



Conflict Sensitivity Consortium

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium presents the

How to guide to conflict sensitivity

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Glossary of key terms

Conflict¹ The result of parties disagreeing and acting on the basis of perceived incompatibilities.

Conflict (violent) Resorting to psychological or physical force to resolve a disagreement.

Conflict Analysis A structured process of analysis to better understand a conflict (its background/history, the groups involved, each group's perspective, identifying causes of conflict etc)

Conflict Sensitivity (CS) The ability of an organisation to:

- 1) understand the context it operates in
- 2) understand the interaction between its intervention and that context and
- 3) act upon this understanding in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict.

Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Comparing conflict analysis information with key (project) parameters (who, what, where, when, how) and making (project) adaptations to enhance conflict sensitivity.

Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (CSC) A consortium of 35 agencies in four countries, working together on a Department for International Development (DFID)-funded project to improve conflict sensitivity in development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding programming.

Do No Harm (DNH) An approach that recognises the presence of 'dividers' and 'connectors' in conflict. It seeks to analyse how an intervention may be implemented in a way that supports local communities to address the underlying causes of conflict rather than exacerbating conflict.

¹ Different organisations use slightly different terminology to talk about conflict. For example, as a human rights-based organisation, ActionAid recognises that its work is liable to cause tension in communities, which is often inevitable and sometimes a prerequisite for social change to secure rights and tackle power imbalance. Therefore, for ActionAid conflict is taken to mean violent conflict, and non-violent conflict may be seen in a positive light. For ActionAid Conflict Sensitivity means understanding the implications of their work and the ability of activities to create tension in affected/participating communities.

Introduction

‘Any project set in a conflict-prone region will inevitably have an impact on the peace and conflict environment—positive or negative, direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional.’²

Many organisations are active in conflict-affected areas, bringing with them a diverse range of mandates and methods. Prominent amongst these actors are governments (including donors), civil society (including local and international NGOs) and multi-lateral organisations. Each actor has specific priorities and objectives that relate to their mandate, such as a primary focus on poverty reduction, saving lives, protecting human rights, improving education etc. Actors in conflict-affected areas are increasingly realising that their interventions will have unintended impacts on the context within which they are working and hence have grown aware of the need for conflict sensitivity.

This increased recognition of the importance of conflict sensitivity led to the formation of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium in 2008, which brought together a broad spectrum of development, humanitarian, multi-mandate and peacebuilding organisations. The consortium comprises 35 humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and multi-mandate NGOs operating in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and the UK, who all share a commitment to being more conflict sensitive. With support from a four-year project funded by the UK Department for International Development – ‘Conflict Sensitivity – from concept to impact’ – the consortium has focused upon enhancing the impact of development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding programming through increased and more effective integration of conflict sensitivity. Prioritised outcomes included:

- 1) Developing a shared understanding of conflict sensitivity across a network of international and local development, humanitarian and peacebuilding organisations.
- 2) Drawing out lessons and recommendations for integrating effective conflict sensitivity across a range of contexts and sectors.
- 3) Strengthening expertise and capacity amongst member organisations and civil society partners to institutionalise and implement conflict sensitivity at headquarters and local levels.

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium was particularly well placed to take forward work on conflict sensitivity. Its members include experienced conflict sensitivity practitioners with complementary expertise at field implementation, capacity building and/or policy levels. Consortium members bring different perspectives from those experienced in humanitarian aid, development or peacebuilding programming together

with perspectives from four different countries – Kenya, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and the UK.

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium has placed a heavy emphasis on testing practical approaches to effective conflict sensitivity, learning from experience and carefully documenting identified best practices. This approach has culminated in the production of this How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity.

This Guide draws upon Consortium experience to illustrate real examples of applying conflict sensitivity. It aims to provide practical advice suitable for anyone aiming to improve conflict sensitivity, whether in the field of development, humanitarian aid or peacebuilding work. It aims to provide user-friendly information for people who are focusing at project or at organisation-wide level, whether aiming for best practice or just starting out on the journey towards conflict sensitivity.

The Guide has been organised into six core chapters. Each of these chapters contains a number of sub-themes exploring ‘the what’, ‘the why’ and particularly ‘the how’ of conflict sensitivity. Key areas that will be explored include:

- **Chapter 1 – Conflict analysis** – provides an introduction to, and practical guidance on, conflict analysis.
- **Chapter 2 – Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle** – provides guidance on how to integrate conflict sensitivity across all stages of the project cycle (needs assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).
- **Chapter 3 – Key Issues for conflict sensitive programming** – examines some of the most critical issues for conflict sensitive programming in depth, including targeting, procurement, relationship with communities/government/partners, feedback/accountability and exit strategies.
- **Chapter 4 – Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses** – provides tailored guidance on conflict sensitive emergency responses.
- **Chapter 5 – Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity** – provides guidance on how to conduct a self-assessment to assess organisational strengths and weaknesses in terms of conflict sensitivity.
- **Chapter 6 – Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity** – provides practical guidance on how to sustainably improve organisation-wide conflict sensitivity.

The work of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium has built upon many previous pieces of guidance related to conflict sensitivity, in particular Do No Harm and the Resource Pack³. Further details on both of these predecessors – including the full contents of the Resource Pack and an extensive collection of additional material on conflict sensitivity – can be found on the Consortium’s website www.conflictsensitivity.org

² Bush, K (1998)

³ Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, Resource Pack

1 Conflict analysis

Conducting a structured conflict analysis and regularly updating it throughout all stages of the project cycle to inform the way interventions are designed, implemented and evaluated, is the cornerstone of conflict sensitivity.

Conflict analysis takes a systematic approach to:

- understanding the background and history of the conflict
- identifying all the relevant groups involved
- understanding the perspectives of these groups and how they relate to each other
- identifying the causes of conflict.

In some situations it may be too contentious or sensitive to talk of conflict analysis. Using the broader term ‘context analysis’ can help to overcome this challenge. However, it is important to differentiate between a context analysis that examines a broad array of social, economic, political and cultural issues and a conflict analysis that specifically seeks to understand conflict.

Information on how to conduct a conflict analysis is detailed at length in a variety of resources, which are referred to below. Therefore, this section does not aim to provide detailed guidance on conflict analysis. Its main aim is to highlight some of the key elements involved and practical aspects to consider as part of the process.

1.1 What is involved in a conflict analysis?

A key lesson from the experience of Conflict Sensitivity Consortium members is that using a structured tool, or combination of tools, to conduct a conflict analysis is central to enabling conflict sensitivity. There are a broad range of conflict analysis methodologies and tools available, which have been developed by a variety of actors – NGOs, donor agencies, governments and academics. Some key ones are described in detail in the 2004 Resource Pack on Conflict Sensitive Approaches⁴ and a number of others are available on line. Both the full 2004 Resource Pack and links to key online tools can be found on the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium website www.conflictsensitivity.org

The following box highlights key questions that ought to be covered in a conflict analysis. These are not intended to provide a definitive list, but rather provide guidance on the sort of questions that a conflict analysis should be seeking to answer.

Key questions for conflict analysis⁵

Conflict profile

- **What is the political, economic, and socio-cultural context?**
Eg: physical geography, population make-up, recent history, political and economic structure, social composition, environment, geostrategic position.
- **What are the emergent political, economic, ecological and social issues?**
Eg: elections, reform processes, decentralisation, new infrastructure, disruption of social networks, mistrust, returnees or refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), military and civilian deaths, presence of armed forces, mined areas, HIV/AIDS.
- **What specific conflict prone/affected areas can be situated within this context?**
Eg: areas of influence of specific actors, frontlines around the location of natural resources, important infrastructure and lines of communication, pockets of socially marginalized or excluded populations.
- **Is there a history of conflict?**
Eg: critical events, mediation efforts, external interventions.

Conflict causes

- **What are structural causes of conflict?**
Eg: illegitimate government, lack of political participation, lack of equal economic and social opportunities, inequitable access to natural resources, poor governance.
- **What issues can be considered as proximate causes of conflict?**
Eg: uncontrolled security sector, light weapons proliferation, human rights abuses, destabilising role of neighbouring countries.
- **What triggers can contribute to the outbreak/further escalation of conflict?**
Eg: elections, arrest/assassination of key leader or political figure, military coup, rapid change in unemployment, natural disaster, increased price/scarcity of basic commodities.

⁴ See Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding Resource Pack (2004) – available on www.conflictsensitivity.org

⁵ Adapted from the Resource Pack chapter 2

Conflict actors

- **Who are the main actors?**

Eg: national government, security sector, armed groups, private sector, multilateral organisations, religious or political networks, civil society, political parties, neighbouring states, traditional authorities, diaspora groups, refugees/IDPs.

- **What are their main interest, goals, positions, capacities, and relationships?**

Eg: religious values, political goals, access to economic resources.

- **What institutional capacities for peace can be identified?**

Eg: civil society, informal approaches to conflict resolution, traditional authorities, political institutions (eg: head of state, parliament), judiciary, regional and multilateral bodies.

- **What actors can be identified as (potential) spoilers? Why? What are their incentives?**

Eg: groups benefiting from the war economy, leaders / authority figures who may feel undermined by a project

Conflict dynamics

- **What are the current conflict trends?**

Eg: escalation or de-escalation, increased defence spending, decrease in inter-group violence.

- **What are windows of opportunity?**

Eg: are there positive developments? What factors support them? How can they be strengthened?

- **What scenarios can be developed from the analysis of the conflict profile, causes and actors?**

Eg: best case, middle case and worst-case scenarios.

An introductory selection of commonly used conflict analysis tools can be found in Annex 1.

1.2 Who should conduct the conflict analysis?

Depending on each organisation's level of awareness and experience, the conflict analysis process may be led by an internal team or outsourced to consultants and external experts. Conducting conflict analysis using an internal team has a much stronger impact than using consultants, as the conflict analysis process, if done well, will challenge staff assumptions and lead to stronger insights. External conflict analyses are all too often left to gather dust on the shelf, are not fully internalised and are often not read by project implementing staff. In all cases, it is essential to consider the purpose of the analysis and ensure that end-users are closely involved in the analysis process, as they will be the ones responsible for keeping it live and integrating it into their work. Effective conflict analysis cannot be a one-off document, it

needs to be kept up-to-date to maintain relevance. The conflict analysis process itself may be used as an opportunity to build capacity on conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity among staff and partners.

1.3 What type of methodology is involved in a conflict analysis?

A conflict analysis may take place at different levels. The main distinction is between a macro-level (national level) conflict analysis and a micro-level (project-level) analysis. The specific tools and methodologies used will vary depending on the purpose of the analysis and the level at which it is taking place. For example, a macro-conflict analysis conducted to inform a new five-year country strategy will involve a different process than a micro-level conflict analysis aimed at informing a short-term community initiative.

While the conflict analysis process may be more or less extensive, it should typically involve a combination of different methods of data gathering:

- desk research
- surveys
- expert interviews
- community consultations
- workshops with staff, partners and other relevant actors.

It is very important to ensure that participatory methods are used and that a range of perspectives are gathered to inform the analysis. Obtaining reliable information for conflict analysis can be difficult and perceptions of conflict will be very different according to who is being consulted. Ensuring that there is a certain level of triangulation of the information – verifying each piece of information with at least two complementary sources – will help clarify different perspectives.

Who to involve in a conflict analysis?

Who needs to be involved in the conflict analysis, and how in-depth it needs to be, will vary depending on the level of analysis and at what stage of the project cycle it is being conducted.

If you already have a presence in the region where the project intervention is being considered, you can draw on staff from your own organisation and from your partners. If you do not have a presence, you will have to rely on external sources.

Typically, a project-level conflict analysis will tend to involve:

- project staff
- partners
- peer organisations working in the same area
- local communities. Local communities can provide valuable information for conflict analysis and many conflict analysis tools are indeed designed to be participatory processes with local communities. However, in some situations it is too

1 Conflict analysis continued

contentious to undertake a shared conflict analysis with a community, especially one where you do not already have established relations or in particularly divided contexts. The risks or constraints to speaking openly for people participating in the process should always be carefully assessed by the team leading the analysis

- other actors such as local authorities, business and religious leaders should be involved as far as is possible.

At the macro-level, external views are very valuable to provide additional perspectives and insights from:

- a broader range of staff, notably from senior management
- donors, embassies, multi-lateral agencies with a presence in the country
- academics
- governments and businesses.

Example of a cross-agency macro conflict analysis

As part of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium project, the three national consortia in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka each agreed to undertake a cross-agency macro analysis. By pooling intellectual and informational resources in each country, they carried out a shared analysis that was considered to be much stronger than any individual agency could have developed alone. It also created a shared understanding of the context.

1.5 Questioning assumptions

Conflict analysis plays a particularly valuable role in helping project staff to question their own assumptions. Staff may often believe that they know their own contexts and have a deep understanding of the conflict. While this is often true, there are multiple perspectives to consider and it is important to remember that there is no one true interpretation of a conflict. Part of conflict sensitivity is recognising that project staff form part of their contexts and may interpret situations based on their own histories, experiences and backgrounds. Assumptions should be challenged, to ensure that we do not perpetuate biased perspectives and to identify gaps in our knowledge of conflicts. For example, in one country a Consortium agency found that violent incidents tended to be 'explained away' by reference to the ethnic conflict at the national-level. However, after they conducted a structured conflict analysis, staff realised that the drivers of certain violent incidents were in fact economic or related to personal vendettas, rather than due to national-level ethnic conflict. In another instance, an agency's staff tended to be from the land-holding class and, when analysing a particular conflict, they revealed a bias towards land holders with a similar background to them and against the migrant labourers they also employed.

1.6 When to conduct a conflict analysis?

For a specific project a structured participatory conflict analysis should ideally be conducted at the earliest stage in the programming cycle (the assessment phase) in order to inform the design of the envisioned project. In practice, it may be that time, financial, donor or other constraints during the assessment phase mean that the conflict analysis cannot be conducted or cannot be as detailed or as comprehensive as intended. As such a thorough conflict analysis may need to be conducted during the design phase or at the start-up of implementation.

Conflict analysis needs to be regularly revisited and analysis progressively deepened as we move from assessment to design and into project start up. The initial full conflict analysis undertaken at project start-up (if not before) needs regularly updating and revisiting throughout project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We need to remain inquisitive throughout our conflict analysis processes, repeatedly asking ourselves what we know, what gaps we have in our knowledge and any assumptions we may have. A chart is included at Annex 2 to highlight what is good enough conflict analysis over the course of the project lifecycle.

Detailed guidance on the different stages of the programming cycle is provided in the following sections.

Beyond specific projects, it is also appropriate to consider implementing a wider macro conflict analysis at certain times, for example ahead of the development of a new organisational strategy or at times when the operational context is changing significantly.

Conflict analysis: reality check	
Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Conflict can be confusing. There will be multiple perceptions and contradictions to be considered as part of the analysis.	As you conduct your initial analysis, note any gaps or issues where there are differing interpretations. These can inform questions to ask as part of implementation and may be clarified later when the analysis is reviewed and updated.
How to choose which staff and/or partners will participate? Individuals and groups have their own agendas and may reflect the existing or potential conflict dynamics. This can bias the choice of stakeholders, limit the participation of others or influence the consideration of possible interventions.	Even where resources are limited and few participants can be involved, try and ensure some level of diversity in contributions to the analysis (staff from different teams, partners from different backgrounds, different segments of the community). If staff and/or partners reflect existing divisions, and it is difficult to bring them together for the analysis, then consider conducting separate consultations.
There are occasions when transparency can pose a threat to the community, partner or staff of the organisation. Even talking about conflict in some circumstances can be threatening.	Always consider the language being used and do not hesitate to adapt it to fit the context. For example, talking of a context analysis rather than a conflict analysis can help in cases where conflict issues are not openly recognised or are very sensitive.

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle

Conflict sensitivity informs an intervention at all stages of the programming cycle. This chapter highlights key aspects to consider when integrating conflict sensitivity at the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of an intervention. This section is most relevant for development, peacebuilding and longer-term humanitarian projects.

