

DO NO HARM PROJECT

The “Do No Harm” Framework for Analyzing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict:

A Handbook

A Product of the Do No Harm Project (Local Capacities for Peace Project)
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What is “Do No Harm”?

Beginning in the early 1990s, a number of international and local NGOs collaborated through the LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE PROJECT, also known as the “DO NO HARM” PROJECT (DNH) to learn more about how assistance that is given in conflict settings interacts with the conflicts. We knew that assistance is often used and misused by people in conflicts to pursue political and military advantage. We wanted to understand how this occurs in order to be able to prevent it.

The collaboration was based on gathering and comparing the field experience of many different NGO programmes in many different contexts. Through this, we were able to identify very clear patterns regarding how assistance and conflict interact.

Why Try To Do No Harm?

Although it is clear that, by itself, assistance neither causes nor can end conflict, it can be a significant factor in conflict contexts. Assistance can have important effects on intergroup relations and on the course of intergroup conflict. In a DNH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT area, for example, one NGO provided 90% of all local employment in a sizable region over a number of years. In another, the NGO estimated that militia looting of assistance garnered US \$400 million in one brief (and not unique) rampage. Both of these examples occurred in very poor countries where assistance's resources represented significant wealth and power.

At the same time, giving no assistance would also have an impact—often negative. The DNH has thus chosen to focus on how to provide assistance more effectively and how those of us who are involved in providing assistance in conflict areas can assume responsibility and hold ourselves accountable for the effects that our assistance has in worsening and prolonging, or in reducing and shortening, destructive conflict between groups whom we want to help.

Conflicts are never simple. DO NO HARM does not, and cannot, make things simpler. Rather, DO NO HARM helps us get a handle on the complexity of the conflict environments where we work. It helps us see how decisions we make affect intergroup relationships. It helps us think of different ways of doing things to have better effects. 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.

Some Fundamental Lessons of the Do No Harm Project

- It *is* possible—and useful—to apply DO NO HARM in conflict-prone, active conflict and post-conflict situations.

And, doing so:

- Prompts us to identify conflict-exacerbating impacts of assistance much sooner than is typical without the analysis;
- Heightens our awareness of intergroup relations in project sites and enables us to play a conscious role in helping people come together;
- Reveals the interconnections among programming decisions (about where to work, with whom, how to set the criteria for assistance recipients, who to hire locally, how to relate to local authorities, etc.);
- Provides a common reference point for considering the impacts of our assistance on conflict that brings a new cohesiveness to staff interactions and to our work with local counterparts;

and, the *most important single finding*:

- Enables us to identify programming options when things are going badly.

In fact, many people involved in the Project say that for some time they have been aware of the negative impacts of some of their programmes but that they thought these were inevitable and unavoidable. DO NO HARM is useful precisely because it gives us a tool to find better ways—programming options—to provide assistance.

The Do No Harm Framework: A Brief Description of Seven Steps

The DO NO HARM “Analytical Framework” was developed from the programming experience of many assistance workers. It provides a tool for mapping the interactions of assistance and conflict and can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate both humanitarian and development assistance programmes.

The Framework is NOT prescriptive. It is a descriptive tool that: 1) identifies the categories of information that have been found through experience to be important for understanding how assistance affects conflict; 2) organizes these categories in a visual lay-out that highlights their actual and potential relationships; and 3) helps us predict the impacts of different programming decisions.

Step 1: Understanding the Context of Conflict

Step one involves identifying which conflicts are dangerous in terms of their destructiveness or violence. Every society has groups with different interests and identities that contend with other groups. However, many—even most—of these differences do not erupt into violence and, therefore, are not relevant for DO NO HARM analysis.

DO NO HARM is useful for understanding the impacts of assistance programmes on the socio/political schisms that cause, or have the potential to cause, destruction or violence between groups.

Step 2: Analyzing DIVIDERS and TENSIONS

Once the important schisms in society have been identified, the next step is to analyze what divides the groups. Some DIVIDERS or sources of TENSION between groups may be rooted in deep-seated, historical injustice (root causes) while others may be recent, short-lived or manipulated by subgroup leaders (proximate causes). They may arise from many sources including economic relations, geography, demography, politics or religion. Some may be entirely internal to a society; others may be promoted by outside powers. Understanding what divides people is critical to understanding, subsequently, how our assistance programmes feed into, or lessen, these forces.

