

Analytical Tools for Understanding Conflict
An Integrated Framework for Humanitarian Assistance,
Development and Peacebuilding

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On behalf of ACTION for Conflict Transformation

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Title

Conflict Sensitive Integrated Programme Framework

Subtitle

A graphic representation of a conflict systems response to crisis and post-crisis contexts that assists in conceptualizing, planning and monitoring how a value based and principled conflict sensitive approach to humanitarian assistance could contribute to longer-term social transformation goals.

Purpose

The tool assists in helping organisations to think through how their programme will affect the dynamics of conflict in the context in which they are working. It sets out to depict the interface between development and peacebuilding initiatives, or those focused on human security, and to explore the interconnections between these different forms of engagement.

It is also helpful in assisting organisations to identify the other stakeholders in a context of conflict with whom they should be cooperating or collaborating, in order to see their own efforts as a contribution to a systems response to a complex conflict system.

It helps organisations to move away from seeing their particular contribution in an isolated or stand-alone way, and can thus be an empowering way of reducing the overwhelming nature of many conflict contexts.

It works best as part of a group discussion amongst practitioners reflecting on their own programme in relation to the context in which it is being implemented and also serves a useful role as a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool, particularly in contexts that are emerging from periods of crisis, or in the post-conflict reconstruction and development phases of societies in transition.

It would be unlikely to assist in the midst of crisis, while there is still armed conflict or high levels of violence. The tool requires time to step back and reflect on the intervention, a luxury often not possible while violent conflict is still raging.

Theory

The underlying hypothesis of the tool is that resources that are brought into a fragile or conflictual context often end up exacerbating existing tensions and can even provide the trigger that reignites open conflict and violence.

In all contexts development resources shift power and in so doing affect existing forms of structural control, influence and change systems and affect the people involved. If the introduction of new resources is not carefully considered they will inevitably initiate unforeseen consequences that may undermine the stated values and intentions of the implementing groups.

These same resources can however also be used to foster connections between people, and can be used to respond to the short term needs in a manner that also rebuilds the longer term social fabric needs of a society.

The tool draws from conflict theory that emphasises the interconnections between short and long term responses to conflict, and the essential linking of responses to conflict to a long-term development perspective, and is strongly rooted in a conflict transformation approach.

The tool provides a useful framework for linking development and humanitarian efforts to a conflict response that shifts thinking beyond the resolution of a conflict to a deeper understanding of the underlying contextual dynamics.

This understanding is well articulated by practitioner scholars like John Paul Lederach and Chris Mitchell.

The work of Lederach is perhaps most strongly associated with the growing emphasis that is being placed on the concept of conflict transformation. In 'Preparing for Peace' Lederach (1995a: 17) argues that conflict transformation has "emerged in the search for an adequate language to explain the peacemaking venture."

Lederach proposes that the concept of conflict transformation responds more effectively to the dynamic nature that social scientists such as Coleman (1956) and Boulding (1962) have suggested is an important part of understanding social conflict.

Lederach places these interconnections between systems and relationships at the core of his contribution. Using a model of nested paradigms that draw from the work of Marie Dugan and other writers Lederach (1997:80) provides an integrated framework for understanding conflict and building peace that links the immediate issues that manifest as crisis or visible conflict with the latent, deeper conflicts that lie within the relationships, subsystems and overarching systemic frameworks that form part of the context. This set of 'nested paradigms' is reflected in the tool.

In further explaining his preference for taking an engagement with conflict beyond resolution Lederach (1995b: 201) argues that the concept of conflict resolution "perhaps unintentionally ... carries the connotation of a bias toward

‘ending’ a given crisis or at least its outward expression, without being sufficiently concerned with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict”.

In an interesting analysis of the two concepts of resolution and transformation Mitchell (2002:19), who acknowledges that his initial position was skeptical of any major differences, recognises in his conclusion that there is at least one significant difference that goes beyond emphasis in approach. As Mitchell points out conflict transformation assumes that structural change will necessarily form part of the conditions by which an effective outcome to a given conflict will be found.

