful?

Source: CARE (2012) *Guidance for designing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding projects: using theories of change*

Guidance on review of TOCs can be found in accompanying CCVRI papers:

Woodrow, P. (2012) *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security & Justice Programmes: Part I: What they are, different types and how to develop and use them* (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects)

Corlazzoli, V. and White, J. (2012) *Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation* (Search for Common Ground)

Tool 8   Assessing contribution

Contribution analysis and process tracing assess the contribution of an intervention to observed outcomes. Contribution analysis and process tracing are variants of theory-based evaluation approaches (see Tool 7, *Review of theories of change*) and can be used to determine both *whether* and *how* an intervention contributed to conflict escalation or de-escalation.

The approaches can be used to assess *planned* or *intentional* contributions of an intervention to mitigation of conflict or to peace—for example, when a programme adopts measures in the design or implementation phases to ensure conflict sensitivity. They can also be used to assess *unintended* and *unanticipated* impacts.

8.1   Contribution Analysis

Contribution analysis assesses the extent to which observed changes in the conflict (outcomes) are due to the intervention rather than other factors. It seeks provide robust evidence about the contribution the intervention is making based on the soundness of the theory of change, the verification of the theory of change, and assessing the contribution of other factors influencing the intervention. The approach developed by John Mayne outlines six steps to building a "contribution story". These have been adapted below for evaluation of conflict sensitivity—including intended and unintended effects on the conflict.

1. **Set out the attribution problem to be addressed** - What cause-effect relationship is being addressed? What level of proof is needed? What are the changes in the conflict that are of interest or concern? What is the nature and extent of the contribution expected? What other factors may influence outcomes?

2. **Develop a theory of change and risks to it** - Build a theory of change and a results chain, clearly identifying assumptions underlying the hypothesized pathway of change, and the role of other factors. In the case of evaluations of *unintended* or *unanticipated* impacts of interventions, the theory of change about how the unintended negative or positive impacts occurred would need to be constructed after the fact, as part of the evaluation.

3. **Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change** - This includes assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the logic and assumptions of the theory and gathering evidence on results, activities and assumptions.

4. **Assemble and assess the contribution story** - Critical questions include: which links in the results chain are strong and weak? How credible is the story overall? Do stakeholders agree with the contribution story? What are the weaknesses of the story—e.g., do key assumptions remain unvalidated, or are other factors' influence still not clearly understood?

5. **Seek out additional evidence** - Identify what new data is needed, adjust the theory of change, and gather more evidence.

6. **Revise and strengthen the contribution story** - Determine level of contribution analysis and strength of other factors.

Resources:
Mayne, J. (2011) "Contribution Analysis: Addressing Cause and Effect." In K. Forss, K., Marra, M., and Schwartz, R. (eds.) *Evaluating the Complex*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Mayne, J. 2008. "Contribution Analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect." ILAC Brief 16. The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative, Bioversity International. http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC_Brief16_Contribution_Analysis.pdf.

8.2   Process Tracing

Process tracing uses qualitative analysis focused on analysing trajectories of change and causation to uncover the causal mechanisms for observed results. It develops a rich description of the unfolding of events or situations over time.

1. **Hypothesis generation** - Generate a number of (potentially competing) hypotheses about how an intervention may connect to an outcome, similar to a theory of change.

2. **Identification of 'diagnostic' evidence** - Identify a series of 'diagnostic' pieces of evidence that will be present for each of the theoretically predicted links in each hypothesis if they are observed in practice. This step is usually informed by prior research and knowledge.

3. **In-depth case study research and analysis** - In-depth case studies, usually using qualitative methods but also making use of quantitative data, are conducted to develop a detailed chronology of what actually occurred, setting out the causal links between each stage.

4. **Process verification** - The evidence is used to substantiate or overturn rival hypothetical explanations by which the intervention may have led or contributed to the outcome. The evidence is subjected to a series of tests to eliminate rival explanations and/or confirm a specific explanation.

Resources:

Bennett, A. (2010) "Process tracing and causal inference." In Henry Brady and David Collier (eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Collier, D. (2011) "Understanding process tracing." *Political Science and Politics*. Vol. 44(4): 823-30.

George, A. L. and Bennett, A. (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, MIT Press.