Step 3: Analyzing CONNECTORS and LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE

The third step is analysis of how people, although they are divided by conflict, remain also connected across sub-group lines. The DO NO HARM PROJECT (DNH) found that in every society in conflict, people who are divided by some things remain connected by others. Markets, infrastructure, common experiences, historical events, symbols, shared attitudes, formal and informal associations; all of these continue to provide continuity with non-war life and with former colleagues and co-workers now alienated through conflict. Similarly, DNH found that all societies have individuals and institutions whose task it is to maintain intergroup peace. These include justice systems (when they work!), police forces, elders groups, school teachers or clergy and other respected and trusted figures. In warfare, these “LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE” are not adequate to prevent violence. Yet, in conflict-prone, active conflict and post-conflict situations they continue to

exist and offer one avenue for rebuilding non-war relations. To assess the impacts of assistance programmes on conflict, it is important to identify and understand CONNECTORS and LCPS.

Step 4: Analyzing the Assistance Programme

Step four of the DO NO HARM Framework involves a thorough review of all aspects of the assistance programme. Where and why is assistance offered, who are the staff (external and internal), how were they hired, who are the intended recipients of assistance, by what criteria are they included, what is provided, who decides, how is assistance delivered, warehoused, distributed?

Step 5: Analyzing the Assistance Programme's Impact on DIVIDERS and CONNECTORS (using the concepts of RESOURCE TRANSFERS and IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES)

Step five is analysis of the interactions of each aspect of the assistance programme with the existing DIVIDERS/TENSIONS and CONNECTORS/LCPS.

We ask: Who gains and who loses (or who does not gain) from our assistance? Do these groups overlap with the DIVISIONS we identified as potentially or actually destructive? Are we supporting military activities or civilian structures? Are we missing or ignoring opportunities to reinforce CONNECTORS? Are we inadvertently undermining or weakening LCPS?

We ask: What resources are we bringing into the conflict? What impact are our RESOURCE TRANSFERS having?

We ask: What messages are we giving through the way in which we work? What impact are we having through our IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES?

Each aspect of programming should be reviewed for its actual and potential impacts on D/Ts and C/LCPS.

Step 6: Considering (and Generating) Programming Options

Finally, if our analysis of 1) the context of conflict; 2) DIVIDERS and TENSIONS; 3) CONNECTORS and LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE; and 4) our assistance programme shows that our assistance exacerbates intergroup DIVIDERS, then we must think about how to provide the same programme in a way that eliminates its negative, conflict-worsening impacts. If we find that we have overlooked local peace capacities or CONNECTORS, then we should redesign our programming not to miss this opportunity to support peace.

Step 7: Test Programming Options and Redesign Project

Once we have selected a better programming option is crucially important to re-check the impacts of our new approach on the DIVIDERS and CONNECTORS.

Outline of a Seven Step Approach to Assistance Programming in the Context of Violent Conflict

STEP 1 **Understanding the context of conflict**

- identify the appropriate “arena”—the geographic and social space which is relevant to your assistance programme
- identify which inter-group conflicts have caused violence or are dangerous and may escalate into violence?
- how does the assistance project relate to that context of conflict?

STEP 2 **Analyze (identify and unpack) dividers and sources of tension**

STEP 3 **Analyze (identify and unpack) connectors and LCPs**

STEP 4 **Analyze - identify and unpack - the assistance project**

analyze the details of the assistance programme. Remember: it is never an entire programme that goes wrong. It is the details that determine impact.

STEP 5 **Analyze the assistance programme’s impact on the context of conflict through Resource Transfers (RTs) and Implicit Ethical Messages (IEMs)**

- how do the programme’s RTs and IEMs impact on dividers and sources of tension?
- how do the programme’s RTs and IEMs impact on connectors and LCPs?

STEP 6 **Generate programming options**

IF an element of the assistance programme has a negative impact on dividers – strengthening / reinforcing dividers, feeding into sources of tension

or

IF an element of the programme has a negative impact on connectors weakening / undermining connectors and LCPs

THEN generate as many options as possible how to do what you intend to do in such a way as to weaken dividers and strengthen connectors

STEP 7 **Test options and redesign programme**

Test the options generated using your / your colleagues experience:

- What is the probable / potential impact on dividers / sources of tension?
 - What is the probable / potential impact on connectors / LCPs?
- Use the best / optimal options to redesign project.

IN PROGRAMMING DOING STEPS 1 TO 6 **DOES NOT** MAKE SENSE
IF YOU DON’T DO STEP 7 AS WELL!

Other ways to use the Framework

The DNH FRAMEWORK is a flexible tool. It has been used during programme design, project monitoring, project evaluation, and programme redesign. It has also been used as a tool for Context Analysis and for Peace and Conflict Impact Analysis (PCIA).

STEPS 1 to 3 **analyzing conflict, understanding context**

STEPS 1 to 5 **evaluating project**

STEPS 1 to 5 **assessing project impact**

STEPS 1 to 7 **project design—systematically taking into account context of conflict**

STEPS 1 to 7 **monitoring project impact**

THE POINT IS: **IMPROVE** OUR PROGRAMMES USING THE EXPERIENCE WE HAVE!

