

Conflict sensitivity and conflict analysis

Introduction

Conflict sensitivity is a cross cutting theme in Dignis overall strategy for 2013-2017. This means that all projects have to apply and report on how they are conflict sensitive and how they are working in order to be conflict sensitive in all the work that they implement.

A weakness that we see in reporting and applications is that the projects and partners seem to have some difficulty in grasping what it means to be conflict sensitive. Therefore, we have developed a short introduction and some guiding points and check lists that you can use in your planning, reporting and implementation, which you will find in this document. There is a shorter version and a longer version so that you can choose which one suits your context best. Feel free to mix and match from both lists if this is useful.

It is important to look at your own project in the context where you are operating. Being conflict sensitive is not just about understanding the conflict and context around you. You also have to analyze your own initiatives within this context. Many projects forget themselves in the analysis, which can be a serious mistake to make.

Conflict

The correlation between violent conflict and war and development is evident.

Since a lot of development work is done in areas of conflict, it is necessary to understand the correlation between violent conflict and development activities – this understanding is the basis for conflict sensitive development work.

It is important to remember that development actors are not neutral actors in a conflict situation. Development actors (NGOs, churches etc.) can contribute to enhance or reduce conflict situations.

At the same time, it is important to realize that conflicts in themselves are not necessarily negative or violent. We need conflict and disagreements in order to have development and make changes. Sometimes we want to contribute to conflicts in our development work, for example, when we want to reduce structural differences.

It is *how* we handle conflict that is essential – do we do it violently or non-violently?

Conflict analysis

We use conflict analysis in order to ensure that our development work takes into consideration the conflicts it is operating in. This can be different conflicts, both violent, non-violent and structural conflicts. In any case, we must be aware of the role we play as development actors within this context. We must understand the context we are working in.

As a **minimum** we must not contribute to an escalation of the conflict and as a **maximum** we can contribute positively to handle and address the underlying causes (root causes) of the conflict.

Some of the framework and checklists mentioned here can help you to be more conflict sensitive in your programming and to do a conflict analysis of your project. Ultimately we want to design and plan conflict sensitive projects.

The main points are:

“What to do?”

- Understand the context in which you operate;
- Understand the interaction between your intervention and the context; and
- Act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts (dividers) and maximize positive impacts (connectors).

“How to do it?”

1. Conduct a conflict analysis and update this on a regular basis.
2. Connect the conflict analysis to the programming cycle for your project.
3. Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the project in a conflict sensitive manner.

Important questions for conflict analysis

- What are the key driving factors?
- What are the relationships and dynamics among these factors?
- What needs to be stopped?
- Who are the “key” actors?
- What are the international or regional dimensions of the conflict?
- What has already been tried, with what result?

A tool you can use is Do No Harm (DNH)

Do No Harm is a conflict analysis tool that you can use in order to be more conflict sensitive in your project planning and implementation.

The Do No Harm Program (DNH) is an effort to identify the ways in which international humanitarian and/or development assistance given in conflict settings may be provided. It helps local people disengage from fighting and develop systems for settling the problems, which prompt conflict within their societies rather than exacerbating and worsening the conflict. For more information on DNH go to <http://cdacollaborative.org>

Conflict sensitivity – useful initial questions

This is a useful and short set of questions that you can use in order to make sure that your project is conflict sensitive. If you find that your answer to many of these questions are that you do not know or have not considered these factors and issues, you probably need to conduct a conflict analysis and make sure that your project is more conflict sensitive.

1. How has conflict sensitivity been considered in planning and programme implementation? Have tools for conflict sensitive programming been used?

2. Has an analysis of the context been made to identify the dividing and the connecting factors in the project area?
3. How has the programme implementation been influencing connectors and dividers in the project area?
4. Identify the various *dividers*, which relate to the work, such as unfair access to wells, education, health care etc.
5. Identify and analyze different *connecting factors*, in other words areas that unite groups, common interests or already existing co-operation. For example; meeting places, markets, common symbols or rituals, local networks and persons who are in touch with both these groups.
6. If conflict sensitivity has been considered – what implications did this have for planning and project implementation? (i.e. selection of right holders, choice of partner organisation, hiring staff, choice of items for distribution, relationship with authorities)

Conflict Sensitive Program Planning – Do No Harm – Longer Version Checklist to use when planning and reviewing a project

Do No Harm has created a list of key questions to use when planning and reviewing a project. Evidence shows that Right-holders, Partner and Staffing decisions can have an impact on Dividers¹ and Connectors, as can the ways an organization interacts with Authorities. These questions only highlight some of the ways a project can have impacts on Dividers and Connectors and give ideas about how to make changes to a project. More information can be found on the website www.cdainc.com.

This is a useful checklist to use both when planning a project in order to make sure that you are working in a conflict sensitive manner and when evaluating or reporting so that you can assess progress on these issues as well as make the necessary changes needed if the situation or context has changed.

Key questions to identify Connectors and Dividers:

1. What are the dividing factors in this situation? What are the connecting factors?
2. What are the current threats to peace and stability? What are the current supports?
3. What are the most dangerous factors in this situation? How dangerous is this Divider?
4. What can cause tension to rise in this situation?
5. What brings people together in this situation?
6. Where do people meet? What do people do together?
7. How strong is this Connector?

¹ Dividers are those factors that people are fighting about or cause tension. Connectors bring people together and/or tend to reduce tension.

8. Does this Connector have a potential?

When Considering Right-holders:

1. Do all right-holders of the project share an identity?
2. Do right-holders share an identity with staff?
3. How do we select right-holders? Do these criteria bias the program toward one group?
 - a. Using political criteria?
 - b. Using technical criteria?
 - c. Using geographical criteria?
 - d. Using social or economic criteria?
4. Are right-holders selected by authorities?
5. WHOM DID WE LEAVE OUT AND WHY?

When Considering Partner Organizations:

1. Does the organization come from an area with only one identity group?
2. Is the staff of the organization biased?
3. How do we select partners?
4. How is the power balance within the organization?
5. Does the organization have military, financial or political interests?
6. WHOM DID WE LEAVE OUT AND WHY?

When Considering Hiring Staff:

1. Do all staff share an identity?
2. Are all staff from the same area?
3. How do we select staff?
4. Are there technical criteria for hiring that favor one identity group?
5. Are staff selected by authorities?
6. WHOM DID WE LEAVE OUT AND WHY?

When Considering What is Distributed:

1. Are goods being stolen or diverted by non-beneficiaries?
2. Are the goods of broad usefulness?
3. Does the distribution make one group better off than others?
4. Is there a surplus of goods meant for distribution?

5. Are goods delivered in a timely way?
6. Is the project or programme substituting for an existing and functioning local structure?
7. Who Benefits?
 - a. Individuals
 - b. Families
 - c. Entire communities/groups

When Considering Authorities:

1. Are authorities stealing or diverting goods meant for distribution?
2. Do authorities say when and where projects take place?
3. Are authorities using interactions with the organization to create legitimacy?
4. Are authorities using interactions with the organization to create the appearance of serving people?