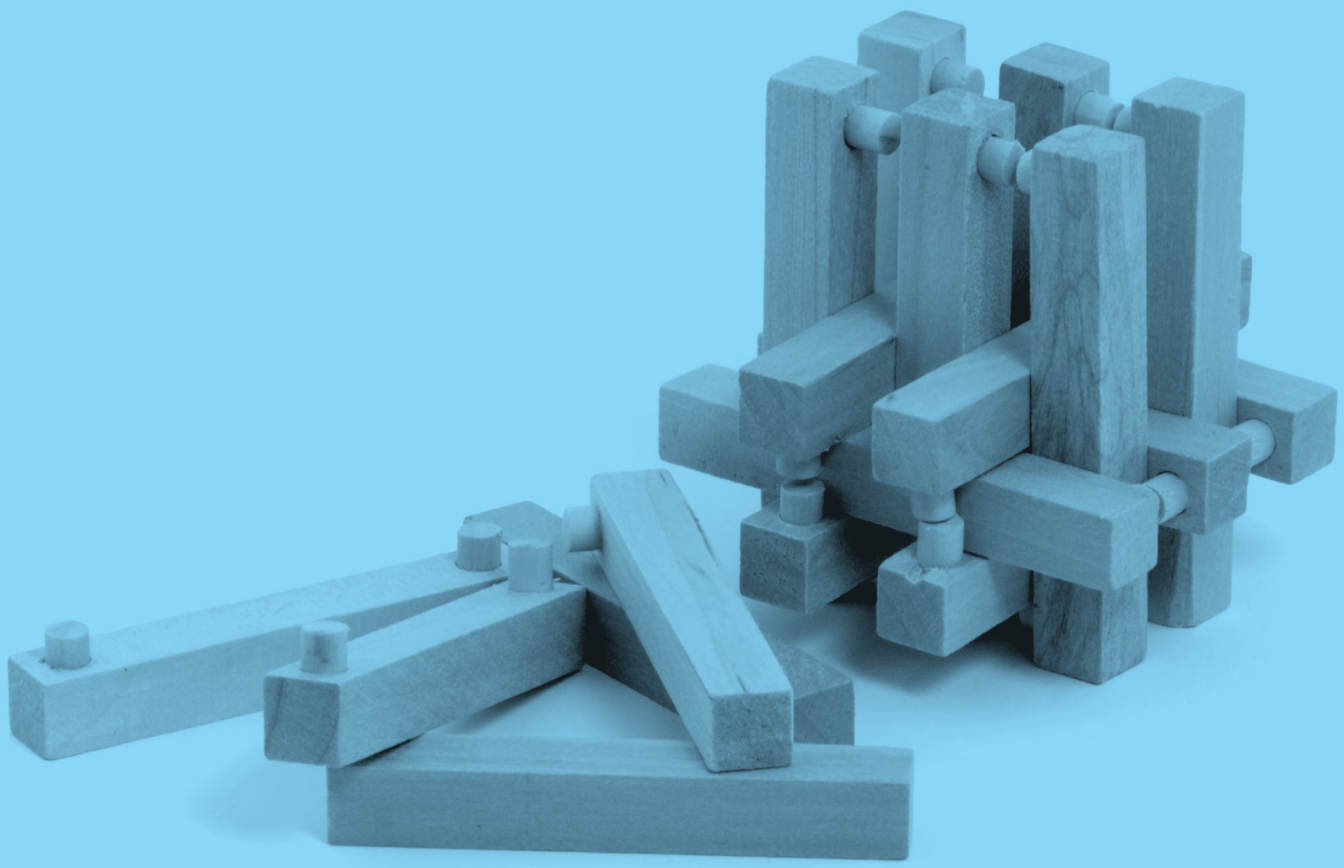
ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES

Towards DAC Guidance



A joint project of the
DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation
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Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Towards DAC Guidance

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Development Assistance Committee

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Part 1

Encouraging Effective Evaluation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: Towards DAC Guidance

Abstract: This report outlines an approach for developing guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. It draws on a broad document review and interviews with key experts, and has been developed in consultation with the DAC Networks on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation and on Development Evaluation.