Notes on Using the Framework and its Elements

The “*Do No Harm*” Framework Tool for Analyzing Assistance in the Context of Conflict emphasizes the lessons learned by the DO NO HARM PROJECT (DNH).

THE FRAMEWORK embodies three distinct ideas:

- Identifying Relationships
- Unpacking Context
- Analyzing Interactions

1. Identifying Relationships

The Relationship of Humanitarian and Development Assistance to Conflict

Assistance, whether relief or development, always becomes a part of the context in which it is given. Humanitarian and development assistance given in a context of conflict becomes a part of that context.

Situations of conflict are characterized by two “realities”. There are those things that **DIVIDE** people from each other and serve as **SOURCES OF TENSION**. There are also *always* elements which **CONNECT** people.

Assistance interventions interact with these **DIVIDERS/SOURCES OF TENSION** and with these **CONNECTORS** or **LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE (LCPS)**. Components of an assistance project can exacerbate the **D/Ts**. Assistance can lessen the **Cs**. Assistance can likewise strengthen the **Cs** and serve to lessen some of the **D/Ts**.

The fact that elements of humanitarian and development assistance interact with the context of conflict is an important thing to consider. This simple and powerful message forces us to take responsibility and to ask ourselves, “What can we do? What are our options? How can we prevent negative interactions and reinforce positive ones?”

2. Unpacking Context

A Unpacking the context and the relationships

THE FRAMEWORK prompts us to analyze the situation. In order to do that we first need to know the *facts*.

In the conflict situation, what are people doing? What are the things which divide people or are sources of tension between them, and what are the things which connect them or potentially connect them?

You say something is a **DIVIDER**. How do you know? How does it divide people? Why is it important? What do you actually know about it?

You say something is a **CONNECTOR**. How do you know? How does it connect people? Why is it important? What do you actually know about it?

What are people doing?

In order to assist you in your unpacking and to prompt you to think in depth, THE FRAMEWORK includes a series of five categories. These categories were developed by assistance workers for three purposes:

- they *encourage brainstorming*; if you consider these categories and what people are doing, you will not leave out something important;
- they help you to *organize information* and, perhaps, to identify relationships;
- they *force disaggregation*—if something fits in more than one category, you can unpack it.

B Unpacking the Assistance Program

An assistance program consists of a number of decisions, answering questions about who will receive assistance, what kind of support will be appropriate, where it will be given, etc. Just as the **D/Ts** and the **Cs** have been unpacked in order to help you understand the conflict situation, you also need to *unpack the assistance program* in order to understand the impact of the decisions on the conflict.

It is *never* a whole assistance program that is having an impact. It is a piece of an assistance program, it is one or several of the decisions that result in a negative - or positive - impact on the conflict.

The questions in THE FRAMEWORK represent those usually asked (whether implicitly or explicitly) in an agency's project planning process. The questions in THE FRAMEWORK again serve the three purposes outlined above:

1. encouraging brainstorming
2. organization of your information
3. forcing disaggregation

These questions must be asked and reasked. It is very seldom in analyzing an assistance program *once* that you can answer these questions. Usually an assistance program has enough components that these questions need to be asked and answered many times before the program is thoroughly unpacked.

3. Analyzing Interactions

A The Analytical Process

The analysis of the assistance program in the context of conflict requires identifying the relationships between the individual decisions of an assistance program and the D/Ts and/or the Cs.

What is the interaction? Where do they interact? How do these things interact? What are the mechanisms by which these things affect each other?

An analytical process often does not serve up easy answers in a one-to-one correspondence. Often many elements are inter-related. Therefore, the Framework helps you to

- identify which are the most important
- identify the places in the process where you need more information
- identify the places where you need to do more unpacking.

B Resource Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages

Assistance is a transfer of resources, both material and non material. Remember that some of the “material” resources are in fact immaterial, e.g. training. These are the direct mechanisms by which humanitarian and development assistance interact in a situation of conflict.

In order to change the impact of an assistance program, we must understand:

- What is the impact?
- How is the assistance program having that impact?
- Which decisions led to that impact?

C Developing Alternative Programming Options

Experience has shown that there are always alternative ways of doing what our assistance is mandated to do. Knowing the patterns or mechanisms by which the various elements of our assistance project or programme interact with the elements that constitute the context of conflict, causing either a negative or a positive impact, we can identify alternative ways of how to do what we are mandated to do, avoiding negative impact.