While structuring guidance around the different stages of a typical programming cycle can be helpful, it is important to note that, in practice, these stages are often fluid and tend to overlap. In addition, organisations, or even specific departments and teams within the same agency, will often have their own representation of what the programming cycle looks like and what each stage should involve. The framework and language used in this chapter should therefore be seen as

flexible and can be adapted to fit the particular systems used by different organisations or project teams.

2.1 Needs assessment / situational analysis stage

If a needs assessment phase is taking place prior to the design of a project, and has time and resources dedicated to it, this is the ideal time to conduct a structured and participatory conflict analysis. Staff should be aware that the assessment process itself may lead to tensions and needs to be conducted in a conflict sensitive way.

Can conflict analysis be integrated with other assessment/analysis tools?

A conflict analysis can stand alone or be integrated into broader types of situational analyses and needs assessments. In either case, findings from a needs assessment and a conflict analysis can usefully complement each other, enabling different levels and types of issues to be taken into account. Where an organisation has already made a significant investment in developing a needs or vulnerability assessment tool, it may be strategic to integrate conflict analysis questions into this. An example of what this may involve is detailed in the box below.

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle continued

ActionAid's experience of integrating conflict sensitivity into its participatory vulnerability analysis tool

Rationale:

As part of its mainstreaming work within the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium Project, ActionAid commissioned work to integrate conflict sensitivity, and conflict analysis in particular, into its participatory vulnerability analysis (PVA) tool and associated field manual. This recognised the fact that conducting conflict analysis was essential to ensuring conflict sensitive programming, but that it would be more relevant for ActionAid to integrate it into one of its key assessment methodologies, rather than treat it as a stand-alone process.

PVA Overview:

PVA engages communities and other stakeholders in a process of identifying and understanding the nature of the threats and hazards they face. This enables them to identify the root causes of their vulnerability and to agree on actions they and others can take to address those issues and increase their resilience. It is one of the core tools used by the organisation to operate its human rights based approach.

Process of integrating conflict sensitivity:

The process of integrating conflict sensitivity into PVA involved reviewing the existing field manual, identifying gaps and areas to be reinforced from a conflict analysis perspective and making corresponding adjustments and additions in areas where conflict sensitivity was seen to be relevant and add value. For example, conflict analysis questions can help refine understanding of how group membership and identity affect vulnerability (exploitation, discrimination, violence). More substantive additions, including the background to conflict sensitivity and ways to integrate conflict sensitivity into the process of conducting a PVA, have been added in a concise appendix to the manual. One lesson learnt from the process is that adjusting a core institutional tool requires strong buy-in, not only from senior management but also across the organisation. Making changes to existing practices takes time and needs to be accompanied by an understanding of why those changes are being made. At the same time, the process of integrating conflict sensitivity into the PVA tool showed that this type of initiative also provided a good opportunity to raise internal awareness of the relevance of conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity.

How to ensure needs assessment is itself conflict sensitive

Some key aspects to consider in order to conduct needs assessment (and conflict analysis) in a conflict sensitive way include:

- Ensuring expectations are not overly raised through the assessment process, especially if funding is not guaranteed at the assessment stage. This involves clearly stating the aims of the assessment to those being consulted and explaining what the follow-up steps will be.
- Considering how those conducting the assessment are introduced and by whom. If there has been no previous work with the community, staff leading the assessment may have respected local actors introduce them, such as local government representatives. Who these actors are, and how they present staff, may create perceptions, notably of lack of impartiality, that are hard to change later.
- Considering who conducts the assessment. Do they represent, or may they be perceived to represent, one side of a conflict or do they represent an example of inter-group co-operation?
- Considering who is being consulted. Taking into account divisions when deciding on who to consult is important, as there are risks in only assessing needs from one side of a division. This will create perceptions of bias and partiality and can reinforce tensions between divided groups. Vulnerability often coincides with lines of division, so care is needed to consider what messages are portrayed when only assessing the needs of the most vulnerable. Communication strategies are therefore important, even at this initial stage, to explain a focus on vulnerability and reduce misperceptions.
- Considering sensitivities around questions asked. Some elements of the analysis may be particularly sensitive. They will need to be introduced carefully or be addressed in smaller groups or individually. Power relations brought by people into the meeting room also need to be taken into account as part of the assessment facilitation, as they may limit the openness of the discussion.

2.2 Design stage

Integrating conflict sensitivity at the design stage involves using findings from the **conflict analysis** to review and inform all key parameters of the project:

- what the project will do
- who will implement it and for whom
- who the beneficiaries/participants will be
- where the project will be implemented
- when the project activities will take place and
- how the project will be implemented.

Reviewing key project parameters against findings from the conflict analysis is what is referred to as a conflict sensitivity analysis of a project. If the assessment phase could not include a conflict analysis or if the assessment and design happen at the same time, a 'good enough' approach to both conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity analysis can be used (see Annex 2).

Linking conflict analysis to the project design

Creating an effective link between analysis and intervention is a recurring challenge for practitioners. Ensuring that a project design is fully informed by assessment findings requires conscious efforts for all development, peacebuilding and humanitarian projects.

Linking conflict analysis to the project design can be even more difficult, as it requires considering risks and opportunities linked to the conflict context, which are not necessarily linked to the project objectives. For development and humanitarian programming, which use information from broader needs assessments (education, health, livelihoods, sanitation needs etc), there is a need to add an explicit stage for analysis and reflection on conflict issues and their relation to the project during the design phase. Peacebuilding projects are different as they focus **on** conflict issues and can therefore use conflict analysis as a direct needs assessment tool for project design.

In practice, conducting a conflict sensitivity analysis of a project can be done quite simply and is one of the most fundamental steps to ensure conflict sensitive practice during project implementation. In particular, it can:

- help foresee risks and obstacles to effective implementation early on
- prevent timely and costly ad hoc management of tensions arising from, or exacerbated by, a project
- help identify new opportunities for action.

Linking conflict analysis to the project design involves:

- reviewing all key parameters of a project in view of their link to the conflict context (what?, who?, where?, when, how?)
- assessing the risks of implementation being affected by conflict issues or contributing to tensions
- identifying opportunities for reinforcing peace outcomes (increased dialogue between divided groups, less violence etc) through the planned intervention
- identifying changes to the original project design to avoid unintentionally contributing to tensions.

Overview of a key tool for conflict sensitivity analysis: Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace

Do No Harm/Local Capacities for Peace has been one⁶ of the most widely used tools⁷ by Conflict Sensitivity Consortium members. It is mainly used for micro conflict analysis, project planning and impact assessment.

Developed by Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) in 2001, the tool comprises a number of key components, which:

- analyse dividers and sources of tensions between groups
- analyse connectors between groups and across sub-groups and local capacities for peace
- analyse the aid programme in view of: why?, where?, what?, when?, with whom?, by whom?, how?
- Consider implicit ethical messages associated with the project
- analyse the aid programme's impact on dividers/tensions and connectors/local capacities for peace
- consider the options for re-design and impact assessment so that the project will do no harm and strengthen local capacities for peace.

A conflict sensitivity analysis will be most effective if it is conducted at the initial design stage and then regularly reviewed as part of the monitoring process. However, in the case of an on-going project, it can also be conducted later on in the implementation process and inform adjustments to the original design to address any issues identified and make the project more conflict sensitive.

On the next page is an example of a simplified conflict sensitivity analysis to inform project design, adapted from the work of the Diocese of Maralal in Northern Kenya: The project-level conflict analysis revealed a number of key conflict issues in the project region. These were deep divisions between the Samburu and Pokot pastoralist communities (and Turkana in some specific areas) in the region targeted by the project, frequent cattle raiding and violent clashes and tribal culture among the young people carrying out the raids.

⁶ There are a wide variety of tools that can assist with conflict sensitivity. Whilst some consortium members have applied Do No Harm, some others have applied alternative tools (including PCIA), or have proceeded to apply conflict sensitivity without following any specific tool or methodology.

⁷ PCIA is an alternative to Do No Harm. It helps you consider whether a project will 'foster or support sustainable structures and processes which strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak, reoccurrence, or continuation of violent conflict'. See Kenneth Bush (1998), *A Measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of Development Projects in Conflict Zones*, Ottawa: IDRC

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle continued

Project design question	Initial project design	Possible impact of project on context and context on project (risk and opportunity analysis)	Conflict sensitivity adjustment/re-design (to maximise opportunities and minimise risks)	Indicators
What?	Livelihood and income-generating activities.	Opportunity: using livelihood and income-generating activities to bring Samburu and Pokot communities closer together, thereby increasing scope and effectiveness of activities for the targeted areas.	Inclusion of some specific activities with both livelihood and peacebuilding objectives, for example creating a market to be accessed, used and overseen by both Pokot and Samburu communities (involving the Turkana progressively where possible) and a road building initiative between Samburu and Pokot.	• Proportion of youth undertaking alternative livelihood options to cattle raiding • Decreased incidents of inter-community raids leading to violence • Proportion of project participants in Pokot and Samburu communities perceiving the project as benefiting both communities equitably.
Who?	Mainly Samburu project participants. Implementing team: Diocese of Maralal.	Risk: project seen as benefiting one group over another and reinforcing existing divisions that contribute to violence.	Broadening of participation in project to Pokot communities (in key activities). Training on conflict sensitivity for staff, partners and some representatives from both communities.	
Where?	Key project areas predominantly Samburu or more easily accessible by Samburu.	Risk: project seen as benefiting one group over another and reinforcing existing divisions that contribute to violence. Security concerns for project staff travelling to non-Samburu areas.	Relocate the implementation of some of the key activities to areas more accessible for the Pokot, prepare in advance and monitor security level for staff travelling to new areas	
How?	Standard procurement policy not taking into account conflict context.	Risk: procuring goods mostly from one community and from same segments of that community, reinforcing divisions.	Reviewing procurement policy to include consideration of balance of procurement, and ensuring transparent communication of criteria and selection process to both Samburu and Pokot.	

Integrating conflict sensitivity in the logical framework

The logical framework (often referred to as logframe) is a commonly used tool for programme design and is often required for donor funding applications. The risks and assumptions column of a logframe is a good place to identify areas where a project might interact with conflict. A strong risks and assumptions section that integrates conflict sensitivity issues will aid effective monitoring and help ensure that flexibility is built into the implementation phase. For example, if changes to the design are required at a later stage as a result of changes in the context, donors will be more likely to respond positively if issues were flagged up in the design

phase as part of the logframe risks and assumptions or risk management planning.

Two key steps are:

- identifying main issues from the conflict analysis to help identify project risks and assumptions
- where possible building in mitigation activities/outputs in response to the risks identified (as shown in the World Vision Lanka water project example in Section 3.1 and in the Maralal conflict sensitivity analysis table in Section 2.2.1). Such activities can be added to the proposal in the risk management section.

A key difference from a standard logframe is that the risk column will focus not only on risks to the project, but also include acknowledgement of potential risks that the project will increase tension or have negative unintended impacts on the targeted communities. It will be important to raise awareness among donors that acknowledging such potential risks to communities is a sign of conflict sensitivity and something they should be encouraging if sustainable improvements to the lives of targeted communities is their primary concern.

Considering conflict sensitivity during the design stage

Using participatory approaches is particularly important for conflict sensitive design. Including participation not only from project staff and consultants but also from community members and partners, at the design stage will enrich the conflict sensitivity analysis of the planned project. It will also help to obtain different perspectives on the possible risks and opportunities linked to implementation.

It is also important to consider if the make-up of the design team is likely to result in any bias in the project design. All aspects raised as part of the guidance for conflict sensitive needs assessment (section 2.1) also apply to a conflict sensitive design process. Some additional questions to consider include:

- Who is part of the design team, and how do they relate to the target area?
- If consultants are leading the process, how aware are they of conflict sensitivity issues and how closely are they working with relevant staff and partners and the in-house design team? Consider including conflict sensitivity analysis as part of the terms of reference for consultants assisting with the design process.
- Is there a feedback and review process on the project design involving other staff, partners and community members?

The risks associated with conflict in-sensitive project design

CARE International Sierra Leone

An economic development project to introduce environmentally sustainable agricultural practices was designed with a partial conflict analysis, which also meant that some key groups were not included in the design process. During implementation, it was realised that the project focused largely on crop farmers, who have historically been in conflict with cattle rearers, another group which the project also hoped to influence. This led to resistance to project activities by the cattle rearers, who felt that they had been marginalized and their needs ignored.

In addition, a main project output was securing long-term access to land for women and marginalised groups. This was seen as being contrary to cultural norms and resulted in tensions and an initial lack of support for the project. To mitigate the situation, project staff conducted full conflict and conflict sensitivity analyses, which helped them identify obstacles to implementation which were directly linked to the conflict context and to issues not taken into account in the original design. They were then able to adjust activities, for instance by increasing communication, dialogue and feedback mechanisms with all groups across the divide, by involving key community actors who had previously felt side-lined by the project, and by linking the work on access to land for woman and marginalised groups to advocacy initiatives at a higher level.

Including conflict sensitivity in project budgets

Including a few specific budget lines can help embed conflict sensitivity in project implementation:

- budget for conducting or updating a full conflict analysis at the start-up of the project and for reviewing it as part of monitoring activities
- budget for capacity-building in conflict sensitivity for staff and partners involved in the project (and where relevant community representatives)
- budget for participatory monitoring and regular reflection with community members
- budget for feedback/ accountability mechanisms (see section 3.4 for more details).

Including conflict sensitivity in project workplans/ timelines

- Conflict sensitivity needs to figure prominently in the project workplan. Ideally the conflict analysis should be completed and reflected upon before key project activities begin, otherwise it will be too late to make any adaptations informed by the conflict analysis.
- Time and space for reflection on conflict sensitivity issues also need to be embedded in the project workplan, for example by being explicitly included on the agenda of regular project review meetings etc.

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle continued

Conflict analysis: reality check	
Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Restrictive donor guidelines for fund allocation. Donor guidelines on budgeting may not permit sufficient allocation of funds for conflict analysis and activities such as capacity building, participatory monitoring and feedback and grievance management mechanisms.	Creative budgeting. Combining activities so that conflict analysis and capacity-building in particular can take place in conjunction with broader agreed activities. Explore the possibility of joint analysis with other organisations.
In some situations it may not be possible to access communities when preparing a design. For example, local authorities might block entry to a location until funds have been committed or agencies may lack the time or human or financial resources.	Try and identify key informants who have knowledge of the needs and interests of different groups within a community. Reflect internally to identify any existing or potential conflict dynamics and how they may interact with the project.
Projects may be designed very quickly in response to calls for proposals. How can conflict and conflict analysis be conducted as part of the concept note and full proposal design if there is only very limited time and resources?	For projects that will use a concept note and a full proposal, a brief conflict analysis is 'good enough' for a concept note and a slightly more in-depth analysis is 'good enough' for a full proposal, with a full conflict analysis being undertaken at start up. See Annex 2 for an indication of what the different stages of analysis can involve in each case.

2.3. Implementation stage

Conflict sensitive implementation involves carrying out a project in a way that does not unintentionally cause, or exacerbate, tensions and capitalises on opportunities to contribute to peacebuilding outcomes.

The way that the implementing team manages relationships with actors who are both directly and indirectly affected by the project is central to conflict sensitive implementation. The team needs to recognise the role and activities of these actors and seek, wherever possible, to build relationships with, and among, the different players for greater effectiveness.

Start-up phase

Project start-up is the time to double-check your design and underlying assumptions. If projects have been through a competitive process, and have not yet been informed by a structured conflict analysis, this is the time to go through a full participatory conflict analysis process, as far as possible involving project staff, partners and communities. Where issues in the design, or opportunities, are identified in view of the conflict context, the start-up phase offers a good opportunity to make adjustments before implementation fully starts. (See previous sections on conflict analysis, assessment and design for further details).

Initial consultations at this stage are important to create or reinforce buy-in and ownership of the project by partners, community participants and other relevant actors, particularly if only limited engagement has taken place with them during the assessment and design phase.

Recruitment

Recruiting staff is a key component of a project start-up. It is important when recruiting staff to consider the impact that those working for the project could have in the communities they are working with. The ethnicity, religion, political affiliation and nationality of staff, or the way they behave and interact with actors participating or affected by a project, can all potentially contribute to exacerbating tensions in communities. Guidance on staff recruitment is provided in section 6.3.