First, the report specifies which types of work can be considered conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, distinguishing between conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. The challenges of evaluating in this field are discussed and recommendations are made on key concepts and important elements for the process, including conducting a conflict analysis; examining theories of change; understanding impacts; programming to support evaluation; and choosing evaluation methodologies and approaches.

The report also looks at the applicability of existing DAC tools, and adapts the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance to the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. Finally, it outlines the next steps for the DAC Networks in developing guidance.

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Executive Summary

The changing nature of war and the astoundingly high human, societal and financial costs of recent violent conflicts – coupled with a growing sense that such suffering and devastation could be avoided or at least mitigated – have led to a marked increase in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity. The past decade has seen growing numbers of individuals, governments, international organisations, civil society groups and research institutions devote their efforts, intelligence and financial resources to interventions intended to avert or end violent conflict. At the same time, concern has grown over the effectiveness of such efforts.

Two Networks of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – Development Evaluation and Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation (CPDC) – sensed this growing unmet need for direction, among their members as well as other actors in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding fields. In response, they launched an initiative to develop forthcoming DAC guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. The overall objective of this two-year process has been to help improve evaluation practice and thereby support the broader community of experts and implementing organisations in their efforts to enhance the quality of conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions.

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) was asked to draft this report with a fourfold aim: to establish greater clarity with regard to conflict prevention and peacebuilding definitions; to review standards against which to evaluate conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities; to identify the distinguishing characteristics and special considerations of the resulting evaluations; and to outline key potential elements those evaluations could include. The research is based on an examination of evaluation and policy documents and interviews with evaluation specialists, donor representatives, multilateral organisations and programme implementers, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). CDA also participated in a DAC meeting in Paris in October 2006 and the joint workshop of the two DAC networks in Oslo in December 2006. The report therefore represents a useful step in the larger process of developing thoroughly tested and practical conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation guidance.

The main audiences for this report are the evaluation and policy staff of donor agencies, conflict prevention and peacebuilding field practitioners and other relevant donor government personnel. Nonetheless, many other actors in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding and evaluation fields will find the information contained herein useful as well.

Summary of general findings

Defining conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Through comparative analysis of activities across contexts and times, CDA found that a policy or approach that was labelled conflict prevention and peacebuilding in some places often was not seen as conflict prevention and peacebuilding elsewhere. Theories of peacebuilding and conflict resolution abound, but each has been disproved as often as it has been proved. Donors also differ in their interpretations of what conflict prevention and peacebuilding is. The confusion over definitions of conflict prevention and peacebuilding leads many to assume (falsely) that by being "conflict-sensitive" they are *ipso facto* also doing peacebuilding work.

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Furthermore, many people assume that advances in critical structural areas also contribute to the reduction of conflict and the promotion of peace. Many donor-funded programmes and policies are undertaken on the assumption that progress towards liberalisation, economic growth, prosperity, human rights and democracy contribute to peace. Evidence shows that while some of those efforts do contribute to peace, others have negative or negligible effects on conflict.

Given this confusion, CDA suggested the following definition of conflict prevention and peacebuilding as the basis for guidance:

> **Conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions are efforts that adopt goals and objectives aimed at preventing conflict or building peace; they are usually (but not always) focused on a particular conflict zone – an area threatened by, in the midst of, or recovering from serious intergroup violence.[1]**

Using an intervention's goals and objectives as the determining criteria for delineating conflict prevention and peacebuilding boundaries helps to clarify the difference between "conflict-sensitive programming" and conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. All efforts undertaken in a conflict area should be conflict-sensitive (aware of how they affect the dynamics of conflict). Interventions intended to prevent conflict and build peace must also be accountable for their impact on the specific factors that drive and shape that conflict.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations

Scope – When a policy or programme adopts goals to make a difference in the key driving factors[2] of conflict, it becomes a legitimate subject for conflict prevention- and peacebuilding-focused evaluating. Donors may also decide to examine the impacts on peace of interventions that do not have conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals, because those efforts nonetheless have the potential for influencing the factors driving conflict. In settings vulnerable to conflict, policy makers may wish to ensure that all interventions are consistent with the effort to prevent violence. Thus, even efforts that were not originally intended to address conflict may be examined for their actual or potential impacts, using conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria.