White, H. and Phillips, D. (2012) *Addressing attribution of cause and effect in small n impact evaluations: toward an integrated framework.* 3ie Working Paper 15. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation.

Tool 9   Feedback mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms incorporate processes and systems to capture data on unanticipated outcomes and effects (positive and negative) of aid efforts on the conflict context. Typically they involve open-ended dialogue using an appreciative inquiry method with particular attention to gathering people's perceptions of and experiences.

9.1   Country level

Feedback mechanisms can be used at the country level to solicit feedback from local stakeholders on broader, strategic areas of decision-making across all donors operating in a country context. CDA's Listening Project is an example of system-wide examination of effectiveness of international aid efforts from the perspective of those affected by them. The Listening Project was not an evaluation of individual projects, sectors, or agencies, but rather focused on the long-term, cumulative effects of different types of international assistance on people, communities, and their societies over time.

The Listening project - CDA

Multi-agency Listening Exercises were conducted in twenty countries between 2005 and 2009. Listening Teams listened to the views of about 6,000 people. It was deliberately structured to be an inter-agency collaborative undertaking so that aid providers in each country were engaged in a joint listening, learning and reflection process. Efforts were made to ensure the impartiality of listening teams by assigning staff to places where they did not regularly work and by putting staff together from different organizations. Experienced facilitators were responsible for the training of listeners as well as guiding the analysis of the data and synthesising it into country-level reports.

Listening teams asked local people, both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, about their experiences with international aid efforts (humanitarian, development, peacebuilding) and solicited their ideas and feedback on how to improve the effectiveness of aid. Listening teams focused on what local people believed to be the overall effects of international assistance and what evidence they cite as shaping their perceptions.

Source: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2012) *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects).
http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/book/time_to_listen_pdf_Pdf1.pdf.

9.2   Project or Programme level

Increasingly grievance or complaints mechanisms are being used at the project level, specifically in emergency response programming, to capture feedback from communities, to inform project re-design and in particular to demonstrate accountability to beneficiaries. They can provide useful real-time data to highlight where projects could be contributing to conflict. For communities to have confidence in the systems, they need to know how the feedback is handled and to see a response to the feedback (in changes to the projects, investigations of sensitive complaints, etc.).

There is a wide range of feedback mechanisms that humanitarian and development agencies have set up and are currently testing and using to solicit opinions, perceptions and feedback and to provide managers with data from primary stakeholders about the quality and effectiveness of their aid efforts. The range of feedback seeking processes and mechanisms include complaints and response mechanisms; listening exercises; perceptions studies; social audits; social performance management systems; community score cards; citizen report cards; constituency feedback, story-telling, and others [21.]

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[21] For more on feedback mechanisms, please see CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2011) "Feedback Mechanisms In International Assistance Organizations" (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects).
http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/pdf/other/lp_feedback_research_report_Pdf_1.pdf.

An ideal feedback process involves the gathering of feedback and the communication of a response, which forms a 'feedback loop'. However, CDA's desk research found that while feedback data gathered from primary stakeholders typically flows through different parts of organizations, decisions based on this evidence are rarely communicated back to communities[22]. Some organizations have begun to embed recipient feedback mechanisms into monitoring and evaluation, rather than establishing an entirely separate tool or reporting requirement. For example, monitoring and evaluation teams are often able to solicit feedback from primary stakeholders by asking some additional questions during their routine visits, including assessing how easily people feel they are able to provide feedback to the agency.

CARE complaints mechanism in Cambodia

Complaints could be lodged in various venues, including a complaints box, a well-publicised telephone number, directly to staff, and via a complaints committee. Boxes were located in all project villages and emptied weekly by a designated person. The mechanism was explained in community meetings, and posted in all village information boards. Three tiers of committees were established to handle and respond to each complaint, with processing at different levels according to the nature of the complaint.

Source: Puno, N., (April 2006) CARE International in Cambodia Complaints Mechanism Study. Presentation at HAPI Complaints Mechanism workshop, April 4-5, 2006, Denmark.
http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/care-cambodia-complaints-mechanism-case-study.pdf

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[22] *Ibid*, p. 47 See also Bonino, F. and Knox-Clarke, P. (2013) *Effective Humanitarian Feedback Mechanisms: Methodology summary for a joint ALNAP and CDA action research. Working Draft* (London: ALNAP).
http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/method-paper-26-2-13.pdf.