Capacity-building

Capacity building of project staff is essential if they are to understand and use conflict sensitivity. A key lesson from the experience of Conflict Sensitivity Consortium members is that involving partner staff in conflict sensitivity training, together with community participants where possible, makes a critical difference to the quality of implementation. It enables all actors involved in the project to recognise conflict issues, and how they relate to the project and to devise solutions jointly. Including communities in capacity-building, and then in reviewing aspects of a project design, can generate a strong sense of ownership. It also sensitises communities to what conflict sensitivity is about, as well as to the fact that an intervention can do harm and that they can feel free to speak about any concerns. Capacity-building of communities in conflict sensitivity also fosters their understanding of project processes and the reasons why particular choices are made.

Please refer to section 6.3 for more general guidance on capacity building. Key aspects to consider during implementation are:

- budgeting for conflict sensitivity trainings during implementation or combining them with other agreed capacity-building plans
- involving partners and, where possible, community participants
- complementing training with a strong emphasis on learning throughout project implementation
- creating safe spaces for those involved in the project (staff, partners, communities) to discuss conflict issues and their relation to the project.

Identifying implementation activities that can reinforce community cohesion and reduce conflict

Agencies should, where possible, identify implementation activities that will reinforce or contribute to community cohesion (which in turn are likely to contribute to better development outcomes). How this can be done is highly dependent on the context – some possible approaches are provided in the illustrations below.

Development activity implementation leading to a positive impact on the conflict context

Northern Kenya – the Diocese of Maralal

In Northern Kenya, in an area with deep divisions between different tribal groups, a livelihood project implemented by the Diocese of Maralal had planned a specific activity whereby goats would be provided to community members, so that they could raise them and benefit from their milk and meat. It was agreed that the offspring of the goats would be dispersed to other families, thus multiplying benefits. This activity was adjusted in view of the conflict analysis to ensure that the goats would be distributed equally across three communities: Pokot, Turkana and Samburu. The project gave goats to five families in each community. They then passed on the offspring to people in the other communities. This follows a traditional covenant: ‘once I give you a goat, we are brothers’. The activity was strengthened by the creation of a shared market that not only increased acceptance and participation in the overall livelihood project but also brought communities closer together. Where previously there was no communication between the different groups, now they are interacting buying and selling milk and meat through their shared market. Community cohesion has improved.

CARE International Sri Lanka

In areas where ethno-political tensions have increased over the years resulting in the polarisation of communities, CARE has sought to re-establish or at times strengthen socio-economic relationships. Using such relationships as an entry point, communities are then encouraged to work together to identify similar needs and issues that they can work together to address – these are often related to the rehabilitation of community infrastructure (e.g.: roads, irrigation channels or wells) or in lobbying service providers to improve services. Such interaction has played a strong role in re-establishing communication channels resulting in growing mutual trust and respect. Such strategies are important in creating relationships that are used by communities to deal with contentious issues that may arise as a result of disputes over resource distribution for example. In volatile areas, such relationships are used by communities to notify each other of security concerns or to warn each other about impending attacks. In areas where inter-community relationships may have broken down due to a lack of interaction and not necessarily due to macro ethno-political dynamics, CARE (where possible) has sought to encourage the setting up of mixed groups that are representative of particular ethnic or social groups. During the tsunami response in particular, CARE sought to bring together communities from different groups to work together in clearing up debris as part of its ‘cash for work’ initiatives.

While pro-actively working with diverse groups in its projects, CARE has also sponsored cross-visits amongst and within its various projects – such activities have helped different regional, district or ethno-religious groups understand the problems faced by each other, while also creating links to new markets or helping to develop peer support networks for farmers for example.

2.4 Monitoring

Monitoring for conflict sensitivity includes reflecting on the interaction between the intervention and the context as part of the broader intervention monitoring plan. It involves three key elements:

- monitoring the context
- monitoring the effects of the context on the intervention
- monitoring the effects of the intervention on the context.

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle continued

How can monitoring for conflict sensitivity make a difference?

Peace and Community Action, Sri Lanka

In the past, reporting meetings focused on “has the task been done?”, “has the money been spent?” and other types of questions focused on the achievement of outputs. There were rarely questions about how the task was done and whether it was sensitive to conflict and to tensions or whether it caused any problems. Peace and Community Action (PCA) has started using a monitoring for conflict sensitivity approach and there is now a specific section on conflict sensitivity on reporting templates. The Team Leader will now ask questions such as “how many people from group A and how many people from group B received xxx?” and “how many men and women received xxx?”.

There are a number of benefits from this approach. Meetings and reporting take better account of conflict issues and tensions faced by project participants and monitoring activities inform the team not just about the achievements of outputs, but also about what factors contributed to the success of activities or to challenges. The approach has also helped make adjustments to be more conflict sensitive and increase the project effectiveness, for example by moving the location of one of the field offices to allow for better and more equitable access for different communities, thereby reinforcing links between them and enabling a more balanced participation in the project.

How to monitor for conflict sensitivity

Indicators for monitoring:

a) Intervention indicators:

Information on: To what extent is the intervention moving towards achieving its objectives?

Description: These are the indicators that any project monitoring and evaluation system, such as the logframe, would normally include. In some instances those existing intervention indicators will provide relevant information for conflict sensitivity. They can also be unpacked or disaggregated to provide pertinent information.

Example: Intervention indicator of livelihood project in district X:

- Intervention indicator: proportion of households in district X reporting year-round access to sufficient food for their family's needs
- Disaggregation to provide information pertinent to conflict sensitivity, based on the conflict analysis that revealed tensions between communities A and B

- Proportion of households from community A and community B reporting year-round access to sufficient food for their family's needs.

b) Conflict/context indicators:

Information on: Are there key changes in the context? How are tensions and conflict issues in the targeted areas evolving?

Description: Conflict/context indicators will help the project team to keep the conflict analysis updated. Conflict issues are dynamic and being able to recognise, and take into account, evolutions in the context is a key element of conflict sensitivity.

Example: Frequency of incidents of violence between communities A and B in a designated area in a three-month period

c) Interaction indicators

Information on: Is the intervention having effects on the context/conflict and how? Is the intervention affected by particular tensions, conflict issues or evolutions in the context?

Description: Interaction indicators will provide information on the direct interaction between the project and its context. Gathering such information will require a reflection on qualitative aspects of project implementation and exploring questions linked to staff and communities' perceptions towards the project. Such data is fundamental to enable a conflict-sensitive approach, but can be very sensitive. An organisation or project team may decide to use such information internally rather than for external reports, to enable greater openness and better quality responses to monitoring questions.

- Example:**
- Proportion of people in communities A and B who perceive the project as benefiting both communities equally or one community over the other (rarely, often or always).
 - Number of staff who believe the project has not had any impact on conflict in the target communities / exacerbated some tensions in the target communities / enabled greater cohesion in the target communities.

Note: It can be hard for project staff to give honest views when their project is having negative unintended impacts. The success of an indicator, such as the one above, rests upon staff understanding the long-term benefits of conflict sensitivity, creating an environment in which discussing the potential pluses and minuses of alternative options is encouraged and creating a safe space for staff to discuss project challenges without feeling their work is being criticised.

d) Unintended impacts

Information on: Are there any unintended / unforeseen impacts of the project? Include notes on both positive and negative unintended impacts.

Description: Alongside the monitoring of specifically set indicators, it is important to allow space to capture information and data on unintended effects of the intervention on the conflict context.

How to act on what is revealed by the monitoring

A key objective of monitoring for conflict sensitivity is to help adapt the implementation plan where conflict issues directly relating to the intervention are identified. Project re-designs or adaptations can be made for several reasons. Monitoring information may, for example, reveal that:

- activities are unintentionally triggering tensions or reinforcing divisions in the community and that there is a need to revise the implementation strategy to minimise those adverse effects
- underlying tensions in the target groups are hindering the level of participation in activities and hindering implementation and that there is a need to better understand and address those tensions to achieve progress
- opportunities for reinforcing community cohesion or dialogue between divided groups through project activities exist and could be capitalised on for the broader success of the intervention.

Consider using a simple table such as the one presented below. The example provided is adapted from the experience of CARE International Kenya's 'Sweetening Justice' project in Kibera:

Information revealed by monitoring	Adjustments in implementation	Results of adjustments
The rising role of paralegals in bringing perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence to justice is heightening tensions, as it threatens some provincial administrators (chiefs and headmen) who feel they are being eclipsed.	In order to avoid a breakdown in the relationship with the provincial administration, a public meeting (Baraza) was convened to address the mistrust. The meeting agreed on a cooperation framework where there would be a division of labour between paralegals, chiefs and headmen and regular communication around issues faced by each of the parties.	The meeting and regular communication improved the interaction between the provincial administration and paralegals. The chief now calls on paralegals to handle relevant cases, document them and follow up on them.

Where significant changes to the original project design are needed, the donor will usually need to be consulted in advance. Having a clearly documented record of the conflict sensitivity analysis that has been undertaken and the conflict sensitivity rationale behind the required changes will make a more powerful case for the donor to allow a revision to the project contract. Donors and senior managers within agencies need to understand that well-justified adaptations to the original project design can be as a sign of project strength whereas blindly adhering to the original project design can potentially be a sign of project weakness. See chapter 6 for further details on relationship with donors.

How to ensure project monitoring is itself conflict-sensitive

Key questions to consider when designing and conducting monitoring activities include the following:

- Who is conducting the monitoring? How are they perceived by the people being consulted (communities, partners, other staff) and how could this affect the data? Are responsibilities spread across different members of staff?
- Who is being consulted as part of the monitoring? How diverse are the groups being consulted (ethnic groups, gender, in positions of power or marginalised)?

- When is the monitoring being conducted? Integrating conflict sensitivity into the monitoring processes and project activities may require changes in timing to be responsive to the dynamics of a conflict.
- How will analysis from monitoring will be used to influence relevant decision-making processes (design, staff security planning)?

Consider including the following elements into your monitoring plan:

- Consulting non-targeted groups as well as direct project participants. This is particularly relevant for context and interaction indicators, as it will help generate data on changes in the broader context in which the project is taking place and on possible effects of the project on tensions or divisions between targeted and non-targeted groups.
- Ensuring that feedback is provided to people consulted as part of the monitoring. This will reduce the risk of the process being perceived as extractive and tensions being created by the monitoring activities themselves.
- Reviewing the risks and assumptions included in the project design.
- Using informal processes to keep the conflict analysis up-to-date and to monitor conflict sensitivity issues linked

2 Conflict sensitivity in the programme cycle continued

to the project. It can be particularly helpful to include a discussion on conflict dynamics and how they relate to project implementation as a regular standing feature of team meetings. This discussion can naturally lead into a consideration of whether the project needs adjusting in light of any changes in the conflict dynamics. Informal conversations with communities (project participants and non-participants) and independent third parties (such as other organisations implementing programming nearby) provide important perspectives outside the project team. Drawing on these perspectives is crucial to help challenge assumptions and cope with any bias.

- Including questions on conflict and on the effects of the project on the context in reporting formats, even where it is not required by the donor.
- Creating safe spaces for staff and communities to encourage open dialogue on the project and conflict issues and tensions faced.

Practical challenges	Possible solutions
What information should be shared with the donor? • Information revealed by conflict sensitivity monitoring may be very sensitive. • Monitoring and reporting information is often geared towards satisfying donors and not necessarily for internal learning.	Distinguish between internal and external reporting formats, to allow for internal information to be more open and concretely used by project staff for learning and project adjustments.

2.5. Evaluation stage

Many of the conflict sensitive monitoring points above are equally relevant for evaluation. It is important to ensure that as well as covering the direct project outcomes the evaluation also reviews the interaction between the intervention and the context, particularly the impact of the intervention (both positive and negative; intended and unintended) on the wider community and conflict context. It is also important to consider whether or not adaptations were needed and made as a result of conflict sensitivity.

Consider the following as part of your evaluation plan:

- If using an external evaluator be aware that their presence could raise expectations in the community for future or complementary activities.
- An evaluator can themselves contribute to conflict/tensions depending on how they are viewed by the targeted communities.
- Ensure that the role of the evaluator is clear to communities and other actors.
- Ensure that both direct and indirect participants are included in the evaluation process.
- Ensure that the outcome of the evaluation is fed back to the community and all stakeholders and that they have opportunity to comment on the findings.
- Identify how learning on conflict sensitivity emerging from the evaluation can be shared with others (possibly by developing a public summary of key lessons learnt) and inform future practice.
- Explicitly include a focus on assessing conflict sensitivity in the evaluator's terms of reference, including a link to this guide to encourage external evaluators to adopt best practices in conflict sensitivity.

3 Key issues for conflict sensitive programming

This Chapter looks at specific components of implementation, such as procurement and capacity-building. It also focuses on some of the key relationships that come into consideration when conflict sensitivity is put into practice during project implementation:

- relationships with project participants and partners
- relationships with donors and governments.

3.1 Targeting

Targeting is a particularly important issue from a conflict sensitivity perspective. The way it is designed can have a direct impact on the potential of a project to cause, or exacerbate, tensions in communities. Targeting can be a particularly challenging question to address if organisational mandates or donors define specific target groups.

It is important to review the specifics of targeting as part of the design process to:

- Ensure that the conflict and needs analyses include consideration of other groups in proximity to the primary target groups.
- Think creatively about ways that targeted activities can also benefit neighbouring communities and build positive relationships (for example, through communication strategies, exchanges, involvement in some selected activities).
- Develop selection criteria with communities to ensure that such processes are transparent and inclusive. Involving communities early on should increase ownership and reduce the possibility of targeting causing, or exacerbating, tensions at the implementation phase.
- Ensure that all decisions made in relation to targeting are communicated widely and that both targeted and non-targeted groups in an area are involved in information-sharing and feedback.
- Influence donors when they are not aware that the specific targeting criteria they have set may lead to increased tensions and hinder implementation.

Approaches to conflict sensitive targeting

World Vision Lanka – Reassessing the targeting of a WASH⁸ project from a conflict sensitivity perspective

When World Vision Lanka were designing a water project in a community with two different ethnic groups they spent time reviewing the risks and assumptions column of the logframe, particularly exploring the risks that could arise from existing tensions in the community. The team quickly realised that the engineers who had designed the water system had not considered the impact on the community. For geological reasons, the system was focused on an area where only one ethnic group lived and bypassed the area where the other ethnic group lived, meaning that those people would not benefit from the improved water supply. The team went back to the design and added in an extra output to mitigate against the risk of exacerbating conflict/ tensions by ensuring that both communities would be able to benefit from the improved water system. No additional funding was required and the donors were happy with the revised design once it was fully explained in the project narrative.

CARE International Sri Lanka – transparency and participation as enablers of conflict sensitive targeting

CARE has consistently emphasised transparency, not only in selection processes of participants and partners, but also in the design of community selection processes. In the communities in which it works CARE is open in its intention to focus on identified vulnerable and marginalised groups from the outset. Through Participatory Rural Appraisals and other assessment and design methods it not only maintains a high degree of community consultation and participation, but it also ensures that communities are aware of why emphasis is placed on certain groups.

Transparency has helped in limiting different groups from perceiving that the targeting and assistance provided is biased, particularly in scenarios where more support will go to a certain group. It has also helped in building community support for targeted assistance for the more marginalised while strengthening ownership and demand for such practices. Informing entire communities of the intentions and purposes of the project has also helped limit the ability of elites or particular power groups to control or manipulate decision making on targeting or implementation.

3 Key issues for conflict sensitive programming continued

Sierra Leone Red Cross Society – managing relations between targeted and non-targeted communities

An issue faced by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) as part of its Community Animation and Peace Support Project (CAPS) was the conflicting relation between the targeted and non-targeted communities (five selected out of 52), especially when agricultural inputs were being brought in. To address this, the project staff and partners adopted a strong transparency and communication strategy with neighbouring communities to increase understanding of why the project was targeting particular communities and reduce tensions. A positive unintended result of this approach is that those neighbouring communities, even without any support from the SLRCS, are starting to adopt some of the practices of the communities participating in the CAPS project.

3.2 Procurement

Procuring and transporting goods into an environment that may have scarce resources carries particular risks. Many organisations have procedures that are designed to deal with cost-effectiveness and the prevention of corruption. These also need to be reviewed from a conflict sensitive perspective. Where you procure goods can contribute to conflict dynamics – for example if the supplier is closely associated with a party to the conflict or if procuring from outside the project location is perceived as undermining the local economy. Issues such as these need to be taken into consideration in procurement policy and combined with a conflict analysis in the area of programming.