Conflict analysis and theories of change – Policy makers, practitioners and donors agree that in order to be effective, conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities must be based on an analysis of the key driving factors of and actors within the conflict. There is also growing agreement that evaluators of conflict prevention and peacebuilding should use such an analysis as the basis for evaluations. Based on that analysis, conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme strategies or theories of change describe the way practitioners and policy makers believe a particular activity will contribute to achieving peace (or conflict prevention). These underlying theories need to be uncovered, described and tested during evaluation.

1. There is no internationally agreed definition of the term "violence". The term "intergroup violence" is used here to distinguish the intentional and illegitimate use of armed force, including both inter- and intra-state conflicts, from other types of violence such as criminal activity and interpersonal violence. While some conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities may address such forms of violence, this research deals primarily with intergroup violence (war).

2. Key driving factors are major elements that contribute to the conflict, without which the conflict either would not exist or would be significantly different. These can be long-term structural issues, more immediate triggers or anything in between, as identified by people in the situation.

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Impacts – There are wide differences of opinion about what is meant by impacts in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. Many think that impacts are beyond the immediate outcomes of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming, occurring "at a higher level" and over the long term. In the view of the CDA team, this preoccupation with the remoteness of impacts can mistakenly divert evaluation attention away from assessing the many effects (intended or not) of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes. Evaluations should take account of individual programme impacts and cumulative, multi-programme impacts at the strategic or policy level. Both long- and short-term impacts should be examined, with a focus on impacts on the conflict.

Special problems, conditions and expectations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations – There is broad evidence that evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding faces special challenges, including: the political nature of peace processes; the potentially problematic role of partner governments; unclear or unspecified goals of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities; implicit and unarticulated (as well as untested) theories of change; the importance of processes as well as outcomes and impacts; and the emotional and ideological commitments of conflict prevention and peacebuilding advocates and programmers.

Evaluation as an intervention – Because a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation occurs in the context of conflict, its approaches and processes are effectively interventions in the conflict. Evaluators who do not know how to engage with conflict dynamics in positive ways (lacking conflict sensitivity and know-how) may do harm as they evaluate a programme. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluators must act in accordance with the field's established principles and be sure that they have thoroughly analysed the conflict context.

Approaches and methodologies for evaluations – There is no one "right" methodology to address all the special circumstances and conditions of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. There are, however, common principles that should be followed, *inter alia*: inclusiveness; testing of the underlying theory of change; use of a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods; attention to unexpected impacts; and ethical standards for approaching informants and handling the reporting of findings within conflict environments.

Adaptation of the DAC Criteria to conflict prevention and peacebuilding – DAC's Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance,[3] with additional information from the OECD/DAC "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management", have been adapted to serve as the basis for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation guidance. All activities (projects, programmes, country strategies, interventions and policies) should be examined using these criteria. Specific questions linking each criterion to conflict prevention and peacebuilding issues were also developed. The criteria are: Relevance/ Appropriateness; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact; Sustainability; Linkages (replacing "Connectedness"); Coverage; and Consistency with conflict prevention and peacebuilding values. There is disagreement over whether Coherence should be considered a criterion; some feel much more evidence is needed to establish whether coherence contributes to conflict prevention and peacebuilding effectiveness. Nor is there full consensus on adding Consistency and Coverage, which could be covered by other criteria.