Furthermore Mitchell (2002:20) argues that conflict transformation recognises that the processes of rebuilding relationships will not automatically take place once the immediate crisis surrounding a conflict is diffused, relationships have to be deliberately rebuilt through directed effort. Mitchell recognises the interdependence of these levels of change and concludes that without both of these aspects either one is unlikely to head off future tensions and the return of conflict and crisis.

Lederach suggests we need to work together to create an integrated framework:

“Structure suggests the need to think *comprehensively* about the affected population and *systematically* about the issues. Process underscores the necessity of thinking creatively about the *progression* of conflict and the *sustainability* of its transformation by *linking* roles, functions, and activities in an integrated manner.” (Lederach, 1997:79)

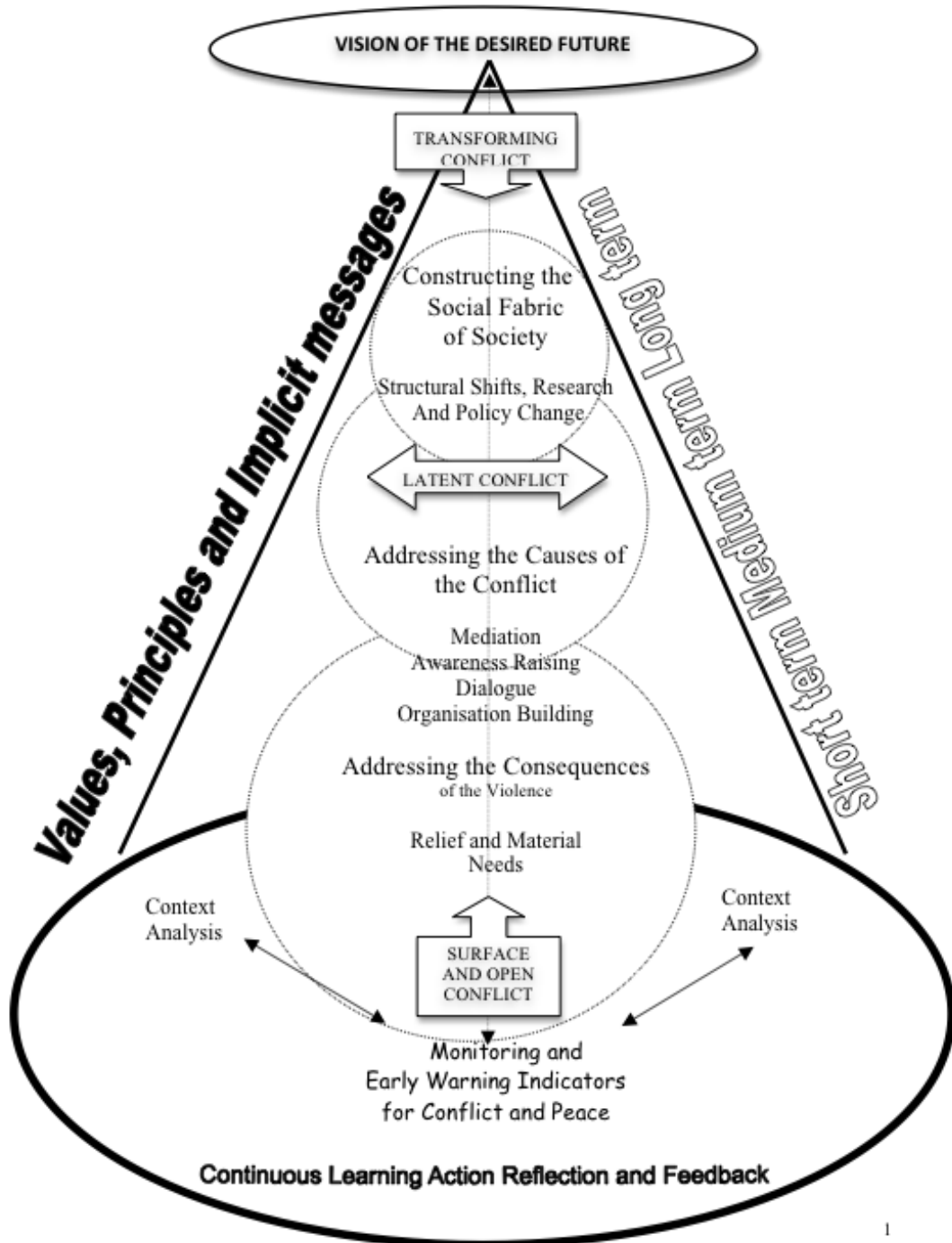
Lederach (1997:82) takes his model of nested paradigms further in explaining that the concept of conflict transformation refers to change that works at both a descriptive and a prescriptive level. Descriptively it refers to the effects that social conflict brings about. Prescriptively it refers to the deliberate interventions that are made in response to conflict, in an effort to direct the dynamics of conflict in a particular direction.