Developing alternative programming options involves three steps:

- generate as many options as possible—“*quantity generates quality!*” The more options you generate the more **good** options you will have!
- identify those options that can most likely be implemented
- test the options to verify that they will not at the same time have another negative impact

Applying the Framework

I Gathering the facts

Analyze the context of conflict:

- dividers, sources of tension, capacities for violence
- connectors, local capacities for peace
- unpack the assistance project, list the details of the project

II Analyzing the facts

Analyze assistance's impact on the context of conflict through

- Resource Transfers
- Implicit Ethical Messages

III Programming Alternatives

Generate options for alternative ways of implementing the project

- generate options: → quantity generates quality!
- test the options: → verify they do not at the same time have other negative impacts
- choose options for redesign

Brief Notes on Resource Transfers and Implicit Ethical Messages

Resource Transfers

Assistance is a vehicle for providing resources to people who need them. Assistance's most direct impacts on conflict are a result of the introduction of resources (food, health care, training, shelter, improved water systems, etc.) into conflicts. Assistance resources represent both wealth and power in situations where these matter in intergroup struggle. What resources are provided, how they are distributed and to whom, and who decides about these matters all affect the economy of war (or peace) and intergroup competition or collaboration.

Theft

Very often assistance goods are stolen by warriors to support the war effort either directly (as when food is stolen to feed fighters, or indirectly (as when food is stolen and sold in order to raise money to buy weapons).

Market Effects

Assistance affects prices, wages, and profits and can either reinforce the war economy (enriching activities and people that war-related) or the peace economy (reinforcing “normal” civilian production, consumption, and exchange).

Distributional Effects

When assistance is targeted to some groups and not to others, and these groups exactly (or even partially) overlap with the divisions represented in the conflict, assistance can reinforce and exacerbate conflict. Assistance can also reinforce connectors by crossing and linking groups by the way it is distributed.

Substitution Effects

Assistance can substitute for local resources that would have been used to meet civilian needs and, thus, free these up to be used in support of war. There is a political substitution effect that is equally important. This occurs when international agencies assume responsibility for civilian survival to such an extent that this allows local leaders and warriors to define their roles solely in terms of warfare and control through violence. As the assistance agencies take on support of non-war aspects of life, such leaders can increasingly abdicate responsibility for these activities.

Legitimization Effects

Assistance legitimizes some people and some actions and weakens or side-lines others. It can support either those people and actions that pursue war, or those that pursue and maintain non-war (peace).

Implicit Ethical Messages

Assistance also affects conflict environments through **IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES**. These are the impacts that assistance workers feel their own actions and attitudes have on conflict. They include the ways that assistance workers operate to reinforce the modes and moods of warfare or, alternatively, to establish non-conflictual relations, mutual respect and intergroup collaboration.

Arms and Power

When international agencies hire armed guards to protect their goods from theft or their workers from harm, the implicit ethical message perceived by those in the context is that it is legitimate for arms to determine who gets access to food and medical supplies and that security and safety drive from weapons.

Disrespect, Mistrust, Competition among Assistance Agencies

When agencies refuse to cooperate with each other, and even worse “bad mouth” each other, the message received by those in the area is that it is unnecessary to cooperate with anyone with whom one does not agree. Further, you don’t have to respect or work with people you don’t like.

Assistance Workers and Impunity

When assistance workers use the goods and support systems for their own pleasures and purposes the message is that if one has control over resources, it is permissible to use them for personal benefit without being accountable to anyone else.

Different Value for Different Lives

When agencies adopt differential policies for two groups of people (e.g. expatriate and local staff) or act in ways to suggest that some lives (and even some goods) are more valuable than other lives, they present a message similar to that in warfare.

Powerlessness

When field-based staff disclaim responsibility for the impacts of their assistance programmes, the message received is that individuals in complex circumstances cannot have much power and, thus, they do not have to take responsibility.

Belligerence, Tension, Suspicion

When assistance workers are nervous and worried for their own safety, they can approach situations with suspicions and belligerence and their interactions with people can reinforce the modes of warfare and heighten tension. The message received is that power is, indeed, the broker of human interactions and it is normal to approach everyone with suspicion and belligerence.

Publicity

When international agencies use publicity pictures that emphasize the gruesomeness of warfare and the victimization of parties, they can also reinforce the demonization of one side. The message is that there are victims and criminals in warfare, while in most wars individuals act both criminally and kindly and both sides perpetrate atrocities and suffer victimization. Reinforcing the sense that there are “good” and “bad” sides in war can reinforce the motivations of people to push for victory and excuse their own behavior.

Using the Framework: Examination of the Context

Using the categories of Dividers and Connectors, think hard about the current situation (it is preferable to have a team which regularly discusses these issues).

Regions where there are conflicts are dynamic. It is important to update your understanding of the context regularly.

Among the elements to consider are (a) historical issues and how they play out in the present; (b) external influences and how they affect the local context; and (c) which issues are broad in their impact, affecting a large number of people, and which are narrow, affecting a smaller number of people yet still important.