Procurement: reality check

Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Sources of skills and goods: • Sometimes skills, goods or services are not available locally or fall short of criteria in delivery or standards. • Sometimes skills, goods or services are in one group only and the organisation might then advantage one group over another.	• Source locally wherever possible, maintaining criteria, standards and transparency. • Be open about reasons for not procuring locally when this is not possible. • Where possible include communities in developing criteria and selection processes. • Provide feedback to all who submit responses explaining why they did or did not get the contract.

3.3 Relationships with communities

The increasing recognition of the benefits and necessity of a participatory approach in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes has helped to develop more transparent and equitable relationships between agencies and participants in interventions. From a conflict sensitivity perspective, the following aspects are particularly important to take into account.

The importance of understanding relationships within a community

Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) Community Animation and Peace Support Project

In the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) Community Animation and Peace Support Project, the relationships with chiefs has been a very important aspect of implementation. In Sierra Leone, chiefs are the ones responsible for managing community life and, although they are not formally paid, they benefit from this position. At first the creation of project committees brought tensions as they challenged existing power relations and exacerbated mistrust. In view of the conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity issues uncovered in relation to the project design, the SLRCS focused on building trust between communities and community animators and promoting a better understanding of the mutual role of the chiefs and committees. This notably resulted in including the chiefs as ‘advisors’ (but not chairs) for the project committees.

Inclusion of communities in decision making

It is critical to recognise and understand the various divisions and relationships in a community and how this affects access to, and distribution of, resources. As mentioned in the design and targeting section, it is essential that:

- Both project participants and those community members that are not targeted are included in the selection of aid recipients and identification of activities if at all possible.
- There are clear criteria for participant selection, developed with representatives of the local community.
- Staff are open and transparent about any donor restrictions on target groups.

How decision-making processes can make a difference – experience from the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium

Principles of accountability, inclusive and participatory decision-making and equity play a critical role in building community capacities to constructively deal with needs prioritisation and equitable resource distribution processes. In addition to being good development practice, emphasising these principles has helped the Consortium in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka to reduce conflicts and the fuelling of tensions and bridge cultural, social and ethnic divides. In situations where elites control decision making or community decision-making processes are co-opted by political or armed groups, creating safe spaces for communities to discuss and take collective decisions in an open and transparent manner has contributed to reducing the negative influence of conflict actors and to reducing tensions.

3.4 Feedback and accountability mechanisms

Feedback and accountability mechanisms are an essential part of ensuring positive relationships with communities and monitoring conflict issues during implementation. The principle of accountability is central to conflict sensitivity as it touches upon issues of power in agency, partner and participant relationships, and the type of power each brings. Creating effective feedback and accountability mechanisms enables good programming and specifically helps reduce the potential for tension and conflict to be created or exacerbated by a project.

Consider:

- Creating safe spaces for feedback and complaints from participants and non-participants. This could be achieved by creating time for community members to discuss project activities and their effect on the community. Where it is not possible, acceptable or safe for people to speak openly about sensitive issues, anonymous mechanisms that are accessible to all need to be set up. Special consideration should be given to giving a voice to vulnerable or marginalised groups as part of that process.
- Setting up rigorous complaints response mechanisms, which are informed by what is considered safe and acceptable and will enable tensions, issues and disputes related to project implementation to be raised and addressed. Such mechanisms are also very important for circulating information, ensuring two-way communication with communities and providing insights that will enable activities to be adapted to make them more effective.

A tool to promote accountability and conflict sensitivity: the use of community diaries in Sierra Leone

The concept of conflict sensitivity was introduced in the Conservation Agriculture Project, implemented by CARE International and its partner Future in Our Hands through a pilot initiative supported by the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium. A key aspect of the project that was reviewed was accountability and communication between the implementing team and project participants. Initially, no structured channel of feedback had been established for communities to express their views and concerns during project implementation. The use of a conflict sensitive lens led project and partner staff to introduce community diaries as a feedback mechanism. Record keeping training was given to project participants so they could document conflict sensitive issues and notably highlight tensions and issues arising during implementation. Community diaries were then provided for communities to record this information. The diaries were reviewed during monthly meetings with project participants, partners and staff and used as a reference for collaborative decision making and possible project redesign. This approach made a considerable difference at different levels:

- It helped the project team identify unintended effects of their activities, both positive and negative.
- It enabled better communication and increased trust and openness between project participants, Future in our Hands and CARE.
- It helped make changes in the way activities were delivered, which both reduced tensions and increased the effectiveness of the intervention.

3 Key issues for conflict sensitive programming continued

3.5 Relationships with partners

Many agencies work through partners. As with staff recruitment, who an agency partners with can have a direct impact on tensions within communities and project effectiveness.

To ensure conflict sensitivity is integrated into relationships with partners during implementation, the following aspects are particularly important:

Partner positioning:

- Refer to your conflict analysis and stakeholder analysis to help you identify possible partners. Remember that each organisation and individual will have their own bias and affiliations.
- Recognise your own and your partners' positions in the conflict. This is based on the assumption that when conflict erupts, there is a tendency for people (individuals or groups) to be perceived as being on one side or the other. These perceptions need to be tested, not blindly accepted.
- In more stable contexts where there is no violent conflict it is still important to identify how partners are perceived within the community. This could be as straightforward as adapting existing partner assessment tools for conflict sensitive issues such as political ties, ethnic bias and impartiality.

Partnership agreements and shared approaches:

- Carry out shared inter-agency conflict/context analysis with your partners, at the start of the intervention, if possible, or as part of on-going monitoring during the implementation period.
- Ensure the partnership agreement is drawn up jointly, with mutually agreed terms and conditions, to ensure that it promotes an equitable and mutually beneficial relationship between the lead agency and partner.
- Make sure that any partner agreement contains a reference to agreed codes of conduct, that can be monitored and strengthened throughout the partnership. Establish processes for monitoring and adjusting partnerships, including a grievance and disciplinary process.
- Consider if you need to build your partner's capacity in conflict sensitivity before signing a partnership agreement. It is important to include partners in any on-going capacity building once an agreement is signed.
- Institute regular reviews of partnership relationships, clarifying and amending defined roles if required.

Integration of conflict sensitivity into Save the Children Sri Lanka's partnership approach

Being a part of the Sri Lanka Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, Save the Children conducted an extensive Partnership Review from a conflict sensitive perspective. Save the Children realised that their approach towards partnerships needed to change and involve more open and increased dialogue between Save the Children and its partners. The process identified was to move from a strict contractual relationship with partners to a more participatory, focused and long-term (strategic) partnership. The immediate action points agreed as a result of the partnership review were to:

- Translate the partnership manual into local languages.
- Use partners' logos in the agreements.
- Revisit the partnership manual in line with conflict sensitivity and accountability principles.
- Include a joint (Save the Children and partners) definition for what it means to be in a strategic partnership: "Partners by choice working together interdependently towards a common goal with a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and mutually agreed norms, and committed to accountable and sustainable development practice".

3.6 Relationships with governments

The relationships sought with government at different levels as part of implementation are likely to be directly related to the context. There are times when it is not suitable to have any formal relationship with a government – for example if the government is contributing to violent conflict or oppressing particular groups. In other instances it is essential to build relationships with different levels of government, to gain access to areas where you want to work or in order to influence policy and practice.

Consider the following:

- Start where you have an entry-point. For many projects this means that local level engagement may be easier than national engagement and this may have more impact on the communities that organisations are working with.
- Identify which international instruments, best practice guidance, humanitarian law or standards governments have signed up to and whether this provides a starting point for engagement or for advocacy.

Different approaches to government engagement around conflict sensitivity issues

An entry-point for conflict sensitivity awareness-raising with local government

In Maralal, Samburu district, it was noted that the Constituency Development Fund that provides government funds for development in the area was a strategic platform for the Catholic Diocese of Maralal to be a part of so as to influence the use of conflict sensitivity in the development agenda. This forum is an opportunity to share information on issues at the community level and take part in planning that is not necessarily pegged on financial assistance. This led to improved communication around conflict issues with the local government and increased awareness around some of the approaches to conflict sensitivity piloted by the Diocese and how they could relate to local government practice.

Involving local government and donors in Do No Harm analysis

In one of its projects in the north of Sri Lanka CARE International included local level administrative officials in an introductory session on Do No Harm that also included the project donor representatives. Connectors and dividers as well as other context specific dynamics were identified as part of the session, and later used by the project team to analyse the context and adapt activities in order to capitalise on identified connectors and deal with dividers. Involving the government actors achieved two objectives: it exposed them to Do No Harm, while also enabling them to understand the project relevance to the context. Engaging with local officials on those issues provided the project staff with insights that helped them better understand the different stakeholders' relationships and opportunities for cooperation. Including the donor provided the donor with a better understanding of the context and its potential interaction with the project activities.

Collaborating with other agencies to influence government Kenya Conflict Sensitivity Consortium

The Kenya Conflict Sensitivity Consortium started working with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in 2010 to sensitise their staff on the practical relevance of conflict sensitivity to their work. As part of the initiative, commissioners reviewed various public policy processes, analysing whether they were conflict-blind. Following the engagement, the NCIC changed their internally displaced people resettlement policy in a particular region taking conflict sensitivity issues into account.

Relationships with government: reality check

Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Who to engage with at which level?	- Analyse the risks and opportunities linked to engaging with government dynamically, in view of the conflict analysis and regular informal monitoring of the context. - Be clear about your objectives in the target area. Develop criteria for engagement with government that directly reflect this understanding. - Work in consortia, partnerships, networks, where some or all of your analysis, strategy and activities can be developed and shared without singling out your organisation.
What are the consequences of engaging?	
What are the consequences of not engaging?	

3.7 Relationships with donors

As with governments, the relationships sought with donors at different levels are likely to be directly related to the context within which project implementation is taking place. More information on external relations with donors is provided in section 6.6, but as part of implementation, the following aspects are important to consider for conflict sensitive practice:

- Establish trust through a continuous relationship, which involves communicating about the operating context and conflict issues and is not just related to funding and grant management.
- A strong conflict analysis can be a helpful way of bringing donors up-to-date with the thinking behind the design of your project or programme and bringing them up-to-date with the operating context. Ensure that this is well documented in the proposal and reports and, if possible, explained verbally during meetings with donors.
- Offer donors the opportunity to be included in participation at all stages of the programming cycle. This could be through visits to target areas, facilitating engagement with project participants, joining conflict analysis workshops or context monitoring reflections.
- Report on what is working and what is not working with respect to conflict sensitivity in the project area. Case studies, lessons learned and good practice may all be of interest.
- Where necessary, you may need to engage with the donor over changes to the project design as a result of conflict sensitivity monitoring. Be sure to justify any request strongly with evidence from conflict analysis or context monitoring updates.

3 Key issues for conflict sensitive programming continued

3.8 Exit strategy

Exit strategies are important for any project, but are very important to consider from a conflict sensitivity perspective. Tensions can arise at the end of projects, particularly when communities do not fully understand the reasons why the project is ending or why an organisation is leaving. The following aspects are important to consider from a conflict sensitivity perspective:

- The exit strategy should be designed in consultation with the target communities, partners and project staff and should be widely shared and explained, particularly when

it comes to whether or not there are plans for continuation and why.

- The exit strategy should be reviewed in view of a conflict and scenario analysis and measures drawn up to mitigate against the risk of exacerbating tensions in the area through the way the project ends. For example, how are remaining resources shared or allocated within or across communities? What are the security risks for local staff, partners or community members that have been involved in implementation after the project ends?

4 Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses

While most of the guidance in Chapters 1 and 2 and 3 will also be relevant for emergencies, the emergency programming cycle is usually shorter and is subject to particular constraints, meaning that a tailored approach to conflict sensitivity may be beneficial. This section focuses on applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses. This guidance complements existing standards and norms (eg: SPHERE and HAP) in the humanitarian sector which implicitly advocate for minimising harm and better understanding the operating context.

Applying conflict sensitivity to an emergency response can be challenging due to the complexity of the contexts in which emergencies occur and the speed with which organisations need to react, which leaves little opportunity for the use of sophisticated analytical tools. This section is structured around each step of the emergency programme cycle: preparedness, assessment, design, implementation and evaluation.

4.1 Preparedness phase

Considering conflict sensitivity at the preparedness stage will help organisations make sense of the complex contexts in which they work and help minimise the likelihood of agencies delivering interventions that have unintended negative consequences. The following aspects should be considered:

- **Senior leadership buy-in** for the integration of conflict sensitivity in emergency response plans, systems and operating guidelines is critical to ensuring that preparedness systems can be adjusted and that space for considering conflict issues faced during the response will be allocated and not deprioritised.
- Where possible, especially in multi-mandate organisations, it is useful to build links between emergency teams and teams involved in longer term programming, to develop a habit of regularly **sharing analyses and assessments**.
- In the preparedness phase it is useful to explore whether formal or informal arrangements can be made between emergency teams and staff with relevant conflict specialisation or experience to provide **technical assistance** through all phases of emergency programming.
- It is important to include a **regularly updated conflict analysis** in contingency and preparedness plans for specific countries or regions. For locations where your agency has an on-going presence, analysis can be undertaken as part of on-going programming. For disaster-prone areas where your agency does not maintain a permanent presence, consider partnering with other organisations on the ground to ensure you maintain an up-to-date conflict analysis ahead of any emergency.

- **Contingency planning** should consider how potential events might interact with any current conflict dynamics. These will be based partly on the conflict analysis and supplemented by data on any prominent environmental risks.
- An **induction pack for surge capacity staff** developed for the first few weeks of an emergency response should include conflict sensitivity alongside other important cross-cutting priorities and additional information about the organisation's mandate and response. This should include generic information, a summary of the local context, local conflict issues and potential conflict flashpoints and how these might be mitigated.
- If a **partnership strategy** is included as part of the preparedness plans, review the selection of partners in view of their relation to the conflict context.
- Develop a **set of competencies for conflict sensitivity** for staff in emergency teams for use in recruitment and staff development. Below is an example of a professional development plan for an emergencies team:⁹

Key conflict sensitivity competencies for emergency staff

Attitudes

- Has impartial views that do not prejudice him/her to different ethnic groups, warring factions.
- Believes in the humanitarian imperative, that all parties in need deserve aid regardless of affiliation.
- Understands the importance of, and is open to, quality improvements in programming – from gender to accountability and conflict sensitivity.
- Is sensitive to cultural contexts.

Skills in conflict analysis in preparation, design and proposal writing

- Understands and uses, or is willing to learn, conflict analysis tools (refer to Chapter 1), both in emergency preparedness planning and for a 'good enough' analysis during emergency deployment. (*You may not find people with these skills but willingness to learn is important*).
- Has the ability to consider conflict flashpoints (social, political, economic) during project design and proposal writing.
- Understands Do No Harm (DNH), SPHERE, HAP and how conflict sensitivity and other key standards for emergency response can reinforce each other.

- Implement a **tailored training plan** to build the capacity of your humanitarian response teams in conflict sensitivity and ensure that conflict sensitivity training materials are included within broader organisational humanitarian and emergency trainings. If possible, complement with a full Do No Harm (DNH) training course for emergency staff. In capacity-building programmes, ensure that all relevant staff are targeted, including surge capacity and roster staff, as well as key long-term country office senior and support staff and partners who are likely to be involved in emergency assessments and other first-phase response activities. You may need to prioritise particular categories of staff in the first instance and then expand the training to others.
- Integrate questions asking whether conflict sensitivity has been considered into your **emergency proposal checklist**. Many agencies have a checklist that assists in examining various aspects of emergency programme quality. Questions regarding whether conflict issues and their relation to the intervention have been considered can also be easily inserted. Below are some relevant questions included in CARE International's Emergency Proposal Check-list:¹⁰

Conflict sensitivity questions in an emergency programme proposal check-list

CARE International

- Does the background description demonstrate a sound understanding of the operational context (including conflict analysis)?
- Have comprehensive assessments been conducted, including those involving the affected population?
- If the project is in a highly volatile context, have indicators for conflict sensitivity been included (eg: whether target groups perceive that the intervention is contributing to conflict)?
- Are there mechanisms and resources in place for effective inclusion and communication with affected / targeted people, including the most vulnerable, throughout the project cycle, in particular during the project design phase? What about also talking with factions to make sure they understand that aid is neutral and based on humanitarian principles?
- Does the programme offer effective feedback and complaints mechanisms available to all beneficiaries/ participants and non-beneficiaries/ participants in the project area?