Skills and tools necessary for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluators – Three qualifications appear to be of particular importance for evaluator teams: i) knowledge of evaluation methods; ii) knowledge of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field (including the state of the art and the skills required for performing conflict analysis); and iii) an appropriate and conflict-sensitive style of working (being comfortable working in dangerous situations, having interpersonal approaches that are transparent, being gender- and culturally sensitive, and possessing skills for managing conflict and tension).

3. DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/21/39119068.pdf

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Additional issues regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations

Joint evaluations – Joint evaluations (involving several donors and programmes) should be promoted because they can generate a fuller picture to establish whether various interventions "add up". Cumulative evaluations look more broadly at many (or even all) interventions in a particular conflict zone to assess the combined impacts of those multiple efforts, often from a strategic level. It is necessary to manage the internal politics, individual interests and diverse needs of multiple actors in order to ensure that the added-value of a joint perspective is sufficient to justify any added costs. Finally, when joint evaluations are performed, it is critical to include local people so that "external agendas" (*i.e.* those of donors) do not distort internal concerns and the evaluation will be useful and relevant.

Partner country roles – The role of partner countries in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation requires additional considerations, in light of the potential involvement of government, or parts of government, in the conflict itself. Government co-sponsorship of an evaluation is inappropriate if the government is party to the conflict. Considerations for defining the role of the partner countries in a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation should be based on an analysis of the potential for bias or the appearance of bias in the evaluation and the potential impact of government involvement in an evaluation on the conflict.

Development and use of indicators – As mentioned above, there is no single proved methodology for preventing violence and building peace. This reality led many with whom CDA spoke to be concerned by recent donor emphasis on establishing standard (or universal) conflict prevention and peacebuilding indicators, specifying detailed logframe analyses of intended activities, and linking evaluations to funding decisions. Many note that they now see evaluations as existing "only" or "primarily" to meet a donor requirement.

Given the reality of what we do not know, conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations in the coming years should be directed toward gathering evidence and learning from it, and on testing and challenging commonly held theories and assumptions about peace and conflict, rather than on establishing fixed universal indicators of peace/conflict. Clarity on indicators (and whether or not they can be generalised in a useful way) may emerge in the process, but the focus and approach at this time should avoid over-specification of anticipated indicators as benchmarks for evaluation. Upcoming conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations should focus on gathering experience and analysing it cumulatively and comparatively across contexts, to improve our collective learning.

A final note: keeping it simple – People involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities commonly speak about how complicated conflict is, and therefore how complicated peacemaking is. But some of the practitioners with whom CDA spoke noted that the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field is probably over-complicating issues, and that doing so provides an excuse for ineffectiveness and lack of accountability. They urged that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations avoid long, complex discussions of the context, as these impede analysis of the effectiveness of efforts. Evaluations should focus on how conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions interact with the key factors and actors that drive the conflict. Simplicity would then be achieved without denying the complexity of conflict causes and dynamics.

Future OECD/DAC actions and next steps

1. *Producing draft guidance* – As stated earlier, this report is intended to contribute to the drafting of guidance for the evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes and policies. To that end, a wide group of donor representatives and practitioners were consulted during the

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drafting of this report and at a special workshop. The feedback received will be incorporated into the future guidance document.

2. *Donor experimentation with evaluations* – The resulting draft guidance could then be used as the basis for a concerted effort by donors to implement evaluations of as many conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes as possible over the next two years, with careful documentation of the processes used, the Terms of Reference (TOR),[4] the lessons learned about the evaluation process and programme content issues. This effort should include the experimentation with joint and cumulative evaluations noted above, but also application of the guidance to single-programme evaluation efforts.

3. *An evaluation of evaluations* – The accumulated evaluations from the experimentation in Point 2 could provide the basis for a comparative evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations, in order to learn what kinds of evaluation have proved useful and which evaluation processes and methods produced those lessons.