- a. We have found that the issues that are most important to people in their relationships with each other do not stay constant. Historical issues can continue to be factors into the present, but how they manifest themselves and how important they are changes over time. We want to understand what issues are currently most important where our project is, if these issues are of recent origin or historical, and to explore the dynamic of shifting importance. Whether a particular issue is significant and what circumstances have brought it to the forefront or contributed to its recession can assist us in determining the impact the programme may have.
- b. We have found that external influences often play a role in post-conflict communities. People have many and varied contacts with other people throughout the region, as well as having a perspective on the larger international situation. These contacts and perspectives can alter the local perception of local circumstances. People act and react to local situations in ways that are shaped by and continue to shape the larger regional situation. External factors may or may not be as important to the situation as local factors, but they are among the elements to be considered.
- c. We have found that there are issues that are important to broad segments of a community, while there are others that have much narrower impacts.

Two questions will guide a discussion of Dividers and Connectors:

1. What are the current threats to peace and stability here?
2. What are the current supports of peace and stability here?

Using the Framework: Analyzing the Impacts of an Assistance Programme on Conflict, or The Details Matter

Any assistance programme, whether a humanitarian intervention or development project, an advocacy campaign or peace-building effort, embodies a series of decisions answering a fundamental set of questions. Why have we chosen this activity with these resources in this place with these people? How did we select these beneficiaries, these resources, and these staff? Who made these decisions and how?

Every organization has a programme planning process that outlines how such decisions are to be made. However, these processes often leave the reasons behind the choices unspoken or implicit. Because each of these choices potentially has an impact on the conflict, it is necessary to make these decisions explicit and transparent.

It is important to remember that it is never a whole project that is having a negative impact. A project may itself be doing the good it set out to do, while at the same time some piece of the decision-making is feeding into and exacerbating the conflict. In these cases, the programme does not need to be stopped, it needs to be adapted.

The Do No Harm Framework captures the decision making process through seven basic questions. It is not enough, when analyzing a programme, to ask these questions once. It is necessary to ask them again and again, until the whole structure of the programme has been made explicit and clear.

The basic questions are:

Why?

- What are the needs that lead us to plan a programme in the first place?
- What do we hope to stop or change through our intervention?
- Why us? What is the value added that our organization brings to addressing this need in this place?

Where?

- Why did we choose this location? What criteria did we use?
 - Why these villages and not those?
 - Why this province and not that one?
 - Why on this side of the front lines and not that one, or both?
- Who did we leave out and why?
- What are the other locations we have chosen that have an impact?
 - Why did we rent these buildings? From who?
 - Why do we drive this route?
 - Why do we buy these resources here?

When?

- Why have we chosen this time to bring in our intervention? What is it about the current situation that makes *now* the right time for our intervention?
 - Is the situation post-conflict, pre-conflict, or is the conflict still “hot”?
 - Why us, now?
- How long is our project going to last?
 - How will we know when our project is finished? What criteria?
 - What will have changed and how will we know?
 - Do we have an exit strategy?

What?

- The specific content of the resources can have an impact on the content.
 - Are we bringing in food, shelter, money, training, experts, vehicles, radios, tools, etc?
 - Be specific: what kind of food? What kind of shelter?
- What types of resources are appropriate to this circumstance?

With Whom?

- How did we choose the beneficiaries? What was the criteria for choosing some people over others?
- Who did we leave out and why?
- Who else benefits from our presence?
 - Landlords? Drivers? Stevedores? Farmers? Hotels?

By Whom?

- Who are our staff? Are they local or expatriate? How were they selected? What were the criteria for hiring these people and are these criteria different in different places?
- Who do the criteria leave out and why?

How?

- What is the mechanism of the delivery of the assistance?
 - Food-for-work or cash? Is training through lectures by outsiders or through participatory methods?
- How exactly do we do our work?
- How exactly do we act?
 - Do expatriates drive to work in the morning while our local staff walk or take public transport?

Human Rights and the Do No Harm Framework

In conflict and post-conflict situations, assistance workers (whether humanitarian or development) need to take several things into account. Among these are the impacts of their programmes on the context with regard to the conflict and the issues surrounding the conflict. Also among these, and especially important in conflict situations, is how their programmes address the human rights concerns of the people in the situation.

International Humanitarian Law clearly lays out the responsibilities of those in authority to their constituencies, while also dealing with the rights that people should expect to be able to exercise. International assistance must work within this framework, supporting both the efforts of the authority to meet its responsibilities and of people to exercise their rights.

Human rights, and the implications of assistance programming on the human rights situation, cannot be ignored.

The Do No Harm Framework was developed to analyze and review the impacts of assistance on the conflict. It was not developed to explicitly deal with human rights and, as such, it is not *the* human rights tool. There are other, better, tools for addressing the totality of the legalities regarding human rights.