The Conflict Sensitivity Framework provides ways of understanding how humanitarian and development resources can be consciously used to impact deliberately on conflict dynamics in support of this conflict transformation approach.

The Framework also resonates well with the “Do No Harm” approach to development associated with Mary B. Andersen and builds on the analytical tools outlined in the “Working with Conflict – Skills and Strategies for Action” co-authored by Fisher et al.

By providing a graphic description of this understanding relief, development and peace practitioners have a graphic that can serve as a practical planning and monitoring tool that assists in finding the complementarity in their approaches, unified by a shared vision of the long term desired future.

Conceptual Framework for Planning a Proactive Intervention -
 Beyond Analysis



Description

The model can be used in several ways but serves its most useful purpose as a framework for reflecting and analysing the conceptual thinking behind a programming intervention. In this sense it provides an additional analytical component to planning and monitoring that turns the lens away from the context and onto the programme and the implementing organisation.

At the same time it outlines the various components that require attention in thinking about what constitutes an effective intervention in a context deeply affected by various forms of conflict. In so doing the framework assists practitioners and policy makers to think more deeply, and in a more integrated way, about the intended outcomes of their engagement.

Used as a discussion starter and as a reflective or inwardly focused tool of analysis the framework enables groups to focus on several areas:

Conflict analysis

- Has it been done?
- What areas has it focused on?
- Has it included an analysis of the causes and consequences of any violence?
- Has it included an analysis of the underlying latent conflicts and the existing connectors and dividers in the social fabric?

Values and Principles

- Are the values and principles of the implementing team clearly articulated, commonly understood and discussed in relation to each aspect of the programme?

Vision

- Is there a shared vision of the future, or at least ongoing dialogue about the different visions?
- Does this vision guide the process and approach to programming and implementation?

Linking time frames

- Are short-term actions guided and informed by their contribution to longer-term goals and objectives?

Linking forms of action

- Do short-term responses contain elements in form and approach that assist in alleviating the consequences of conflict and violence?
- Is the programme consciously engaging with and addressing the causes of the conflict?

- Does the programme explore ways in which activities can assist in building the social fabric of the society and in contributing to a longer-term conflict transformation agenda?

Collaboration and Coordination

- Is the implementing group aware of and in contact with other organisations in the context doing similar work, with whom it could be working more closely to establish how each of the different interventions fit together and complement each other?

Context

The Conflict Sensitive Integrated Framework was developed primarily for development practitioners and policy makers concerned about how to effectively implement programmes in contexts deeply affected by conflict.

The framework works best when used by mixed groups of people representing a range of interventions, either from a single organisation or from a group of organisations working in the same context.

A facilitated dialogue that uses the tool as a base can spark off a peer review type of process that enables the group to reflect together on each other's and their own interventions. This discussion can be useful in itself, but also serves as an important element of a planning or monitoring process.