Tool 10   Scenarios

Scenarios provide a useful way of monitoring at the country operational plan level, to check whether strategic level decisions remain relevant to the conflict context. They can also be used at the sector, programme or project levels.

Scenarios can be developed in different ways. One method is to generate the best case, worst case, and most likely scenarios. Another is to develop the three most likely scenarios. A third is to identify key drivers of change in the context to create a matrix of four scenarios. With these scenarios in hand, indicators of change between scenarios can be developed. Regular review of these indicators enables a decision on whether the plans (operational level, sector level, programme or project level) should be revised.

10.1   Country Operational Plan level - Key drivers of change

The key drivers of change method seeks to identify four plausible scenarios on the basis of key driving forces of change in a conflict context. These forces could be micro or macro, and include things such as political power, root causes of conflict, frustrated youth, empowered civil society, etc. In some circumstances environmental disasters, such as drought, could be a key conflict driver. These driving forces should emerge from the conflict analysis. The driving forces then are ranked according to level of influence and uncertainty.

The two highest ranking driving forces are identified. In practice forces tend to coalesce around broad themes that may unfold into one of two directions. For example civil society may be a key driving force for change in a society. The different directions for civil society could be that it a) becomes vibrant and representative, or b) stagnates, becomes elitist or co-opted, or is stunted in its development by autocracy. These two directions represent the positive and negative directions for this key driver of change.

The positive and negative outcomes for each of the two key drivers of change are mapped onto a matrix – one driving force on the x axis, one driving force on the y axis, such that four plausible scenarios are created, one for each combination of the positive and negative directions of the two key drivers of change (see Table 14, below). Detailed scripts for each scenario can be developed alongside the quadrant, and importantly, indicators are identified to highlight when this scenario is starting to become reality.

In the example in Table 14 below the two key drivers of change are:
1   Civil society (becoming empowered or undermined)
2   Internal political forces (reaching resolution or further conflict and fragmentation)

Table 14: Example of scenarios developed through the key drivers of change method
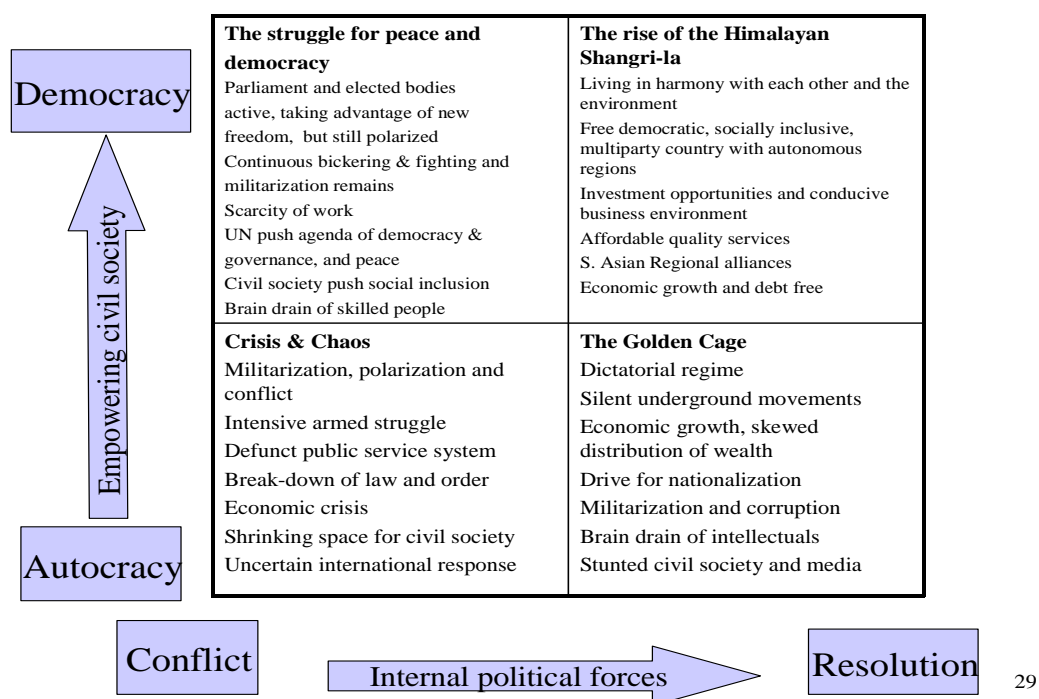
Joint scenario building among multiple donors was undertaken in Sri Lanka in 2006. The scenarios were used to determine the extent of donor engagement with government versus civil society.