Nonetheless, human rights are included in the DNH Framework. Human rights clearly and regularly arise in the Context Analysis section (Dividers and Connectors). On the positive side, human rights appear as shared values and experiences that connect people. They appear in the cultural and governmental systems and institutions that promote non-violent attitudes and actions and non-violent ways of resolving disputes. They appear in certain occasions and in symbols that people use to promote connectedness.

On the negative side, those elements of a society in conflict that are actively engaged in attacking human rights are Dividers (whether a discriminatory legal or education system, a particular warlord or militia, or direct attacks on officials responsible for human rights, for example).

The merit of the DNH Framework as it addresses human rights is that it looks at human rights in an immediate and operational fashion. What do people do to demonstrate their support for human rights? How do they promote rights? What do people do to denigrate and undermine human rights? How do they attack them? Where and when do they attack them?

In the DNH Framework, “human rights” is not a concept to be considered in the abstract. The actual impacts of a conflict on people and on their human rights are taken into account in order to develop good and effective programmes.

CDA will continue to work on the implications of human rights within the context of the DNH Framework.

One particular finding of our recent efforts to think more explicitly about human rights in the context of the DNH Framework intrigues us. The DNH Framework encourages us to think more

systematically about potential *responses* to human rights violations. What are the options for dealing with violations? DNH does not pre-judge, nor does it prescribe a single response, but instead it deals with actual situations and examines options for accountability on the basis of existing and identified connectors.

We have been struck by the range of options that people and nations use to address violations of human rights that occur in their conflicts. People are simultaneously extremely creative and forgiving. They know what systems of forgiveness and punishment will and will not work in their communities and they almost always work to promote activities to heal their societies. This strikes us as profoundly hopeful, and also, as outsiders to these societies and the direct effects of their conflicts, extremely humbling.

Gender Analysis as it Relates to Conflict: A Note for Programmers of Humanitarian and Development Assistance

Assumptions (Some of Which are Questionable):

Many people believe that women are less prone to violence than men. This belief is based both on the sex roles and the gender roles of women.

Sex Roles

Historically, in some societies, because the male sex does not give birth or nurse children, men did the things that required mobility such as hunting, gathering and fighting.

Correspondingly, women (because they give birth and nurse babies) did the things associated with locational stability. Furthermore, in many societies, the roles of birthing and nursing are connected to longer-term nurturing and child rearing.

Gender Roles

In addition, societies very often assign a gendered role to women (and girls) by teaching—and expecting—they to be the family or intergroup “peacemakers.”

Many people assume that these sex and gender roles whereby women take care of and nurture children and families predispose women to reject violence and to seek peace.

Experience Shows:

1. That women are under-represented in peace-making as they are also under-represented in the military, business, institutions, wealth, etc.
2. That women can be as fiercely committed to war and warfare as men and that men can be as committed to peacemaking as women. In the same context, women who are very similar in all other respects can be heard to say either:

“They killed my child. I will not rest until we have killed every one of their children”

or

“They killed my child. I will find the Mothers on the other side and join them to stop this killing.”

3. That neither sex nor gender roles are a predictor of peaceableness.
4. That gender analysis is useful for identifying ways to provide assistance that can lessen conflict and/or rebuild intergroup connections.
5. That women in many conflict areas report that, because they are seen as politically marginal, they have special opportunities to speak out against war and to undertake

political anti-war initiatives. Because they are not taken as seriously, they can go farther in this direction than men (who are supposed to be fighters). However, if/when women become effective in mobilizing anti-war sentiment, they are as endangered as men who oppose conflict. (Recent assassinations of women attest to this fact.)

6. That the easy designation of women as “peace-makers” allows men to abdicate their responsibility for this work.

How This Connects to Gender Analysis

How can we understand how aid programmes interact with conflict and what importance gender and/or sex roles have in these interactions?

The DNH PROJECT identification of Dividers and Connectors provides one important analytical tool for integrating gender analysis and conflict analysis.

Aid workers should determine how gender roles affect Dividers and Connectors.

Take the example of women's groups. Are they dividers or connectors? In some instances, women join together to reach across group boundaries around a common concern or enterprise (e.g. a hostel initiated by Tutsi and Hutu widows in Rwanda, post-war Tajikistan promotion of carpet weaving and wool production in two formerly warring villages in which women undertook these linked and interdependent enterprises). In these cases, these women's groups and the activities in which they engage represent connectors.

Alternatively, women may organize among "their own" group to pursue their interests (e.g. credit groups centered in neighborhoods representing only one side of a conflict, rebuilding focused on "those who suffered the most" who, it happens because of the conduct of the war, represent one side). Very often, in these cases, women's groups represent dividers.

Similarly, programs focused on young males (whose gender roles mean that they are likely to be former soldiers or easy "draftees") can mitigate divisions and tensions. Identification of roles of men can help aid workers target where programmes should focus on their roles in order to reduce divisions/strengthen connectors.