4. *Annual review of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations* – In order to facilitate learning about evaluations, the OECD/DAC could convene an annual session to examine a set of evaluations performed during the previous year, perform cross-case analysis, and derive ongoing lessons to inform subsequent evaluations.

5. *Policy review* – Over time, the review of a range of interventions will provide evidence that should inform a review of the policies of individual donors, as well as OECD/DAC policies and guidelines.

4. Terms of Reference (TOR) is a written document presenting the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the methods to be used, the standard against which performance is to be assessed or analyses are to be conducted, the resources and time allocated, and reporting requirements. Two other expressions sometimes used with the same meaning are "scope of work" and "evaluation mandate" (OECD, 2002).

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Introduction

How effective is the international community, acting in partnership with local groups, in preventing conflict and building peace? Impressive successes in some places are counterbalanced by devastating failures in others. Recognising these failures, more and more individuals, agencies, universities and governments have, over the past decade, have devoted their efforts, intelligence and financial resources to interventions intended to avert or end violent conflict. As the body of experience – both positive and negative – has grown, so have attempts to evaluate and learn from it, and thereby to improve conflict prevention and peacebuilding effectiveness.

In late spring of 2006, two Networks of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD – the Network on Development Evaluation and the Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation – asked CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) to help them develop an approach to guiding evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. This work was to follow and build on a review of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations carried out for the DAC networks by the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies (Taylor *et al.*, 2005), during 2005-06, as well as earlier seminal work commissioned by the Utstein group (Smith, 2004a). The Fafo report clarified a number of issues embedded in conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and programmes and in evaluations of these, and pointed towards a more appropriate and robust conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation approach

CDA's challenge was to take the next steps in helping to develop this approach, by establishing greater clarity with regard to conflict prevention and peacebuilding definitions; reviewing standards against which to evaluate conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities; identifying the distinguishing characteristics and special considerations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations; and outlining key potential elements those evaluations could include. The main audience for the resulting guidance was identified as the policy and field staff of donor agencies and other relevant parts of donor governments. The overall objectives were to help improve evaluation practice and, in so doing, to support the broader community of experts and implementing organisations in their efforts to enhance the quality of peace practice.

In addition, the DAC networks asked CDA to augment the present report with specialised applications (called "drill-downs") of specific areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, such as security sector reform, dialogues and training. Once draft guidance has been developed, the DAC also plans to undertake field tests to inform further refinements. This report therefore represents an intermediate step in the larger process of developing appropriate, tested and usable conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation guidance.

Based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) provided by the two DAC networks (see Annex 8), CDA carried out interviews and reviewed a range of conflict prevention and peacebuilding documents and evaluations completed after the Fafo review, as well as donor policy papers. CDA also helped organise two workshops on the application of evaluation guidance to two specialised sub-fields: security sector reform (held in Birmingham, United Kingdom) and political dialogues (held in Cambridge, Massachusetts). Finally, CDA staff participated in the DAC meeting in Paris in October 2006 and the joint meeting of the two DAC networks in Oslo in December 2006.

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Interviews

Following conversations with the Steering Group and OECD Secretariat, CDA conducted 28 interviews. Among the interviewees were evaluation specialists (5), donor representatives (members of the Steering Group and other staff of DAC members) (8), a private donor (1), multilateral organisations (4 + a team), and programme implementers (10). Ten different countries were represented in the group, although eight interviewees were Americans and eight British (or working for a UK organisation). Only four people represented societies in conflict in Africa and the Middle East. A full list of those interviewed is presented in Annex 1.

Although a common set of questions was used for the interviews,[5] in most cases wide-ranging conversations regarding evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes were pursued. Without exception, the interviewees were eager to talk about this topic and offered many ideas and opinions. The findings from the interviews are presented in various places throughout this document.