Table 15: Scenarios used in Sri Lanka (from 2009 Evaluation of donor support)

| Donor lead	Scenarios developed and purpose
Sweden (2003)	Scenarios: "No war no peace," "return to conflict" Considered what the repercussions might be of a collapse of the peace process, though the strategy did not specify choices to follow.
Netherlands (2005)	Scenarios: "Peace and Final Settlement," "Muddling Through," "Conflict" Speed of exit from Sri Lanka varied depending on scenario.
World Bank (2006)	Scenarios: "Muddling Through," "Drifting Back," "Moving Forward" Scenarios guided the level of Bank Investment. The Bank assessed its modest performance from 2002-2006 and concluded it needed to be more cautious.

10.2 Country operational plan level - MERV

The MERV scenario process (MERV is a German acronym for the monitoring of development-relevant changes in the circumstances) was developed by the Swiss Development Corporation to monitor any context, and is more frequently applied in conflict contexts (1 to 3 months).. MERV involves the production of a scenario report periodically through collecting information into structured tables around key themes.

For each theme there are subheadings that link the theme to the specifics of the project, and for each of these the chart captures detailed information of events. The events are summarised into a trend, which either increases, decreases or remains the same. These trends can then be diagrammatically transposed onto a graph to show changes over a longer period of time. A fuller narrative describing the situation is also included. The graph thus summarises a large range of complex information into a very simple diagnostic tool.

The process is driven by consensus, and operational conclusions/recommendations always form part of the discussion and write up. The draft is circulated for internal discussion and refinement. Chart 16 provides an example of a chart produced using this process.

Chart 16: Example of a MERV report produced by SDC Nepal Co-operation Office

Main trends in Nepal
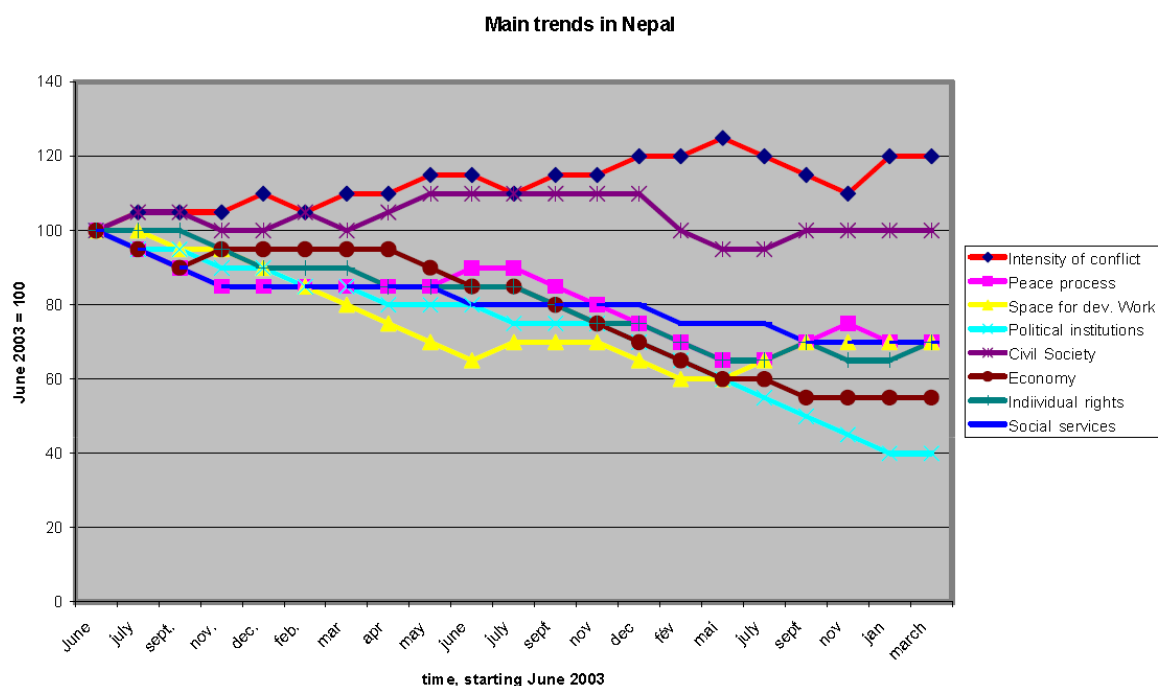
Source: Paffenholz, P., (2006) *Nepal: Staying engaged in conflict – experiences from conflict sensitive programme management (CSPM) in fragile context with armed conflict* Annex 6c, p. 70.
www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_100755.pdf