Applying gender analysis in context can help aid workers identify special opportunities to avoid worsening dividers and to support and strengthen connectors. It can also help us avoid making the dreadful mistake of reinforcing divisions and undermining connections.

“Indications” for Assessing Assistance’s Impacts on Conflict

We need to identify clear and consistent ways to understand the impacts of assistance on conflict.

The DO NO HARM PROJECT first thought of developing a list of “indicators” of impacts. However, we quickly changed our approach to adopt, instead, the terminology of “indications” of impact. There were two reasons for this. First, because “indicators” is a term commonly used to refer to scientific precision, we knew that, in the context of assistance in conflict, we did not want to mislead our colleagues into believing in—or even seeking—such “proof” of the single, identifiable source of causation. Second we found that, while it is extremely challenging to imagine how to trace cause and effect of assistance and conflict in a theoretical framework, when we are actually in a given field location, the ways that assistance and conflict interact can be fairly clearly observed. It was the latter reality that we want to highlight and observe.

It is important to remember and recognize both the limits and the power of our roles in conflict settings. There are three types of events in a conflict setting to consider when thinking about the impact of assistance:

- a. Some things happen in conflict settings that bear no relation to assistance and on which assistance has no effect. Even if we applied all the lessons of past experience and carried out “perfect” programmes, wars, for example, would still happen.
- b. There are also things that happen in conflict settings to which assistance is connected and on which it has an effect. These events would happen whether assistance existed or not, but because assistance is in the context where they occur, it has an impact on them.
- c. Finally, there are events that assistance, itself, causes to happen.

As we increase our awareness of the impacts that assistance can have on conflict, it is critical that we remember to focus on the second and, particularly, on the third type of event where assistance has its greatest impact.

Through careful attention to the mechanisms whereby assistance has an impact on conflict, through RESOURCE TRANSFERS and IMPLICIT ETHICAL MESSAGES, we are able to identify the following indications of whether assistance is having a negative (worsening) impact on conflict. The following questions highlight

Indications of Negative Impacts [A “yes” answer indicates a negative impact]:

- Are assistance goods stolen, especially by those connected directly to a warring side?
- What are the market impacts of assistance in the given area?
Specifically:
 - ⇒ Are prices of goods connected to the war economy rising?
 - ⇒ Are incentives for engaging in the war economy rising?
 - ⇒ Are prices of goods connected to the peacetime economy falling?
 - ⇒ Are incentives for engaging in peacetime economic activities falling?

- Is assistance provided in ways that benefit one (some) sub-group(s) over others? Does the assistance agency employ people more from one group than others? Do material goods go more to one group than others?
- Is assistance providing a sufficiently significant amount of material to meet civilian needs that:
 - ⇒ More local goods are freed up to be used in warfare/by armies?
 - ⇒ Local leaders take little or no responsibility for civilian welfare? [What are the manifestations of this?]
- Is assistance being given in ways that “legitimize” war-related individuals (giving them more power, prestige or access to international attention or wealth)? Is assistance being given in ways that legitimize the actions of war (for e.g. reinforcing patterns of population movements that warriors are causing; linking to divisions in the society thus reinforcing them)? Is assistance being given in ways that legitimize war-supporting attitudes (for e.g. rewarding those who are most violent; being given separately to all groups in assumption that they cannot work together)?
- Does the assistance agency rely on arms to protect its goods and/or workers?
- Does the assistance agency refuse to cooperate or share information and planning functions with other assistance agencies, local government or local NGOs? Does it openly criticize the ways that others provide assistance and encourage local people to avoid working with other agencies?
- Do field staff separate themselves from the local people with whom they are working and do they frequently use assistance goods, or the power they derive from them, for their personal benefit or pleasure?
- Does the assistance agency apportion its institutional benefits (salaries or per diem scales; equipment such as cars, phones, offices; expectations of time commitments to the job; rewards for work done; vacation, R & R, evacuation plans) in ways that favor one identifiable group of workers more than others?
- Do the assistance staff express discouragement and powerlessness in relation to their staff superiors, home offices or donors? Do they express disrespect for these people but often cite them as the reason why something is “impossible”?
- Are assistance staff frightened and tense? Do they express hatred, mistrust, or suspicion for local people (any of the local people)? Do they frequently engage their local staff counterparts in conversation about violence, war experiences, the terrible things they have experienced (thus reinforcing the sense that these are the things that matter)? Does the agency promote or in other ways exceptionally reward staff members who have served in more violent places/situations?
- Does the assistance agency's publicity and/or fundraising approach demonize one side of the war? Does it treat one group as always “victimized” by the other?

In addition to deciding if an assistance agency's programme deserves a “yes” answer to the above questions, people involved in these projects must also assess the degree to which any of these actions, attitudes or situations actually matters in the given context.