Document review

CDA's document review was designed to build on the work done for the Utstein Report and by Fafo rather than to repeat it. Additional documents identified related closely to the issues posed in the TORs for this report, mostly produced after the Fafo review. Categories of documents reviewed included:

- Conflict sensitivity literature, including Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIAs) and other selected conflict analysis tools, as well as reflections on their usefulness.
- Recent conflict prevention and peacebuilding literature, particularly those items that analyse the boundaries of the fields and evidence of varying approaches.
    - — Evaluation literature, including:
    - — Most significant change literature.
    - — Goal-free evaluation literature.
    - — Focus-structured comparisons.
- Theory-based evaluation literature.
- Literature on how to assess when circumstances are improving [*e.g.* Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Iraq].
- Meta-evaluations, especially those of DAC donors not yet covered by Utstein or Fafo.

Other evaluations, assessments and case studies identified by our interviewees as especially useful/instructive.

The overall purpose of the literature review was threefold: to expand understanding of the state of the art of evaluations; to explore a broad set of potential approaches to conflict prevention and

5. Interview questions are available on request.

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peacebuilding evaluations; and to consider evaluation methodologies from other fields for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The general bibliography can be found in Annex 2.

Policy documents

A number of donor policy documents relating to conflict prevention and peacebuilding were also reviewed (see Annex 3 for a list). Surprisingly, it proved difficult to locate all pertinent donor documents. This is because conflict prevention and peacebuilding policy articulations appear in different places in these documents: some were found in papers issued by ministries of foreign affairs, and others in sections of policy papers dealing with development co-operation, development assistance or humanitarian assistance.

In addition to requesting policy papers directly from donors, web sites of the majority of DAC members were examined for any mention of conflict or peace in the papers issued by either their foreign ministries or their development agencies. The majority of conflict prevention and peacebuilding policy statements found were included in development policy papers, reflecting a common tendency among donors to connect their aid policies and their peace policies. More recent policies often dealt with "whole of government", the Three Ds (development, diplomacy and defence), and "coherence," which intends to ensure consistency among the various branches of donor governments that deal with regions of poverty and/or conflict. Some policies also reflect recent efforts of donors to co-operate with each other in development, conflict prevention and peacebuilding (and evaluation of efforts in these fields). Review of the policies and subsequent discussions led to the view that evaluation of such interventions must include consideration of interactions between policies and on-the-ground activities, both to assess whether policies are applied in a consistent manner, and to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policies themselves by judging the success or failure of efforts undertaken to implement them.

The wealth of thought and experience gathered through these interviews and document and policy reviews provided the CDA team with an extensive overview of current understanding about how to prevent conflict and promote peace. In addition, over the past five years, CDA has been involved with many international and local partners in a collaborative learning project called Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP); this report also draws directly on that project. Using these sources, the CDA team has identified the salient issues that must be addressed in any evaluation.

Organisation of this report

Section I, "An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities", takes the idea of the palette of potential conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities suggested by the Utstein Report as a point of departure, and then moves forward with a pragmatic boundary definition of these activities based on the goals and objectives of the policy or programme.

Section II, "Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Evaluations: Special Issues", discusses a range of topics that should be considered in evaluations (outlined in the Terms of Reference provided to CDA). The section reviews what emerged from the aforementioned interviews, document and policy reviews and RPP.

Section III, "Relevance of Existing DAC Evaluation Tools", reviews existing DAC evaluation criteria, tools and guidance, and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) criteria derived from them, and analyses their usefulness and relevance for programming. While the tools suggest a number of pertinent approaches, the special conflict prevention and peacebuilding conditions reviewed in Section II necessitate some adaptation of these criteria for evaluations.

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Finally, Section IV, "Recommendations and Main Findings", outlines key elements in programme design, evaluation planning and the evaluation process, suggesting guides for the processes, methodologies and standards of future conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. The report ends with comments about how to move from this discussion toward draft DAC guidance.

Several appendices are attached. Most of these are referred to in the text, as they provide more background or greater detail. Annex 7, however, stands on its own, as it contains two examples of how to apply the general overview provided to specific areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work – *i.e.* training and political dialogues.