9 Adapted from CIUK, *Conflict Sensitivity Competencies for Emergency Staff*

10 Adapted from CIUK *Emergency Proposal Review Check-list*

4 Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses

continued

4.2 Assessment phase

The assessment phase of an emergency is a particularly challenging period where the demand to start providing life-saving assistance is very high. As time is limited, opportunities to integrate conflict sensitivity need to be realistic, practical and easily understood. Taking on board these simple steps may avert negative unintended consequences:

- Undertake a **'Good Enough'**¹¹ **conflict analysis** as part of the first-phase emergency response. This analysis should be short and easy to integrate with other aspects of a multi-sectoral emergency assessment and clear enough to be used by people with no conflict-sensitivity expertise. Try and use participatory methods with partners and affected communities as much as you can. In some cases, access may be restricted and it may not be possible for remote teams to complete the assessment. If this is the case, an analysis can be drawn up in the short-term on the basis of the knowledge of existing staff and/or programmes operating in these regions, including from other agencies operational in these areas. The following guiding questions for a 'good enough' analysis may be helpful in all emergencies (ie: rapid onset, natural disaster, conflict):¹²

Rapid conflict analysis for use in first-phase assessment

Analysis questions

- What is the history of the conflict in the area being assessed? What is it about and how long has it been going on? How intense/open is the conflict?
- What groups of people are involved?
- What kinds of things divide these groups (for example caste, tribe, neighbourhood affiliation, access to resources) and what connects¹³ them (for example shared cultural practices, local peace initiatives)?
- Where are the conflict-affected areas geographically located?
- Does conflict get worse at any particular time or period (time of day, season, during elections, during religious festivals etc).
- What are the best, worst and most likely scenarios for the future of the conflict in the context? What does each scenario depend on?

- Try and **deepen the conflict analysis in later stages** of the emergency intervention. As the dynamics of any given situation are constantly changing, it is important to update the analysis at regular intervals. This can be achieved by cross-referencing with other agency analyses or carrying out consultation with communities or other groups who were not part of the original analysis. This could happen as the response transitions into new phases, such as from relief to recovery. This could be led either in-house, if the capacity exists, or by a consultant. 'Pause and reflect' sessions, real-time evaluation meetings or intra-agency coordination/planning meetings can provide excellent opportunities to integrate a deeper level of analysis.

4.3 Design phase

The following aspects are particularly important at the design stage:

- Using participatory conflict analysis from both the preparedness and assessment stages to inform programme design and risk management:¹⁴
- Developing a **risk matrix** that considers how potential conflict flashpoints may be mitigated. (See table below for some potential flashpoints and mitigating measures).¹⁵

11 A term borrowed from the Emergency Capacity Building project, which promotes a 'good enough' approach to impact measurement and accountability in emergencies. This emphasises "simple and practical solutions and encourages the user to choose tools that are safe, quick, and easy to implement". For further detail on impact measurement/accountability see <http://www.ecbproject.org/the-good-enough-guide/the-good-enough-guide>

12 ODI HPN paper No. 70, October 2011, Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency response: Current practice and ways forward by Nona Zicherman, with Aimal Khan, Anne Street, Heloise Heyer and Oliver Chevreau available on <http://www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/hpn-network-papers/applying-conflict-sensitivity-emergency-response-current-practice-ways-forward>

13 Connectors and Dividers are commonly used conflict sensitivity terms stemming from Do No Harm – see chapter 2.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

Response element	How it can contribute to conflict	Potential mitigation measures
Targeting and beneficiary selection	- During a shift from blanket distributions to targeted interventions. - When selection processes are not transparent. - When targeting criteria are not well understood by all stakeholders. - When targeting criteria overlap with, and reinforce, existing social divisions.	- Facilitating community participation in determining targeting criteria. - Sustained information-sharing with both beneficiaries/ participants and non- beneficiaries/ participants on targeting criteria and selection processes. - Complaints and feedback mechanisms to identify problems during beneficiary selection. - Understand existing social divisions and map them against the proposed criteria.
Control over distributions	- When the implementing agency exercises exclusive control over the distributions without sufficient understanding of the context. - When powerful actors attempt to control distributions and divert resources for their own gain. - When committee members act in a non-transparent or non-accountable way. - When marginalised groups are excluded from distributions.	- Involve the community in the management of the distributions. - Set up distribution committees or other participatory mechanisms with an awareness of local power dynamics. - Ensure all committees are inclusive and representative of the entire population. - Balance the power of committees with robust complaints mechanisms. - Build committees' capacity in leadership, management, and conflict resolution. - Ensure proper protection mechanisms exist during distributions to prevent violence, extortion or discrimination.
Role of local structures	- When local government and civil society actors are excluded from the aid response. - When local political interests try to co-opt the aid effort.	- Link to existing development programmes to help new emergency staff understand existing local structures. - Develop comprehensive humanitarian partnership strategies as part of emergency preparedness. - Dedicate time and resources to ensure involvement of local partners during the first phase of response. - Be aware of practical barriers (language, meeting locations, gender) that can inadvertently exclude local stakeholders. - Advocate with local political actors for the respect of humanitarian principles and the need for independent and impartial humanitarian action. - Seek support from beneficiaries/ participants and local leaders to resist pressure from local politicians.
Inter-agency coordination	- When aid packages are not standardised. - When certain locations are privileged over others - When aid actors do not have a shared analysis of underlying conflict dynamics in the context.	- Ensure conflict-sensitivity concepts are familiar to UN cluster lead agencies and OCHA. - Support the clusters and advocate with donors at an inter-agency level for the standardisation of packages, approaches, and geographic distribution. - Advocate for the institutionalisation of cross-sectoral forums for the analysis of conflict and context issues.

4 Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses continued

4.4 Implementation and monitoring phase

During the emergency response implementation, consider the following elements:

- Ensure that **staff recruitment** takes into account the potential identity-based divisions among staff and between staff and beneficiaries/participants. The following table provides some practical steps on how this can be managed:¹⁶

Staffing

Managing new recruitment and turnover

- Hold regular all-staff meetings, open staff fora or similar initiatives to foster links between new and existing staff and between staff from different locations.
- Design an orientation package for all staff that includes contextual and cultural understanding for new international staff, as well as humanitarian principles, codes of conduct and community-based programming approaches.
- Require longer-term commitments from senior managers.

Managing national staff identity issues

- Ensure that awareness of national staff identity issues informs staffing decisions and identify possible measures to mitigate tensions. For example, draw staff from other departments or partner agencies to make up appropriate assessment teams, ensure that teams sent to the field are mixed (with at least one person from the local area) and, monitor the proportion of foreign, national and local staff.

- As far as possible, use **community-based participatory methods to develop targeting criteria and to manage distributions**. The following example outlines how this might be achieved:¹⁷

“Some agencies have instituted host community representation in camp committee meetings, and are including neighbouring residents in social events organised as part of health promotion, education or psycho-social activities. This appears to have helped in building relationships and reducing tensions between camp residents and people in surrounding neighbourhoods. As planning for the ‘transition’ phase begins, some organisations are explicitly adopting a ‘neighbourhood strategy’, which will take an inclusive and integrated approach to areas of return, focusing on providing a complete package of services and enabling recovery for everyone living in or returning to these areas.”

- **Procurement** can often become a very direct source of tension during emergency responses. Procuring on a local or national basis without showing concern for what supplies are available can create shortages of goods and materials, leading to price rises and speculation. It can also mean that local people can no longer afford these items. This can cause conflicts between targeted groups and those who were not considered to be directly affected by the disaster and did not receive any help (see more details on procurement in section 3.2).
- **Interagency coordination:** try and identify which agency is delivering what as different levels of provision can result in tensions between beneficiaries/participants.

Increasing inter-agency coordination for greater conflict sensitivity

CARE International Haiti¹⁸

In Haiti, CARE International initiated a cluster technical working group on housing, land and property in June 2010. This forum, which included members from the shelter, camp coordination and management, protection and early recovery clusters, allowed different agencies to share experiences and access local knowledge. Haitian lawyers and land experts were also brought in to address some of the complicated questions around shelter and resettlement. These initiatives enabled programme planners to gain a greater understanding of contextual constraints and adjust implementation accordingly.

- Set up effective **post-distribution monitoring mechanisms** that enable feedback from both beneficiaries/participants and non- beneficiaries/participants. Post-distribution monitoring can be used to both monitor the quality of a response and provide a helpful indicator of any unintended negative consequences, particularly regarding tensions between beneficiaries/participants and non- beneficiaries/participants. The following guidance from CARE International explains how this might be approached:¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Op Cit. Zicherman, N., et al, p 11.

¹⁸ Op Cit, Zicherman, N., p 14

¹⁹ Adapted from CARE International Post-Distribution Monitoring Check-list (CARE Emergency Pocket Book, p 197)

Post-distribution monitoring check-list

Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) checks that the correct recipients got their correct food rations or packages of non food-items and that everyone who should receive a distribution is able to. It may also check why some intended beneficiaries didn't collect their rations or items and can tell us if beneficiary targeting and distribution process caused any problems within the community. Within two weeks of a distribution, randomly choose a sample of both recipient and non-recipient households to interview. Make sure the sample includes households from different social groups within the community, with particular attention to marginalised groups. Be sure that you get direct feedback from women and children on their access to, and satisfaction with, the distribution, not via other family members. It is also good to check local markets to see what is being sold.

The sample size of the PDM should be larger than normal if:

- the population is more diverse than usual or there are social tensions or insecurity
- if the types and amounts of food rations or other items actually distributed differed from what was approved
- if the distribution process was affected by late/missed deliveries or other problems.

Try to follow a set questionnaire for each household. From beneficiaries/participants find out:

- ☐ how the recipient heard of the distribution
- ☐ who actually collected the ration or the items (ie: cardholder or other)
- ☐ how long they waited at the site to collect their rations or items
- ☐ what rations or non-food items package they got—items and quantities per person
- ☐ differences between expected and received rations
- ☐ whether they had to pay any fee or tax before, during or after the distribution
- ☐ how the community participated in the distribution process
- ☐ the recipient's satisfaction with the process
- ☐ If there was community input into targeting criteria
- ☐ If they are aware of the targeting criteria
- ☐ whether they meet the targeting criteria
- ☐ whether they experienced any problems or conflicts with their neighbours, or within their household, as a result of the distribution

- Develop robust **complaints and feedback mechanisms** as well as common approaches to respond to issues identified. The following example outlines how ActionAid implemented such a strategy:²⁰

ActionAid International's 2004 Asian Tsunami Response Programme, which covered India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Somalia (Puntland), Sri Lanka and Thailand, sought to operationalise a rights-based approach to disaster response. ActionAid's programme in Sri Lanka involved 36 partner organisations implementing a multitude of tsunami recovery and rebuilding programmes that benefited more than 70,000 tsunami-affected women, men and children. As per ActionAid's principle of transparency and accountability to rights holders, social auditing and community review processes were undertaken, guided by ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) – a system which clearly establishes participation of and accountability to people living in poverty and exclusion as the foundation of ActionAid's approach.

Social audit is delivered through three key processes:

1. **Transparency boards:** The name of the village and objectives, coverage, activities and budget of the initiatives under implementation are displayed on a board in a public, central location which is visible and accessible to all members of the community and updated on a regular basis, with the aim of strengthening community ownership of information
2. **Vigilance committee:** The community selects a group of volunteers mainly comprising members of excluded groups with equitable gender representation, to monitor and supervise the day-to-day implementation of the projects, including procurement. These volunteers are elected/selected by affected communities, and receive training to enable them to take up larger responsibilities in community-based institutions. The aim is to ensure community oversight of all activities and participation in decision-making
3. **Sharing bills and vouchers:** Copies of vouchers and bills of the expenses incurred by partners and community members in implementing project activities in the village must be shared so that community members can verify the support provided. The community must accept the role of the vigilance committee and approve the bills and vouchers of the expenses incurred in the village by passing a resolution. Any complaints against the vigilance committee or partner implementing the project must be acted on immediately. It is useful to invite other civil society organisations and government representatives to these interactions. This helps the community to ask for similar processes to be done in the village by other actors. The aim is to ensure transparency in transactions; an environment should be created whereby communities have the opportunity to express their perception of the impact of assistance, positive or negative.

²⁰ Adapted from ActionAid, *Social audit and community review process in ActionAid's Tsunami response*

4 Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency responses

continued

- Establish a **clear communication strategy and mechanisms for relating to crisis-affected communities**. Use practical approaches to establish the most appropriate and trusted communication channels in a given context. This should be used to inform the implementation of a communications strategy which connects humanitarian programming to the people they are designed to support. This is achieved through open dialogue at all stages of programme planning and implementation. One possible approach could be to appoint community mobilisers (talkers/listeners) to act as communicators and mediators between the community and programme implementers. They can help explain organisational and project strategies as well as listen to, and act upon, community concerns.
- Establishing a communications strategy as part of the response implementation, in order to help mitigate conflict and security issues:
 - Share information about the project with the community and ensure that everyone understands what is happening to them and why. Communication channels must be specific to that context and facilitate two-way dialogue and community feedback on agencies' responses. This can often be enhanced by working with local partners.
 - Access to information is critical to communities so that they understand the selection and targeting criteria and can explore alternative support if they are not selected.
 - Use two-way communications with tools including: a shortcode phone line, SMS, suggestion boxes, community mobilisers, a chalk board where residents can leave comments or questions, community meetings, face-to-face discussions, sound trucks, posters, maps of the shelter construction process and written explanations of beneficiary selection criteria and lists of those selected. Ensure the most relevant and trusted communications channels are used in your response. For example, SMS may be a relevant, trusted and available channel in one context, but radio or community mobilisers may work better in another context²¹.

A perspective from the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Initiative:²²

Communication with disaster-affected communities can be critical as a life-saving device, as a means of enhancing aid effectiveness and as a mechanism for building trust between aid actors and crisis-affected populations.

Recent independent evaluations and aid providers themselves are increasingly recognising the importance of integrating two-way communications mechanisms into humanitarian programming as a means of both enhancing aid delivery and as an aid deliverable in its own right. Information can be relayed to and from inaccessible areas, providing life-saving information and reassuring people that their concerns and ideas are being listened to. Communication can enable aid agencies and affected-people to work in partnership to explore effective approaches, to seek solutions to problems and to identify the most vulnerable people requiring priority assistance. Communication can help identify and mitigate conflict before it arises and is critical to building trust and understanding between the affected populations and aid providers.

This ultimately helps create an operating environment in which aid can be delivered more effectively and efficiently. Affected-populations have the greatest knowledge and expertise of their own environment and aid providers have a responsibility to treat them as active agents in their own recovery. Insufficient or non-existent two-way communications mechanisms can be extremely detrimental to the humanitarian relief effort and deny the affected-population their right to be listened to and have their concerns and ideas acted on. Communication is vital.

21 Produced in consultation with the CDAC Network (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities)

22 Craig Tucker (2011). CDAC Network Information Officer (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities).

4.5 Evaluation phase

Learning from previous responses is key to improving the quality of programming in future emergencies. Asking simple questions in real-time evaluations and after-action reviews, can provide useful lessons on what went well and what aspects need to be strengthened from a conflict sensitivity perspective. Wherever possible external evaluations should be shared with relevant clusters to increase learning. The use of benchmarks on conflict in real-time evaluations, after-action reviews and other agency emergency response evaluation tools can be a useful way to systematise the integration of conflict sensitivity in emergency response evaluations.

23 Adapted from CAFOD's – Terms of Reference Horn of Africa Response RTE

Conflict sensitivity integrated in real-time evaluation terms of reference

CAFOD Horn of Africa response²³

Relevance: Were conflict dynamics taken into account in planning the response? If so how? Did the needs assessment include a consideration of conflict dynamics?

