



SAFERWORLD
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

SAFERWORLD'S APPROACH

WHAT IS CONFLICT SENSITIVITY?



Conflicts often revolve around competition for power or resources. By introducing new resources into an area, or by altering how decisions are taken and policies made, humanitarian or development assistance – as well as international business investment – inevitably has an impact on peace and conflict dynamics in recipient countries. It can, for example, challenge or disrupt existing power relations, create competition for resources between groups, fuel underlying tensions, or contribute to corruption. Equally, when well planned, international assistance can help bring competing groups together, promote more equitable and fair societies, and help to create more peaceful communities.

Over the past 15 years an increasing number of international organisations have recognised the risks associated with their interventions, and have tried to adopt a more 'conflict-sensitive' approach. This entails:

- understanding the context they operate in, especially the conflict dynamics
- understanding the nature of their engagement and how this affects the conflict context, and vice-versa
- acting on this understanding to avoid reinforcing conflict dynamics and to capitalise on opportunities to support peace

CASE STUDY: DONOR HELPDESKS AND STRATEGIC ADVICE

Saferworld has provided advice to governments through the provision of 'donor helpdesks' for almost ten years. These helpdesks have allowed donors to access strategic advice on the conflict sensitivity of country and sector strategies, as well as programme design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation strategies. The helpdesks have developed sector-specific guidance materials to support the integration of conflict sensitivity into programmes, as well as delivering tailor made training and capacity building courses for staff at HQ and country levels. Advisers from across donor agencies have also been able to commission discrete pieces of research, including conflict analyses, to inform strategy development. Saferworld has contributed to the integration of conflict sensitivity into programmes in over 15 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. The helpdesks have helped to build sustainable capacity of a broad range of staff working within donor agencies to better understand conflict issues, and develop appropriate responses for their programmes.

“From the workshop I learnt how to determine and calculate risk and how to apply this tool when dealing with conflict... I see the benefits of adopting a conflict-sensitive approach. It helps to reduce the risk of conflict – which can benefit both the local population and companies.”

Chinese Commercial participant, Conflict-sensitive approaches training workshop, Beijing, March 2014



CASE STUDY: ASSESSMENT OF THE CONFLICT SENSITIVITY OF THE EU PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA

In 2009–10, the European Commission (EC) commissioned Saferworld to assess the overall conflict sensitivity of EU development cooperation in Sri Lanka. Following an extensive process of primary and secondary research, including wide-spread interviews and focus group discussions across the whole country, the report presented key findings, best practices and recommendations in the areas of:

- Conflict-sensitive programme design and partnership development
- Conflict-sensitive project planning
- Conflict-sensitive project implementation
- Communication during implementation
- Identifying and responding to risks
- Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation

The report resulted in the EU designing flexible responses to the conflict, adapting its instruments to strengthen conflict sensitivity in its work, and building capacities of its partners to integrate lessons learned into their programme approaches.

CASE STUDY: GUIDANCE MATERIALS, RESOURCE PACKS AND TRAINING

Saferworld, along with a handful of other peacebuilding NGOs, was one of the pioneers of conflict-sensitive approaches. In 2004, this group produced a resource pack on the subject, still regarded as the key reference work on the theory and methodology of conflict-sensitive approaches. Saferworld also played a leading role in the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, a group of 35 development and peacebuilding agencies, set up to help mainstream conflict-sensitive approaches in participating agencies and in the sector more broadly. In 2012 the Consortium produced a ‘How to’ guide to conflict sensitivity, which provides detailed practical guidance and examples on conflict sensitivity, and a policy brief targeted at donors, which sets out the business case for a conflict-sensitive approach.

Saferworld has also developed conflict sensitivity guidance materials and tailor-made training courses for donors and multilateral organisations (including the EU, Netherlands, Irish and UK Governments, and the UN), leading INGOs (including Oxfam, Christian Aid and World Vision), local civil society and governments, and international business actors (including a wide range of Chinese companies operating in conflict-affected contexts).

WHY IS CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IMPORTANT FOR YOU?



Any gains achieved by humanitarian or development interventions, or external investment in a country, can easily and rapidly be reversed by the onset of or upsurge in violent conflict. Beyond the massive human impacts, it has been estimated that the 'average' civil war costs a developing country the equivalent of 30 years' GDP growth. Violent conflict meanwhile impedes the ability of agencies to access vulnerable communities, undermines efforts to move beyond immediate responses into long-term development, puts enormous strain on staff and beneficiaries, and can massively increase the costs of operations.

A range of new threats meanwhile is challenging the abilities of international organisations to effectively manage the risks of operating in fragile contexts. The increased prominence of and threat posed by organised criminal groups, such as international drug trafficking networks, as well as violent 'extremist' organisations, pose new dilemmas for development, humanitarian and business actors. Other long-term trends, such as climate change and globalisation, are also having profound impacts on global patterns of peace and conflict.

Adopting a conflict-sensitive approach can be a low-cost, and highly effective means of helping an organisation to navigate these difficult contexts in a way that can minimise any negative and maximise the positive impacts of interventions on peace and conflict.

"85% of relief workers surveyed ... reported that they had been involved in or witnessed emergency work that had become unwittingly implicated in existing conflicts or even caused conflict in some instances."

Promoting conflict sensitivity amongst donor agencies: Policy brief





WHAT WE CAN OFFER

Saferworld is internationally recognised as one of the leading agencies in promoting and building capacity for conflict sensitivity – helping a wide range of international actors, including government agencies, multilateral institutions, INGOs, local civil society and international businesses. Over 25 years, we have established a reputation for delivering products of the highest quality, including research, training, strategic advice and consultancy, whilst operating to the most stringent ethical standards.

Saferworld's team of expert international and in-country advisors are available to provide a wide range of services to organisations committed to maximising their positive impacts on peace for local people. Our staff can draw on Saferworld's global presence, as well as our networks of associates, local teams and partners, and broader development professionals to ensure that our work is always informed by the most up-to-date developments on the ground as well as latest thinking in global debates.

Services we can offer include:

- Impartial, independent and targeted advice for staff working at different levels
- Analysis of global, national and local conflict dynamics, and identification of targeted, realistic and achievable recommendations



PUBLICATIONS

China and conflict sensitivity: An introduction

Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A resource pack

Conflict-Sensitivity Assessment of EU programmes in Sri Lanka

Embedding Conflict Sensitivity: The ability of Uganda's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan districts to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach to development

How to guide to conflict sensitivity

Promoting conflict sensitivity amongst donor agencies: Policy brief

Download all the publications from:

www.saferworld.org.uk/resources

- Support to design and conduct conflict analysis, and for conflict-sensitive implementation and monitoring of projects and programmes
- Conflict-sensitive evaluation of projects and programmes
- Assessment of institutional capacity to implement a conflict-sensitive approach and design and delivery of tailored and targeted capacity-building for staff and partners
- Review of strategic and operational planning documents to identify potential conflict risks
- On-the-ground updates of changing conflict dynamics and establishment of early warning systems

To find out more, contact us at:

conflictsensitivity@saferworld.org.uk



Saferworld is an independent not-for-profit organisation, with 25 years' experience in promoting peace and conflict prevention in societies affected by violence and instability.

We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve policies and practices that help build lasting peace and stability. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity. And we believe that this goal cannot be achieved without the contributions of the non-governmental, private and public sectors at the local, national and global levels.

We work in nearly 20 countries and territories across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and have permanent offices established in ten countries, including teams in the UK, EU and US.

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