The question to ask in this regard is: ***Does this impact directly relate to events that are effected by or caused by assistance?***

Note: If the answers to these questions are consistently “no” and, furthermore, rather than doing the things described in the questions, the agency and its staff are actively pursuing alternative approaches, it is important also to assess the significance of this in relation to the conflict. Is the alternative approach recognized and commented upon by community leaders or large numbers of

local people with appreciation? Are incidences of violence between groups or of lawlessness among warriors dropping? Can any of this be attributed to a change in climate to which the assistance agency's approaches have contributed?

Again, following what LCPP has learned about connectors and local capacities for peace, the following represent the questions that reflect the

Indications of Positive Impacts (i.e. lessening tensions and/or supporting local capacities for peace):

- Has the assistance agency actively sought to identify things in the conflict area that cross the boundaries and connect people on different sides? Has it designed its programme to relate to these connectors?
- Is the assistance delivered in ways that reinforce a local sense of inclusiveness and intergroup fairness? Are programmes designed to bring people together? Are they designed so that for any group to gain, all groups must gain?
- Is the assistance delivered in ways that reinforce, rather than undermining, attitudes of acceptance, understanding and empathy between groups?
- Is the assistance delivered in ways that provide opportunities for people to act and speak in non-war ways? Does the agency provide opportunities for its local staff to cross lines and work with people from the “other” side?
- Does the assistance respect and reinforce local leaders as they take on responsibility for civilian governance? Does it provide rewards for individuals, groups and communities that take inter-group or peace-reinforcing initiatives?
- Do assistance agency staff reinforce the attitudes of their friends and counterparts as they remember, or reassert, sympathy and respect for other groups?

Again, in addition to answering these questions with a “yes”, those involved in the implementation pilot projects must try to assess the significance of these actions in relation to the conflict, or its mitigation. The Local Capacities for Peace Project, as a whole, will be engaged in refining ways to make this assessment in different settings and circumstances.

When Is A Divider A Connector?

1. An international NGO has been intervening for some time in the area of The River where there have been ongoing conflicts or “tribal clashes” between several different groups with a rough division between agriculturalist and pastoralist lifestyles. The pastoralist peoples herd cattle and other livestock and range widely through the area without great regard for the settlement of land. The agriculturalist peoples raise cereals and vegetables, and some have also taken to rearing livestock in a small way. The agricultural communities live in mono-ethnic clusters close to the river while the pastoralists live further in the hinterland. The normal migration pattern for the pastoral population means moving towards the river during dry season and back to the hinterland during the rainy season.
2. In keeping with the pastoralist mentality which does not readily accept ownership of land (land is seen as common property for grazing), the pastoralists often allow their cattle to graze on the crops of the agriculturalists. This, clearly, has been a flashpoint. In addition, various types of raiding are prevalent: inter-pastoralist raids for cattle, pastoralist against agriculturalist, and particularly pastoralist against members of the agriculturalist community who have recently taken to rearing cattle “against type”. The area is drought-prone, and clashes between the two groups become more severe when water is scarce. Curiously, however, in the workshop The River was identified as both a divider and a connector in this context. How?
3. The answer becomes clear with analysis. It turns out that in times of plenty, but even on occasion when things are difficult, casual encounters on the banks of the river between members of different communities seeking water for their different needs have been a significant factor for cohesion in the area for a long time. Such encounters give people the chance to exchange pleasantries, indulge in gossip or even petty trade. Even during drought there is usually enough water in the river for everyone, so resource scarcity is not a significant flashpoint in this instance.
4. However, access to water can be a significant source of tension. Much of the river bank areas consist of small agricultural plots used by the various farming communities. Access to the river for livestock to drink, therefore, often involves pastoralists and their herds traversing land which the agriculturalists consider theirs (and to which they may at times even hold legal title). Moreover, as might be expected, the cattle trample and graze on the crops as they pass, further enflaming resentments by the farmers.
5. This example demonstrates two connected points: first, that whereas it may seem that “the river” represents both a connector and a divider, careful further analysis reveals that different aspects of the same larger phenomenon are individually a connector (meetings by the river) and a divider (access to the river). Second, by using such analysis to carefully distinguish between the two aspects of “the river”—one positive and one negative—we open up the possibility that assistance agencies could more carefully orient their actions to reinforce the connector and diminish the source of division. Programme options discussed included the idea that the agency might develop cattle troughs or water points near pastoral communities in the hinterland, at a distance from the agricultural plots, thus reducing livestock migrating to the river for water and correspondingly reducing conflict. But though this would lessen the tension side of the river issue (avoiding cattle trampling and grazing crops) it would weaken the connector side (casual encounters at the river’s edge would lessen). A better option from a Do No Harm perspective, therefore, was the suggestion to negotiate specific and agreed access corridors to the river that would be acceptable to both sides.