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I. An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities

A. The problem: Blurred boundaries and lack of definitional consensus

A comparative analysis across contexts and times shows that a policy or approach that has been labelled as conflict prevention and peacebuilding in some places is not seen as such elsewhere. Theories of peacebuilding and conflict resolution abound, but each is disproved as often as proved. Overall, many activities that are taken up with good intentions are classified automatically as conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The "palette" outlined in the Utstein report represents one way to define the broad range of activities that can be labelled "conflict prevention and peacebuilding" (Smith, 2004a). This palette was derived from the (limited) set of programmes and policies nominated by the four countries and then reviewed in the Utstein process. It did not purport to present a comprehensive definition of the limits/boundaries of the label. However, the four categories of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming proposed in the Utstein report – and included in the palette – have been found to serve as a useful way to organise a listing of intervention modalities, to which other programming types can be added. The four Utstein categories were: socio-economic foundations; security; political framework; and reconciliation and justice.

The CDA team has reviewed various other documents that attempt to list conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming types, and used that information to propose some refinements and additions to the Utstein palette. These are presented in Annex 4, which also presents an approach to clarifying which conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions (projects, programmes, whole-country strategies and policies) should be held accountable to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria – in other words, where to apply (eventual) DAC evaluation guidance.

In dealing with this question, CDA identified a need to distinguish two other questions that are often mixed: i) What are the differences between programmes that are and are not conflict prevention and peacebuilding? and, ii) What are the differences between effective and ineffective conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming? Table 1.1 makes the distinction.

The three columns are delineated by the differences between what is and is not conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Three basic types of efforts are suggested (projects, programming, policies): i) interventions that clearly intend to have a direct impact on the conflict and peace – "pure" conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes; ii) interventions whose primary objectives are not related to peace and conflict (they are usually development and/or humanitarian relief), but which may have inadvertent effects on conflict dynamics; and iii) interventions that have both conflict prevention and peacebuilding and other objectives. Of course, the question of whether a policy or programme is effective or not (*i.e.* whether it falls in the upper or lower row of the matrix) is the main purpose of a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation or review process. This report – and the forthcoming DAC guidance – will provide specific criteria by which to make such judgements.

Note that the top of the matrix also suggests that *all* interventions should be held to conflict sensitivity standards (discussed further below). The second row from the top shows that the interventions in the first two columns – which have articulated conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals and

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objectives – should be held to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria, including those in the middle column that might be development or humanitarian relief programmes. Development and humanitarian interventions that fall in the far right column may or may not be held accountable to conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria – a discretionary matter taken up further in Annex 4.

Table 1.1. **Applying conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation guidance: Conflict sensitivity, objectives and effectiveness**

	All held to conflict sensitivity criteria		
	Held to conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria		Discretionary application of conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria
	Primarily conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives	**Mixed conflict prevention and peacebuilding and other objectives**	**Primarily other (non-conflict prevention and peacebuilding) objectives**
Effective efforts	Intervention has goals for exerting a positive effect on key conflict dynamics, does so well, and is conflict-sensitive.	Intervention attempts to achieve both conflict prevention and peacebuilding and other (development, relief, governance…) goals, does so well, and is conflict-sensitive.	Intervention does not attempt to address conflict dynamics directly, is effective in its own domain, and is conflict-sensitive. (May also have an inadvertent positive effect on peace.)
Ineffective efforts	Intervention has goals for exerting a positive effect on key conflict dynamics, but misses the mark and/or fails to be conflict-sensitive.	Intervention attempts to achieve both conflict prevention and peacebuilding and other (development, relief, governance…) goals, but misses the mark and/or fails to be conflict-sensitive.	Intervention does not attempt to address conflict dynamics directly, is ineffective in its own domain and/or fails to be conflict-sensitive. (May have an inadvertent negative effect on peace.)