The use of MERV in Nepal

In Nepal a MERV report was produced every 6 to 8 weeks. 10-12 colleagues collected information according to agreed tables, with an emphasis on continuity of the elements of the table. Observations were made on cards and discussed. Trends were then consensually agreed, and these were captured on a graph, showing changes over the longer term. See chart of following page for the long term graph for Nepal. The information and discussion were captured in short reports, including operational recommendations / conclusions, which was circulated, revised and then distributed. Analysis and conclusions were verified by other conflict analysis materials.

The themes in the Nepal experience were intensity of conflict, peace process, space for development work, political institutions, civil society, economy, individual rights, and social service provision. Themes are identified through conflict analysis at the project level, including macro factors.

Sources: Paffenholz, T. (2006) *Nepal: Staying engaged in conflict – experiences from conflict sensitive programme management (CSPM) in fragile context with armed conflict* (Bern: SDC).
www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_100755.pdf

Conflict Prevention and Transformation Unit and the South Asia Division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2008) *Conflict Sensitive Engagement: Lessons Learned from Swiss Experiences in South Asia for Aid Effectiveness in fragile scenarios* (Bern: SDC).
www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_169827.pdf

Tool 11   A comparative conflict analysis

Comparing the intervention to conflict analyses from before and after an intervention can help explore how relevant the intervention was to the conflict – in particular whether it was revised in light of the changing context.

Multi-donor evaluation of South Sudan

While this evaluation was specifically of peacebuilding interventions, the use of comparative conflict analysis can also be used for conflict sensitivity. The evaluation wanted to assess whether donors had adapted and changed their interventions to keep them relevant to the changing conflict. However the evaluators were concerned that donors would not have the benefit of hindsight when devising their interventions, and so an up-to-date conflict analysis could not simply be applied to programmes planned 5 years earlier - in 2005 – to assess their relevance. Thus two conflict analysis were used – one at the time of the design of programmes being evaluated (2005) to test whether interventions were relevant to conflict at that point in time, and an up-to-date conflict analysis (2010) to test whether donors had adapted to a changing situation. The 2005 conflict analysis was also used to derive a set of conflict sensitive principles (see Tool 5, above).

Source: Bennett, J., Pantuliano, S., Fenton, W., Vaux, A., Barnett, C., and Brusset, E. (2010) *Aiding the Peace - A Multi-donor Evaluation of Support to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities in Southern Sudan 2005–2010* (Paris: OECD DAC). http://www.oecd.org/countries/southsudan/46895095.pdf.

At the country operational plan level a macro conflict analysis will give the appropriate level of detail, with particular attention paid to the nexus between conflict and development. For the programme and project level, conflict analyses need to be focused on the relevant areas and issues pertinent to those interventions.

Tool 12   Timeline tool

The timeline tool helps understand whether an intervention at any level is adapting to emergent developments in the conflict – i.e. if it is adjusting in light of changes in the conflict. The timeline tracks critical incidents that occurred in the lifespan of the intervention, as well as developments in the conflict and documenting if/how the intervention adjusted in light of the changing context.

One type of a timeline takes the form of three columns. Down the middle column is the timeline. On the left side is a description of the key events in the conflict, and on the right side is a description of changes in the intervention (be it the country operational plan, the sector, the programme or the project). Comparing these, and using further discussion with relevant stakeholders to understand if changes in the country operational plan / sector strategy / programme / project correlate to changes in the conflict, highlight if/how the intervention has maintained its relevance to the context.