Effectiveness: Have you altered or amended the response or methodologies of targeting, distribution or community involvement because of unexpected negative outcomes or experiences? If so what were they? What did you do in the light of these to minimise negative and maximise positive outcomes.

Coverage: Was/is any conflict analysis conducted in the design phase of the programme? If so, did this change the design of the programme?

5 Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium found that building institutional capacity is crucial for sustainably and effectively improving conflict sensitivity. Without taking an institutional approach, skills are at best confined in a small group of experts, risking complete loss of capacity when those individuals leave. Even with skilled individuals, conflict sensitivity will not be effective unless wider structures, policies and ways of working also support and encourage conflict sensitivity.

Conflict sensitivity is relevant for any organisation involved in development, peacebuilding or humanitarian work, whatever its size, set-up and scope of action. The terms used to describe organisational functions and processes in this chapter are not rigid and individuals and organisations should feel free to adjust those to match their own particular terminology.

5.1 Institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity self-assessment

A crucial step for any organisation intending to improve its organisational conflict sensitivity is to conduct a conflict

sensitivity self-assessment to assess current capacity against key benchmarks. Such a self-assessment enables each organisation to identify its own particular strengths, weakness, opportunities and blockages. The information thus gathered will provide a sound basis for defining priority areas of action and agreeing on specific change objectives.

Benefits of conflict sensitivity capacity self-assessment

Undertaking a self-assessment can generate many positive outcomes above and beyond the actual research results:

- It can (re-)generate buy-in amongst senior management who do not see conflict sensitivity as a priority.
- Different staff participating in the process will have different levels of existing understanding of conflict sensitivity. The self-assessment process can therefore be useful in itself in raising basic awareness of conflict sensitivity.
- It can reveal greater existing knowledge and implicitly conflict sensitive practices among staff than may have been anticipated.
- It helps highlight both hidden barriers and opportunities for change.

Key benchmarks for conflict sensitivity mainstreaming

In order for agencies to improve conflict sensitivity, numerous organisational areas need to be considered, including:

5 Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

continued

1. institutional commitment
2. policies and strategies
3. human resources – staff competencies, skills and understanding
4. learning and knowledge management
5. integration into the programme cycle
6. external relations.

Annex 3 shows key conflict sensitivity mainstreaming benchmarks for each of the above categories.

Self-assessment tools

A combination of methods can be used to carry out the self-assessment, depending on the size and complexity of the organisation and how familiar staff are with different methods. These include questionnaires, focus group discussions, targeted interviews and key document reviews.

Self-assessment tools need to be tailored to each organisation, particularly to make sure they use language and terminology suitable for their target audience.

An example self-assessment tool is provided in Annex 4.

5.2 Conducting the self-assessment

The self-assessment may be led internally by selected staff or by an external expert. Consultants can be used to help design the methodology or analyse and summarise data, experienced staff from other organisations can be called upon to support the process or teaming up with another organisation can be considered to provide mutual support through the process. Care must be taken before using a consultant-led approach to ensure this is supported by conflict sensitivity champions (see Chapter 6) within the organisation who can drive forward the changes recommended by the self-assessment. A consultant can effectively lead the self-assessment, but is less likely to be able to lead processes to effect long-term change.

Drawing together input from across the organisation is very helpful in understanding capacity issues and priorities for change from all perspectives. The experience of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (described below) showed initial reluctance on all sides to extend the assessment beyond the programme department, yet it proved extremely beneficial to reach out to the whole organisation. Facilitated focus group discussions are particularly useful in this respect. If staff may be reluctant to talk openly about conflict issues or to acknowledge particular barriers, individual and anonymous survey tools, such as the web-based 'survey monkey' tool, can be helpful –²⁴.

Acting upon information gathered through the self-assessment

The self-assessment will generate information on organisational strengths, weaknesses or gaps in terms of conflict sensitivity. Self-assessment findings will need to be compiled, analysed and the desired changes (change objectives) prioritised by key staff and management. It may be ineffective to launch completely new tools and strategic processes. Placing conflict sensitivity within existing policies, systems and procedures will help make change objectives more achievable and sustainable.

The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium self-assessment process

In 2009 and 2010, the 35 member agencies of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, including international and local NGOs in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and the UK, undertook conflict sensitivity capacity self-assessments. The aim of these self-assessments was to help member agencies identify strengths, weakness, opportunities and blockages in terms of each agency's capacity for conflict sensitivity.

Each agency started with a common tool, which they adapted according to the needs of the individual agency. Likewise, a variety of methodologies were followed to conduct the assessment. In the UK, agencies were paired up and provided each other with peer support. In other countries, consultants supported and helped facilitate the process. The self-assessment process included the use of questionnaires, focus group discussions, targeted interviews and reviews of relevant agency documents.

Each agency ensured that its self-assessment covered a wide range of issues and stretched across a broad cross-section of the organisation, encompassing departments beyond those actually implementing programming. Based on a review and analysis of the findings, each organisation developed and secured internal buy-in for a list of priority change objectives to work towards over the remaining two years of the consortium project. Progress was monitored using a simple common reporting format.

The following box gives examples of change objectives drawn from member agencies of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium. The example given here is an extensive change plan. For many organisations it may be relevant to initially prioritise a small number of key changes, so that the journey of change does not appear too large and unworkable.

²⁴ <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>

Organisational function	Sample change objectives
Programme support	- Conflict sensitivity discussions integrated into agendas of inter-departmental management meetings at head office and country offices. - Trained conflict sensitive focal points established at head office and country offices.
Policies and strategies	Policy document on conflict sensitivity developed, including the relation to the organisational mandate and vision.
Design, monitoring and evaluation	- Use of conflict analysis in all new country programmes and projects. - Use of participatory conflict analysis, monitoring and community grievance management mechanism in all projects.
Communication, documentation	- Case studies of conflict sensitive lessons learned produced and disseminated across organisation. - Identified best practices are documented and used as training tools and in induction processes.
Human resources	- All senior managers across departments are trained on conflict sensitivity. - Introduction to conflict sensitive policy and practices as part of the induction programme for all new staff - Part of the annual training budget is allocated for conflict sensitivity capacity building.
Grants and fundraising	Core funding and project proposals incorporate funds for conflict analysis, conflict sensitive monitoring procedures, training, evaluation and documentation

Note on conflict sensitivity/ conflict analysis skills training

Change objectives need to focus on the most effective way to sustainably maintain high levels of conflict sensitivity capacity, taking into account each organisation's particular circumstances (staffing, budget availability for on-going training). Organisations with larger flexible funding budgets for on-going training can make on-going conflict sensitivity training for new staff part of their strategy. Organisations with smaller flexible funding budgets for on-going training will need to devise more creative ways of making conflict sensitivity changes sustainable. This could be through commitments to build funding for required training into project budget lines or through a greater focus on adapting institutional guidelines/ processes/ check-lists so that conflict sensitivity is integrated into the way the organisations works. Care must be taken not to devote all of the initial energy to a one-off training course, particularly where staff turnover is high.

5.3 Change strategy

Once change objectives have been identified, the next step is to develop a plan or strategy for change. This will need to consider the following aspects for each action or objective agreed:

- what?
- how?
- by whom
- when by?
- benchmarks or performance indicators
- resource requirements.

Ensuring that a common planning, monitoring and reporting system is established to track progress against each change objective will help ensure that everyone involved knows the responsibilities / commitment of others, that actions agreed are effectively implemented and that support and dialogue across different teams and departments can be provided.

5 Assessing institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity continued

Making changes can incur costs. The following box highlights the areas in which costs may be incurred as part of a change process.

Costs to be planned for the organisational integration of conflict sensitivity:

The list below provides an indication of costs, either financial or in terms of staff time, that will typically need to be planned and budgeted for the organisational integration of conflict sensitivity. At any point in time an organisation will only bear some of those costs, depending on the priorities it has established:

- institutional conflict sensitivity capacity self-assessment
- staff and partner capacity-building in conflict sensitivity
- staff reflection spaces
- reviewing induction processes to include introduction of conflict sensitivity

- reviewing staff roles for inclusion of conflict sensitivity competencies and elaborating expectations of staff from a conflict sensitivity perspective (competencies, functions)
- developing and adjusting organisational policies and strategies for inclusion of conflict sensitivity eg. partnership policy, procurement policy, recruitment policy.
- establishing conflict sensitivity champions (this could either be a particular position or time and responsibilities integrated into the role of existing positions)
- conducting conflict analysis to inform country strategic plans

6 Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity

This final section considers the key categories for conflict sensitivity mentioned in section 5.2. These are:

1. institutional commitment
2. policies and strategies
3. human resources – staff competencies, skills and understanding
4. learning and knowledge management
5. integration into the programme cycle
6. external relations.

Number five will not be covered here as it is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

6.1 Institutional commitment

Institutional commitment is critical to enable the sustained implementation of change strategies that will enable an organisation to become more conflict sensitive.

Generating buy-in at leadership and senior management level

Getting buy-in from chief executives, presidents, directors and senior managers can be a challenging process, especially when multiple agendas and cross-cutting issues are competing for their attention. Senior management buy-in is central to driving conflict sensitivity integration. However, the experience of Conflict Sensitivity Consortium member agencies shows that even where leadership commitment is lacking, action can still be taken to build on existing awareness and best practices in particular sections of an organisation and progressively generate buy-in at higher levels.

Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Most senior management staff do not spend much time on the day-to-day details of individual projects and therefore do not see the relevance of conflict sensitivity for them.	• The added value of conflict sensitivity needs to be explained in the context of improving the effectiveness of the overall organisation. Conflict sensitivity needs to be located alongside other core principles for an organisation, such as use of participatory approaches, or accountability or sustainability agendas. • Explain the importance of conflict sensitivity as a donor priority and how it gives added value to the organisation's credibility.
Leaders and senior management are busy with a number of competing priorities and focus on the organisation-wide picture.	• Explain that although the work can be delegated and responsibilities spread, having their understanding and support is critical to ensure organisation-wide 'buy-in'. • Try to reach an agreement that an overall change strategy will be signed off by senior management and that performance reports on integration activities will be tabled at senior management level meetings. • Agree on monthly or quarterly meetings with senior managers to discuss progress.
Senior managers and organisations as a whole are often struggling with existing change strategies and are under constant pressure to improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness.	• Explain the possible synergies with other change strategies or organisational priorities and how integrating conflict sensitivity can be achieved relatively simply through adapting existing policies, systems and procedures. • Prepare an action plan that takes into account other organisational processes and combines resources and activities where possible. Include steps on who needs to do what to design and effect change, performance benchmarks, concrete resource requirements (ie: time, budget).

Generating commitment across the organisation

A helpful step is to consider where awareness and buy-in for conflict sensitivity currently exists and build on those areas to generate awareness and commitment more broadly across the organisation. It may be useful to consider:

- Using the opportunity of broader organisational events to include sessions or presentations on conflict sensitivity, such as learning weeks, programme department meetings or regional and thematic meetings involving different country offices or parts of the organisation. As far as possible, ensure that sessions include a discussion, reflection time and agreement on follow-up actions.
- When the operating context changes and conflict issues affect an organisation's capacity to operate, staff and management will often be more receptive to the principles of conflict sensitivity and see the relevance of prioritising it. This can then lead to a longer-term commitment.

Different approaches to promoting the uptake of conflict sensitivity across an organisation – insights from CARE International country offices

CARE International Somalia. Workshops were used to help field staff understand the concept of conflict sensitivity and CARE's commitment to it. The field staff wrote a number of case studies on conflict blind practice, which were then presented to middle and senior management. This led to discussions that identified where significant conflict flashpoints existed and generated commitment to conflict sensitivity. An institutional capacity assessment was undertaken as part of the strategic planning process and change objectives were identified that were then prioritised and incorporated into the new strategic plan.

CARE International Georgia. The Strategic Planning process included action research on power relations that highlighted conflict erupting among project participants. Conflict sensitivity was identified as an issue, the country office chose to address it and a plan for change was included in the strategic plan. Further action research was undertaken with project managers to explore conflict in communities and that resulted in significant commitment to conflict sensitivity, as problems were 'discovered' and assumptions challenged. This was an important step in building the business case for conflict sensitivity in the organisation and triggered training in Do No Harm and its application to specific projects.

6 Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity continued

CARE International Nepal. An attack on one of the sub-offices triggered a strong interest in Do No Harm by senior management. Training was initiated, which also involved other agencies in Nepal. DFID and GTZ made the use of a conflict sensitivity tool mandatory, promoting strong institutionalisation of conflict sensitivity in DFID-GTZ funded programmes. The country office's wide reflection process on the use of Do No Harm strengthened understanding of Do No Harm and regenerated commitment to it, as well as clarifying where its use needed strengthening. A new strategic planning process was used to recommit the country office to Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity and develop new directions for application.

Example of a slide presentation to introduce conflict sensitivity to staff – CAFOD

Slide 1: What is conflict sensitivity?

Conflict sensitivity involves “gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context, acting to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of interventions on conflict, within an organization's given priorities/objectives (mandate)”.

Slide 2: Conflict sensitivity in practice

What to do	How to do it
Understand the context in which you operate	Carry out a conflict analysis and update it regularly
Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context	Link the conflict analysis with the programming cycle of your intervention
Use this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts	Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate your intervention taking conflict sensitivity issues into account and redesign the intervention accordingly

Slide 3: How does conflict sensitivity relate to CAFOD?

CAFOD has been striving to improve the quality of its programming. Conflict sensitivity integration is part of that agenda. Related initiatives include:

- HAP Certification
- New strategic framework
- Changes in grant and supply chain management
- New/improved policies (ie: Safeguarding Children, Complaint Handling Policy)
- Involvement and commitment in various consortia

Slide 4: Why is conflict sensitivity important?

- Conflict sensitivity helps CAFOD to increase the effectiveness of our programming, by minimising the risks to actors involved and ensuring that programming does not contribute to violence and where possible contributes to peaceful outcomes.
- There are ever growing linkages between increased conflict sensitivity and more effective humanitarian relief, human rights, poverty reduction, and peacebuilding programming.
- Conflict sensitivity strengthens and systematises our understanding of the context where we operate.
- Conflict sensitivity reduces the risk of the intervention sparking or supporting violence by identifying flash points and helping to build bridges between antagonists.
- Conflict sensitivity helps identify key decision makers, local leaders, potential spoilers (people who might try to exacerbate conflict for their own interests) and marginalised and excluded groups affected by conflict.
- Conflict sensitivity encourages and promote transparency, accountability and inclusive processes.

Slide 5: Example from Kenya

HIV/Aids project in Lloyangalani: presentation of project and context

Work in groups:

- In your opinion is this project conflict sensitive?
- Can you identify any possible conflict issues this project may exacerbate or help address?
- How would you deal with these problems/opportunities?

Slide 6: What has CAFOD done so far? What are our next steps for conflict sensitivity integration?

Conflict sensitivity ‘champions’

The push for conflict sensitivity mainstreaming will often rely, at least initially, on the identification of ‘champions’ or focal points within the organisation. Focal points may be located in teams with a particular focus on conflict or fragility, but this is not necessary. Champions for conflict sensitivity may be staff with a variety of roles, including: Programme Officer, Project Manager, Humanitarian Coordinator, Head of Programmes or Fundraising Assistant. The experience of Conflict Sensitivity Consortium agencies suggests that it is helpful to have more than one focal point in the organisation, if possible in different teams and at different levels of responsibility, and to ensure that their job descriptions include a reference to their mandate with regard to conflict sensitivity integration. Such measures will help to ensure sustained commitment and continued efforts even when particular staff leave. It is also important to see conflict sensitivity as relevant to the whole organisation and to avoid having conflict sensitivity isolated within one particular team.

6.2 Policies and strategies

Organisational policies

Ensuring that an organisation has a policy on conflict sensitivity is a key step to ensuring a sustained commitment to conflict sensitive principles and notably to overcoming the challenge of commitment falling due to staff turnover. An overall policy on conflict sensitivity can be used as the basis for reviewing and adapting other policies. If a stand-alone policy is not appropriate or feasible, it can be helpful to enshrine the commitment to conflict sensitivity into broader key organisational strategies and policies, such as within a multi-year strategic plan, a code of conduct or a statement of organisational principles.