The tool is primarily concerned with social conflicts, particularly those that manifest at community level, and makes explicit the impact of the overriding systems, structures and latent forms of conflict that often emanate from national or international dynamics.

Case Study

The tool was introduced and further developed with a mixed group of practitioners and policy makers working for UN agencies and partner organisations in the post-election conflict context of Kenya.

The announcement of the results of the December 27, 2007 election was followed by unprecedented and widespread violence that devastated Kenyan society and shocked the world. Within hours of the announcement of the results on December 30th, extreme violence erupted in most parts of the country. Widespread mob and police violence in the weeks that followed left over 1,000 people dead.

Over half a million were on the move, displaced from their farms and homes both in the rural areas and urban centres. As law and order quickly broke down, the dispute among the political leaders created a leadership and power vacuum, ruling out any acceptable official response. The survival of Kenya as a country was severely threatened.

This eruption of violence led many development stakeholders and peacebuilding practitioners to think long and hard about the effectiveness of their work. Many

of the development gains that had been made were swept aside in the wake of the violence. The rapid escalation of the conflict and the destruction that followed brought with it a realisation that much of the development work that had taken place had either ignored or simply been unaware of the extent of the latent conflicts and deep rooted tensions that characterised Kenyan society.

In response to this realisation UNDP embarked on a process aimed at strengthening their own capacity and those of their partners to enable a more effective response to the residual tensions and ongoing underlying conflicts.

An extract from the Terms of Reference for the workshop articulate the thinking behind the response that led to the introduction of the Integrated Framework:

“Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive approach encompassing short-term and long-term political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures to address prevention.

To respond to this context and ensure that the UN system’s multifaceted development programmes and activities contribute to the prevention of conflict by design rather than default, in January 2010 the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Kenya endorsed the UN Conceptual and Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention in Kenya, which adopts the Community Security and Social Cohesion (CSSC) approach as the framework for UN support for conflict prevention during the UNDAF period 2009-2013.

*The CSS approach includes enhancing local governance and strengthening institutions; strengthening the rule of law and security sector governance; conflict prevention and peace building; targeting livelihoods; improving the community environment and enhancing service delivery; addressing the tools of violence; and a public health approach to crime and violence.”
(UNDP Kenya Country Team, Workshop ToR, 2010)*

Working with a group of representatives from community-based organisations, local partners and the UNDP country team the tool formed part of a strategic review and capacity building workshop that focused on making the development interventions of the UNDP and its partners more conflict sensitive.

The process that was followed began by introducing the framework (within the context of a workshop that had its own wider agenda, and all of the necessary introductions and relationship building processes that create the space for a discussion characterised by some level of trust and openness).

After the framework was introduced participants were asked to relate the theories contained in the framework to their own practical experiences and the real programming examples that they were involved with. The key question was whether or not the forms of thinking contained within the framework were already part of the planning and monitoring processes or not.

Participants then worked in groups of mixed representatives working their way steadily through the questions outlined above in the section on Description. Insights, challenges and opportunities that emerged in the small group discussions were then fed back into the whole group.

In addition participants were asked to suggest ways in which the framework could be strengthened. These ideas have been fed into the version of the framework contained within this assignment.

In the workshop some time was then allocated to isolate the challenges involved in shifting programmes and in encouraging organisations to align themselves more closely to the conflict sensitive approach suggested by the framework. More group work then looked at ways in which these challenges could be overcome, particularly with a more supportive and better coordinated approach between stakeholders.

The culmination of the workshop was a series of recommendations to organisation representatives not present at the workshop. These recommendations were taken back for further discussion, in an effort to try and influence development planning and implementation approaches.

The Framework was well received and appeared to work well as a common point of reference for a deeper discussion. Clearly organisational change processes require more than a single workshop to be sustainable.

Nonetheless the Integrated Framework provides a shared point of reference and is a useful way of encapsulating the range of issues that need to be considered as part of a conflict sensitive approach. It is hoped that some changes in both practice and policy will emerge as a result of the discussions that took place.