Examples of references to conflict sensitivity in the policies and guidelines of Conflict Sensitivity Consortium member agencies:

In a child protection policy:

“All personnel are expected to behave sensitively towards the local context and consider the impact of their actions on potential conflict and tensions within communities.”

In guidelines for policy analysis in an emergency:

“Consider conflict sensitivity issues:

- Is the humanitarian response exacerbating existing conflict or causing tensions?
- Is existing conflict and the effect of the response discussed in cluster meetings?
- Are the costs and resources of conflict analysis provided for by donors?
- What is the national government’s response to existing conflict or likely tension?”

As part of an organisational vision statement:

“We work to make our projects ‘conflict sensitive’, as insensitive development projects can trigger or worsen conflicts, wasting chances for peace. Our staff and partners avoid unintentionally contributing to conflict.”

Many organisations have a range of policies on issues such as procurement, security or programming, which will benefit from a review from a conflict sensitive perspective. The following box highlights how conflict sensitivity links to different organisational policies.

6 Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity continued

Policy area	Conflict sensitivity linkage
Audit	Risks assessed as part of an audit can be expanded to include conflict sensitivity considerations: risks linked to changes in the context or to conflict-blind practices.
External policies (partnerships, communication, advocacy)	- The way an organisation relates to its partners, donors and constituencies is critical to its ability to be conflict sensitive or to influence other actors' policies and practices. - This aspect is explored in more depth in section 6.6.
Procurement	- Procuring goods and transporting goods into an environment that may have scarce resources carries particular risks and can exacerbate tensions. - Many organisations have procedures that are designed to deal with cost-effectiveness and the prevention of corruption. These also need to be reviewed from a conflict sensitive perspective. Where and when you procure goods and who from can all have an impact on conflict dynamics and on the organisation's perceived impartiality. - An explicit review of the procurement policy in view of a conflict analysis will help identify risks and mitigation strategies in each particular context.
Programming framework	- Programming standards and guidelines can enable or hinder the ability of project staff to integrate conflict sensitivity into particular projects. - Integrating conflict sensitivity into an organisation's programming framework will help ensure a more systematic application of conflict sensitivity across the organisation. It may involve different components, such as: proposals including costs for a conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity trainings, internal programme reporting formats incorporating indicators and reporting on conflict sensitive practice and evaluation terms of reference including questions on the conflict context and interaction with the project.
Sectoral policies (gender, disability, HIV/AIDS, child protection...)	- Where an organisation has prioritised particular sectoral approaches or cross-cutting issues, such as gender, child protection, disability or HIV/AIDS, the importance of conflict-sensitive principles can be highlighted in relation to these existing policies, and a commitment to conflict sensitivity can meaningfully be integrated into a broader policy. A common thread across such issues is the question of power and lines of exclusion and division. - Encourage reflections across teams. Recognise the overlaps and identify points of synergy or connection between different sectors. This may help develop integrated approaches to analysis and programming (eg: common assessment tools).
Security	- Often, risk mitigation strategies imply 'outsourcing' risks. Security policies should consider not only risks to staff but also to partners and communities. - Consider the implications of security measures in terms of local perceptions and possible longer-term risks. Arriving in a community with obvious security measures, such as an armoured car, will send out a particular message about the organisation and its assessment of the context. This may be at odds with the organisation's actual situation assessment or the image it wants to project.
Travel	- Visiting staff need to receive adequate briefing on the local context and conflict issues. - When foreign staff or partners visit communities, they may raise expectations and lead to tensions when those are not met. Staff need to be aware of this risk and be briefed on how to communicate in a conflict sensitive way. - Who staff meet, and how they are introduced to communities/other stakeholders, can have an effect on local perceptions towards the organisation and notably on its impartiality or link to parties in a conflict. - In particularly divided contexts, the information shared by visiting staff may lead to risks for the safety or liberty to operate for the organisation and staff in the country. The level of transparency or confidentiality that needs to be applied has to be clearly communicated to visitors.

Policies and strategies: reality check	
Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Where to start policy development or alignment? - Large organisations often have a multitude of policies and a multitude of departments. - Smaller organisations may have very little in the way of written policies or departments responsible for their implementation.	- A good place to start is to write and obtain agreement on a simple conflict sensitivity policy paper that outlines the rationale of conflict sensitivity and the commitment of the organisation. - Identify and prioritise the key policies that need to be in place. Start at the project implementation level and work backwards, mapping the key processes that need to be in place to enable conflict sensitive practice. - Ask how do we do things now and what needs to change in order practices to be conflict sensitive. Even if policies do not exist for specific functions of an organisation, identify these functions and work from there. Changes to these practices can be systematically included in a general conflict sensitivity policy document and adjustments made to existing policy documents if they exist.
In large multi-country agencies, policies are often written at head office and designed to have an organisation-wide and global effect. Those policies may be too broad and general to make sense in the local context.	Policies on conflict sensitivity need to make sense in the local context. They should be written as guidelines that can be interpreted in any given context. It may be useful for each country office to provide a written interpretation on how conflict sensitive policies are grounded according to local conflict dynamics.

Strategic plans

Integrating conflict sensitivity into organisational or country strategic plans will not only help to ensure sustained commitment from the organisation, but will often offer the chance to generate initial attention from senior management.

Strategic planning processes represent a key opportunity to integrate conflict sensitivity into overall strategies. While such periods put a lot of demands on an organisation and may lead to a lesser emphasis on programme implementation or the development of new initiatives, they can also offer unique spaces for staff reflection and dialogue and for broad organisational consultations. This can create space for more open discussions among staff regarding the context in which they are working, the conflict issues they are facing and how the context is affected or impacted on by their work.

Integrating conflict sensitivity into organisational strategies may translate into a simple reference to conflict sensitive principles. Alternatively, it may be more extensive and lead to different choices of activities, methodologies or target groups because of issues or opportunities highlighted by a conflict sensitivity analysis.

ActionAid International Kenya's experience of integrating conflict sensitivity in its country strategic plan

As part of its strategic planning process, 18 staff members from ActionAid International Kenya participated in a four-day retreat to review the draft Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2012-2016 from a conflict sensitivity perspective. The workshop was facilitated by an external consultant familiar with ActionAid Kenya, who was also an expert in conflict sensitivity and strategic planning processes. It was structured around the following sessions:

- A refresher on conflict sensitivity and its relation to ActionAid's mandate and action.
- Brief conflict analysis mapping in groups.
- Reviewing ActionAid's Kenya conflict sensitivity self-assessment and change objectives. What has been achieved? What have been the challenges? What remains to be done?
- Presentation of the draft Country Strategy 2012-2016.
- Discussion on how conflict sensitivity relates to different sections of the Country Strategy – issues, concerns, opportunities.
- Recommendations for the Country Strategy and development of an action plan to ensure that conflict sensitive principles and practices are integrated into ActionAid Kenya's work for greater effectiveness.

Following the retreat, ActionAid Kenya introduced conflict sensitivity as a key organisational principle. The Country Strategic Plan 2012-2016 makes a commitment to integrating conflict sensitivity into the organisation's programming cycle to reduce the risk of their programmes contributing to conflicts or creating new ones.

6 Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity continued

Conflict and conflict sensitivity analyses, which form the cornerstone of conflict sensitive practice at the project implementation level, are also crucial to inform higher level strategies. Details on conflict analysis and how to link it to programming are provided in Chapter 1. At the broader organisational level, conflict sensitive practices can be helped considerably by ensuring that country strategic planning processes include, and take into account, a conflict analysis.

There are many ways to integrate and systematise the use of conflict sensitivity in organisational and country strategic plans. Examples from Conflict Sensitivity Consortium member agencies are provided in the boxes below.

World Vision minimum standards for context analysis

Guidelines are currently being developed to ensure national strategies are informed by regular context monitoring. Elements of the draft policy include:

- Annual strategy reviews should include context monitoring.
- Fragile/highly vulnerable contexts to include context monitoring more frequently (between quarterly and weekly).
- Context monitoring to include National Director, Peacebuilding Advisor, Advocacy Director, Security Advisor among others.
- A range of analysis tools are applied, including the review of possible triggers and preventative measures related to those triggers.
- Processes in place to adjust strategies and tactics according to the context analysis.

Plan International conflict sensitivity audit framework

A framework is being developed and tested for auditing conflict sensitivity. The framework includes:

- Drawing on reliable external analyses carried out by the International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UN sources and informed academics to develop a country situation document.
- Identifying approaches for conflict mitigation.
- Identifying approaches and practices that might have conflict consequences.
- Reviewing staff breakdown and conflict awareness handling of internal disputes.
- Reviewing how programmes link to contexts and whether programmes are working in, on or around conflict.
- Reviewing how monitoring and evaluation processes and frameworks take into account conflict sensitivity.

6.3 Human Resources – Staff competencies, skills and understanding

Recruitment

Who is recruited and how they are recruited is important from a conflict sensitive perspective. In all contexts, attention will have to be paid to staff competencies (detailed below) and to the overall staff make-up of an office and organisation. In divided contexts in particular, perceptions of bias, lack of impartiality and association with particular groups or parties to a conflict can easily arise from the way an organisation recruits its staff. This may increase tension, exacerbate existing divisions, diminish trust towards the organisation from particular groups and increase security risks for staff.

The way to mitigate risks and ensure that recruitment policies are conflict sensitive will be highly specific to each particular context. The recruitment policy needs to be very closely linked to the conflict analysis and to an assessment of the particular make-up of the area where staff are being recruited. The overriding objective in all cases will be to minimise divisions and perceptions of bias. Key questions to explore include:

- Looking beyond individual jobs and people, what does the overall staff make-up say about the organisation?
- Is the recruitment balanced across social divides such as ethnicity and gender? If not, why not?
- Does the organisation's recruitment have an impact on how it may be perceived or on its capacity to operate in a conflict sensitive manner?
- Are changes in the recruitment policy needed and how can they be implemented?

The following examples illustrate the diversity of what a conflict sensitive recruitment policy may look like in different contexts and organisations:

Valuing local knowledge and skills – CARE International Kenya

From its experience of working in the Dadaab refugee camp in the North-Eastern Province, CARE Kenya has learned the importance of recruiting candidates from the host community for certain job opportunities, in particular those requiring local knowledge and language skills. As such job advertisements reflect these requirements. Along with a greater awareness of the need for local skills and knowledge, this practice also evolved out of the dissatisfaction and tensions caused in the host communities when opportunities were seen as disproportionately given to 'outsiders'.

Involving communities in staff recruitment – Peace and Community Action (PCA), Sri Lanka

With the introduction of conflict sensitivity into its work, PCA realised the importance of ensuring that all segments of the communities were included as project participants, as well as actively engaging them across the whole project cycle. This also applied to recruitment. In one instance, PCA included different representatives from the communities in the selection and recruitment process for a project's staff. Those representatives were chosen at an open meeting and participated in the entire recruitment process, from the design of the job description to the appointment of the successful candidate. This approach helped reduce potential conflict situations as the legitimacy of the person chosen for the job was high among the entire community and as they felt increased ownership over the implementation of the project.

Benefits of a proactive conflict sensitive recruitment policy – CARE International Sri Lanka

Though not formalised, in addition to hiring from local communities CARE, where possible has tried to ensure that there is an ethnic balance among staff. With security and required expertise taken into consideration, staff members from different ethnic groups are encouraged to work in communities that are not of their own ethnicity or religion. In cases where a staff member does not possess adequate language skills, she or he often partners with another staff member who has them. These practices are intended to serve a dual purpose of enhancing individual staff understanding of different communities and altering stereotypical or prejudicial attitudes that may arise from a lack of interaction. By consciously recruiting staff from different ethnic groups public perceptions of the organisation only hiring or serving particular communities are reduced. Employing staff from different groups and communities also brings in a diverse set of perspectives that contributes to CARE better understanding the communities and contexts it operates within, as well as how its activities may be perceived by different groups.

Roles and competencies

Roles: Staff with different functions in an organisation will need to do different things in order to enable conflict sensitive practice. For example a senior manager needs to be able to explain the importance of conflict sensitivity so that he or she can convey this to staff, donors and others, whereas a person who reviews proposals needs to ensure that a conflict analysis has been done and that the project design has taken this into account. A review of roles within the organisation will help determine what particular expectations are associated with them from a conflict sensitivity perspective and to integrate those in job descriptions. This can be done at the individual level or at the level of teams or particular categories of staff, depending on what is most relevant for the organisation. If there is a human resources department, it will need to be closely involved in this process.

Competencies: These comprise the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to fulfil the expectations linked to different roles. A broad set of competencies is described in the box below. Each organisation will need to determine which roles require which competencies, according to the expectations agreed. Other competencies not on the list may also be identified. These competencies may be included as criteria in the recruitment process or form part of a training or staff development plan. They also should be included in regular staff appraisal processes.

Overall competencies for conflict sensitivity (to be selected and tailored for particular roles):

Knowledge:

- Understanding of conflict
- Understanding of conflict sensitivity

Skills:

- able to have a conversation with individuals/groups about conflict
- able to analyse conflict
- able to find the links between programming and conflict
- able to convince others of the need for conflict sensitivity

Attitude:

- accepting that programming or the overall organisation's action can inadvertently contribute to conflict
- self-awareness of own biases and of how individual actions may be perceived in different contexts
- possessing good inter-cultural sensitivity and understanding
- able to challenge assumptions and look for various ways to gather and analyse information
- concerned with social justice.

6 Building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity continued

Induction

Induction processes are an ideal place to reinforce an organisation's commitment to conflict sensitive practice. Including an introduction to conflict sensitivity in induction schedules (see for instance the CAFOD slide presentation in 6.1) will help to ensure that new staff are made aware of conflict sensitivity and how it relates to the specific role that they will play.

Capacity-building, staff development and learning

Capacity-building plans are crucial to ensure that all staff develop, or reinforce, their conflict sensitivity competencies. Training is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure conflict sensitive practice. Training needs to be reinforced by institutionalised learning processes that facilitate and encourage reflection on practice.

Ensuring that there are safe spaces to talk about what might be going wrong is extremely important from a conflict sensitivity perspective. Conflict issues, lines of division and how a person's work may impact on a context and vice-versa are extremely sensitive issues, particularly in very fragile and divided contexts.

Integrating partners or communities into the organisation's training on conflict sensitivity is also particularly valuable. This is explained in more detail in section 6.6.

Capacity-building and staff development: reality check

Practical challenges	Possible solutions
Not all staff will immediately recognise the necessity of training in conflict sensitivity. For example, they may feel this is only necessary for programme staff.	• It is very helpful if senior management teams and board members are willing to undertake training in conflict sensitivity. As such try to engage these staff in such trainings, or arrange a specific training tailored for senior staff or board members. • Try and secure an agreement on systematic training on conflict sensitivity in the organisation, for example by linking it to other already required training programmes (eg: on security, gender, child protection). Where conflict sensitivity is integrated into other trainings, ensure that the differences and overlaps between conflict sensitivity and the other training elements are clearly defined.

6.4 Learning and knowledge management

Change processes need to consider how lessons learnt relating to conflict sensitivity are captured, stored and shared to ensure that they inform future activities. There is often a reluctance to document and communicate when projects face difficulties, yet this is the time when the most valuable lessons can be learned and shared.

In order to facilitate a transition to an organisation that learns from its difficulties, the organisation needs to create a culture where staff are not afraid to share challenging stories. Some organisations have put a focus on creating 'safe spaces' for staff to discuss their concerns.

6.5 Integration into the programme cycle

This section will not cover Integration into the programme cycle, as it has already been covered in Chapter 2.

6.6 External relations

Partners

Some agencies partner with other organisations or local groups to implement projects. In these circumstances it is important to understand the conflict sensitivity capacity of implementing partners, develop means for addressing conflict blind practice and build partner capacity in conflict sensitivity.

Donors

Donors significantly affect an organisation's ability to be conflict sensitive. Donors may accept, or refute, budget lines and time lines for conflict sensitive actions such as conflict analysis and conflict sensitive capacity building. Organisations may need to have discussions with donors to protect these budget lines and activities.

Broadly speaking there are two main areas for engagement, firstly through the grant making process (ie: proposal writing, contracts, on-going reporting etc) and secondly through awareness raising and influencing in order to increase donors awareness and use of conflict sensitivity.

The Consortium found that reaching out to donors to raise their awareness on conflict sensitivity can be done outside the formal proposal development/approval process. Working in consortia was particularly helpful in doing this, as it gave additional weight and credibility to the message. Another useful practice was to work with change agents within donor organisations, helping them build the case internally for conflict sensitivity.

Engagement as part of donor-grantee relationship

- You may need to alert donors to the need for some upfront costs in relation to skills development and analysis. Stress that the long-term benefits of more accurate and effective programming outweigh these initial investments.
- It is important to ensure that principles or specific practices that promote conflict sensitivity are included in contracts with the donor. This could include getting an agreement that the donor will be open to negotiating revisions to the approved project if conflict sensitivity suggests the need for the original project design to be adapted.

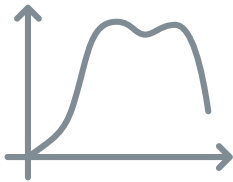
Awareness raising and influencing

- Build relationships and trust with donors through increased engagement not just regular reporting. Consider meeting donors formally and informally to discuss the context.
- Periodic meetings between donors and civil society. The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium has found that agencies are more willing to pro-actively engage and hold discussions with donors on conflict sensitivity in large groups rather than as isolated individual agencies.

Annex 1 A selection of conflict analysis tools

Tool-Set A: To understanding the **history** of a conflict, its **levels, stages** and **dynamics**.

Stages of conflict



- To see the stages and cycles of escalation and de-escalation of conflict.
- To assess where the situation is now.
- To identify the cycles and triggers to escalating conflict.
- To try to predict future patterns of escalation
- To identify a period of time to be analysed using other tools.

Timelines

Party A Events Party B



- To show the key events and views of this history from the point of view of the parties in a conflict
- To clarify and understand each side's perception of events.
- To identify which events are most important to each side.

Note: a line for peace initiatives during the same time period could be added as appropriate

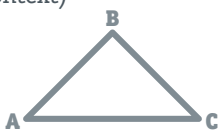
Tool-Set B: To identify the **parties and actors** in a conflict and their roles (looking at their **positions, interests and needs**) and seeing where the **power** lies in that particular situation. Identifying the conflict **issues** and the **nature of the relationships** between the parties

Conflict actor mapping (Venn diagram)



- To represent the conflict graphically.
- To place the parties in relation to the problem and each other.
- To identify all the parties directly or indirectly involved.
- To set out the situation more clearly from one viewpoint.
- To clarify where power lies in that context.

ABC triangle (Attitude, Behaviour, Context)



- To identify these three sets of factors for each of the major parties.
- To analyse how these influence each other.
- To relate these to the needs and fears of each party.
- To gain a greater insight into what motivates the different parties.
- To identify a starting point for intervention in the situation.

Positions, interests, needs



- To identify the positions, interest and needs of each party.
- To identify possible common areas or areas of divergence in the interests or needs of parties.
- To build a comprehensive picture of each party's positions, interests and needs.

Tool-Set C: To identify the **local capacities for peace** (existing systems and mechanisms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding).

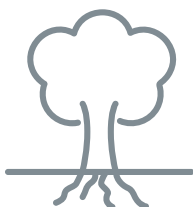
Do No Harm – seven steps approach

The seven steps of the Do No Harm process help to deepen understanding of the complexity of the environments where we work. The seven steps used systematically help to show how the decisions we make affect intergroup relationships. They help us to think of different ways of doing things to achieve better outcomes. The aim is to help assistance workers deal with the real complexities of providing assistance in conflicts with less frustration and more clarity and, it is hoped, with better outcomes for the societies where assistance is provided.

Tool-Set D: To identify **types of conflict**.

Conflicts can be resource-based, identity-based, politically-based and so on. Some are complex, having many facets to them. It is important to examine the type(s) of conflict in a particular context. This can help add detail when identifying the conflict triggers and impact of the conflict and the manner in which the conflict is being experienced and expressed

Conflict tree



- To stimulate discussion about causes and effects in a conflict.
- To help a group to agree on the core problem.
- To relate causes and effects to each other and to the focus of the organization.
- To explore values.

Multi level triangle



- To indicate the various levels where the parties are situated.
- To identify all the parties at each level.
- To identify the links between the parties at the different levels.
- To identify the interests of the parties at each level.

Annex 2 Good enough approach to conflict analysis

When	Concept note	Full proposal	Project start-up	Monitoring	Evaluation
What	First stage conflict analysis (not in much depth) plus initial consideration of areas of concern / areas of opportunity where project and conflict areas/issues overlap.	Revisit the questions from the concept note stage and enrich the analysis by drawing on other resources.	Full conflict analysis applying a specific tool. Analyse areas of concern / areas of opportunity. Develop and implement adaptations to project design to minimise concerns / maximise opportunities.	Review of indicators, regular informal updates of the analysis.	Review of conflict baseline, indicators, and project adjustments.
How	Reflection/desk study.	A small number of interviews and a focus group discussion among project participants.	Refer to the chosen tool.	Keeping discussion live within project team (for instance within regular team meetings). Informal discussions with communities and relevant other external actors familiar with the project area.	Evaluation methodology.
Who	Person/people developing concept note.	If you have existing operations in/near proposed project area then draw on existing staff knowledge. If you are not operational in the area then interview others who are working there.	Refer to the chosen tool, but should include staff, partners and involve community participation.	Staff, partners, communities, relevant other actors in the area.	Evaluation team, staff, partners, communities.
Where	Desk based.	In community and in office.	Refer to chosen tool, but likely to be in workshop setting.	In community and in office.	In community and in office.

Annex 3 Benchmarks for conflict sensitivity mainstreaming

1. Institutional Commitment:

- Management /Leadership understands conflict sensitivity and is able to explain why conflict sensitivity is relevant for the organisation
- Organisational accountability systems are in place for enabling conflict sensitivity
- Conflict sensitivity is integrated into decision making criteria in project approval.

2. Policies and Strategies

- CSA policy exists separately or integrated into other policies
- CSA integrated into overall country / organisational strategy
- Institutional policies dovetail with CSA e.g. Procurement, Travel, Risk Management (e.g. includes risk to communities).

3. Human Resources – Staff competencies, skills and understanding

- Job Descriptions/recruitment – CSA competencies articulated for each role clarifying organisational expectations of staff
- Inductions raise awareness of staff to organisational commitment to CS
- Capacity building of staff – Staff are aware of required competencies for their role and training provided where skill deficits identified
- Support functions have CSA mainstreamed within them notably Audit, Advocacy, Communications, Campaigning, Finance, HR, Procurement, Security
- Appraisals – Staff exhibit appropriate attitudes and behaviours or training offered
- Entire organisation has basic awareness and understanding of conflict sensitivity.

4. Learning and Knowledge Management

- The organisation has effective CSA knowledge management, documenting and learning from its experiences in applying CSA
- The organisation has created 'safe spaces' where people can openly discuss areas where they feel programming may have a negative impact on conflict
- Culture or reflection supported with time for thinking and analysis
- CSA best practices in policy and programming encouraged, with institutional blockages identified and a system put in place to overcome them.

5. Integration into the Programme Cycle

- CSA integrated into each stage of the programme cycle
- Conflict Analysis – Every stage of the programming cycle refers back to the context
- Design – Resources for conflict sensitivity included in all proposals
- Project design and decision making flexible in light of changing contexts
- Conflict sensitivity is integrated into project design / proposal sign off
- Conflict sensitivity is integrated in to project implementation including start up
- Monitoring – Monitoring reports refer to conflict sensitivity
- Evaluation – Criteria for evaluations includes conflict sensitivity.

6. External Relations

- The organisation gives a clear message to all donors that conflict sensitivity is a non-optional part of their work
- Conflict sensitivity is considered and prioritised in relations with partners
- Resources (funds and time) for conflict sensitivity are included in all proposals.

Annex 4 Conflict sensitivity capacity assessment tool²⁵

1. Institutional commitment

1.1 Management commitment and leadership

Management / leadership in the organisation understand conflict sensitivity and are able to explain why conflict sensitivity is relevant for the organisation.

- a) Are management aware of conflict sensitivity?
- b) Can they describe conflict sensitivity accurately?
- c) Is conflict sensitivity given high priority in decision making?
- d) Is commitment translated into enabling decisions, resources etc?
- e) Have management actively promoted conflict sensitivity within the organisation and with external partners, donors etc?

1.2 Responsibility and accountability mechanisms

Organisational accountability systems are in place for enabling conflict sensitivity

- a) Do existing performance monitoring systems consider conflict sensitive practice of staff?
- b) Is there a system for reporting monitoring conflict blind programming?
- c) Are there incentive systems where avoidance of conflict blind programming is explicitly encouraged?

Conflict sensitivity is integrated into decision-making criteria in programme approvals

- a) Are there any mandatory conflict sensitivity checks in the proposal approval process?
- b) Is it explicit where responsibility for various aspects of conflict sensitivity lie (among staff in the UK and in target countries)

2. Policies and strategies

2.1 Conflict sensitivity policy

There is an organisational conflict sensitivity policy, or conflict sensitivity is integrated into other key organisational policies

- a) Is there a conflict sensitivity policy?
- b) Do any other key organisational policies or strategies refer to conflict sensitivity (such as a multi-year strategic plan or a code of conduct)?

2.2. Internal policies and strategies

Current programmatic strategies / policies dovetail with the conflict sensitivity policy

- a) What are key internal programmatic strategies / policies? (eg: Rights Based Approach strategy, gender strategy, protection strategy)
- b) Do these policies explicitly refer to conflict sensitivity?

Current institutional policies dovetail with the conflict sensitivity policy

- a) Are there institutional policies relevant to conflict sensitivity? (procurement policy, recruitment policy, travel policy, audit policy, partnership policy, security policy)
- b) Do these policies explicitly refer to conflict sensitivity?

2.3. External policies and strategies

Current external policies that the organisation has signed up to dovetail with the conflict sensitivity policy

- a) What are key external policies? (Humanitarian Accountability Framework, Sphere standards, Charity Commission (UK))
- b) Do these policies explicitly refer to conflict sensitivity?
- c) Do any of these seem to impede conflict sensitivity and warrant further investigation?

²⁵ Developed by the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium

3. Human resources – staff competencies, skills and understanding of conflict sensitivity

3.1 Staff conflict sensitivity expectations

The organisation has clarified what expectations (in terms of specific actions) are required from different functional roles in order for the organisation to be conflict sensitive.

- a) Are the expectations of each role in terms of conflict sensitivity clear?
- b) Are staff aware of the implications conflict sensitivity has for their role?
- c) Are they receiving support to build skills / awareness where there are deficits?

3.2 Staff conflict sensitivity awareness, attitude and behaviours

Staff are competent to fulfil the conflict sensitivity expectations for their role

- a) Do staff feel able to fulfil the conflict sensitive expectations of their roles?

Staff are able to articulate appropriate attitudes and behaviours

- a) are staff aware of the key attitudes for conflict sensitivity?

Where deficits in current knowledge or skills are identified, the organisation ensures that training is provided.

- a) Is there a systematic way in which skill/knowledge deficits are noted and capacity built?

The entire organisation has a basic level of awareness and understanding of conflict sensitivity

- a) How many staff are able to give a good basic description of conflict sensitivity and why it is important to the organisation?
- b) Do staff working outside of programme teams consider conflict sensitivity as relevant to their work? (eg: marketing, finance, logistics, human resources)

4. Learning and knowledge management

4.1 Learning and reflective practice

The organisation has effective conflict sensitivity knowledge management, documenting and learning from its experiences in applying conflict sensitivity

- a) How are lessons learnt collected and shared?
- b) What incentives are present for people to share experience of poor conflict sensitivity practice?

The organisation has created a 'safe space' where people can openly discuss areas where they feel programming may have negative impacts on conflict

- a) What do people do when they feel a programme may contribute to conflict?
- b) Is there formal guidance on what steps they should take?

The organisation has promoted a culture of reflection, where sufficient priority is given to thinking and analysis, such that staff are encouraged and enabled to reflect on the potential unintended consequences of programmes.

- a) How much priority is given to thinking and analysis? How does the organisation ensure that such consideration is prioritized?

4.2 Encouraging conflict sensitivity best practice

Institutional blockages to conflict sensitivity have been assessed and system put in place to overcome such blockages

- a) Has the organisation systematically considered blockages to conflict sensitivity (prior to this assessment)?
- b) Have any changes been made as a result?

Annex 4 continued

5. Integration into the programme cycle

5.1 Integration into project/programme cycle management

Conflict sensitivity is integrated into project cycle management systems

- a) Is Conflict sensitivity referred to in project cycle management systems, templates or guidelines?
- b) Is there guidance on whether to use conflict sensitivity in more or less depth in different contexts?
- c) Is consideration of conflict sensitivity and unintended consequences on conflict a mandatory part of all evaluations?
- d) Do log-frames have conflict only as a risk to the project (rather than two-way interaction?)

Decision-making systems are flexible enough to enable changes to projects in light of changing conflict context

- a) Is there a clear message and practice that when activities risk escalating the risk of violent conflict, the activities will be revised as a priority?

5.2 Integration into programme design/start up

Conflict sensitivity is integrated into project design / proposal sign off

- a) Is conflict analysis a mandatory part of project design?
- b) Are staff aware who is responsible for checking that a conflict analysis has been completed and for considering implications of conflict analysis for the proposed project design?
- c) Are staff responsible for proposal approval considering conflict sensitivity?
- d) Are indicators for conflict sensitivity developed?

Conflict sensitivity is integrated into project start up

- a) Are new staff briefed on conflict sensitivity and on conflict issues relevant to their programming?

5.3 Integration into programme monitoring and evaluation

Conflict sensitivity is integrated into project implementation

- a) Is there regular reflection and reporting on interaction between conflict and programming?
- b) How do managers / staff in UK encourage project managers / country office staff to openly share information on unintended negative consequences of programming?
- c) How does the organisation incentivise sharing real information of on-the-ground project complexities rather than only sharing success stories?

Criteria of evaluations include conflict sensitivity

- a) Do evaluations consider conflict sensitivity of an intervention, in particular wider, unintended impacts?
- b) Is understanding of conflict sensitivity a mandatory consideration when interviewing / selecting consultants?

5.4 Integration into advocacy, communications, campaigning

Conflict sensitivity is mainstreamed into advocacy, communications and campaigning

- a) Do staff working on advocacy, communications and campaigning see conflict sensitivity as relevant to their work?

5.5 Integration into support services

Conflict sensitivity is mainstreamed into human resources

- a) Does staff induction include conflict sensitivity?
- b) Which job descriptions explicitly refer to conflict sensitivity?
- c) Are conflict sensitivity competencies included in job descriptions?

Audit is effectively supporting conflict sensitivity

- a) Is conflict sensitivity given similar weight to other security and financial risk considerations?
- b) Do audit staff consider conflict sensitivity in their work?

Finance enables conflict sensitivity

- a) Does the finance department see conflict sensitivity as relevant to their work?

Security and Procurement enable conflict sensitivity

- a) Do security and procurement see conflict sensitivity as relevant to their work?

6. External relations

6.1 Donors / funding

The organisation gives a clear message to all donors that conflict sensitivity is a non-optional part of our work

- a) How is conflict sensitivity currently communicated to donors?
- b) What are key opportunities for raising the issue of conflict sensitivity with donors?
- c) Where a donor is unwilling to fund essential conflict sensitivity elements (eg: conflict analysis) does the organisation make a commitment to finding these resources elsewhere or decline the funding or take other action?

The organisation ensures that resources for conflict sensitivity (staff time, specialist support where needed, work plan time for conflict analysis, resources for conflict analysis etc.) are an integral part of proposals

- a) Do proposals include: budget for conflict sensitivity, time for conflict analysis in workplace and indicators for conflict sensitivity?

6.2 Partners

Conflict sensitivity is considered and prioritised in relations with partners

- a) Do partner selection guidelines refer to conflict sensitivity?
- b) When and how do we communicate to partners our expectations with regard to conflict sensitivity?
- c) Do we offer partners any support / training in conflict sensitivity?
- d) What action would be taken if a partner was found to be conflict blind?



**How to guide to
conflict sensitivity**

www.conflictsensitivity.org