Of course, within a specific conflict context most donors are funding efforts that fall into most or all of the columns in the matrix above. In other words, they are funding "pure" peacebuilding policies and programmes as well as a variety of development and humanitarian initiatives that may or may not incorporate peacebuilding or conflict prevention objectives.

At a strategic level, then, the donor must determine how to assess the effectiveness of the entire suite of interventions funded. The matrix above may help sort out the different types of interventions and how they could be evaluated. Multi-donor evaluations and/or country studies will face the same issue at a strategic level: what are the cumulative impacts of multiple interventions by multiple donors at various levels and across several sectors? If such a country study were restricted to purely peacebuilding efforts, the task might be simplified, but it might also miss important dynamics in relation to the peace process. Stated another way: at a strategic level, all interventions in a conflict context should be held accountable for their effects on the conflict, whether or not they have adopted specific peacebuilding objectives. This is closely associated with the DAC Criterion of Relevance, discussed elsewhere in this report.

An additional challenge when defining the boundaries of conflict prevention and peacebuilding arises when both claims and assumptions have not been proved.

Some interventions proceed on the unexamined *assumption* that they are conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In this category we find statements such as, "All poverty reduction promotes peace" or "Women are crucial to peace" or "Working with youth is essential for building peace." It is often naively assumed that any programme that does *good* in a context of conflict contributes to peace. However, there is clear evidence that this is not the case. "Good" activities, undertaken singly or in collaboration, do not inevitably support conflict prevention or peacebuilding. "Doing good" or "doing good things" does not necessarily contribute to an effective peacebuilding strategy.

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Efforts that *appear,* on the surface, to be peacebuilding must also be held accountable for their actual effects in a particular context at a particular time. For example, one can imagine that under certain circumstances, establishment of a truth and reconciliation process (normally accepted as an important element of transitional justice, and therefore of peacebuilding) might not contribute to achieving durable peace or could even have a negative impact. In contrast, interventions that are not typically labelled as peace work, such as building a road or providing secure access to electrical power, may in fact have a major impact on conflict dynamics and could therefore be considered under the conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities umbrella.

Still other interventions *claim* that they are building peace or preventing conflict, when in fact they may have no discernable impact on peace or conflict dynamics. The motivations for such claims vary widely. Some respond to donor funding criteria by adding a "conflict prevention and peacebuilding" component or title. Others really *do* wish to promote peace but, for a variety of reasons, are doing (often perfectly good) work that has essentially no influence on the actual conflict. Such an activity may still benefit from a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation approach, but it is likely that stated objectives and underlying strategies will have to be re-examined in order either to focus efforts on other positive (non-conflict prevention and peacebuilding) goals, or to redesign the programme to directly address relevant peace and conflict issues more effectively.

The most frequently confused programming thrust is institutional development (democracy and governance, anti-corruption, parliamentary capacity-building, etc.), which is assumed by its very nature to contribute to peace. In persistent humanitarian crises, there are also frequent attempts to combine peacebuilding work with physical assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other war victims. Many such programmes are driven by relatively unexamined and unarticulated assumptions about linkages between development outcomes and peace. Further guidance is needed on strategies for understanding these causal relationships and evaluating the links between various development intervention impacts and conflict.

Whether interventions that claim or assume that they are contributing to peace actually do so or not is clearly the key question of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. Some programmes may turn out to be effective in conflict prevention and peacebuilding terms while others may be shown to be effective for other goals but not for peace. Whether working with (for example) poverty, women or youth is effective for building peace will likely depend on the context and on an analysis of the key driving factors of conflict. If it is effective work but does not contribute to peace, it can be justified for other reasons; it would not, however, be judged as successful against conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria alone.

Many interventions with mixed programme approaches appear on the Utstein palette but clearly are not entirely conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For instance, whether an employment programme or human rights programme is conflict prevention and peacebuilding will depend on its stated programme goals and the context.

B. Defining conflict prevention and peacebuilding for evaluation purposes

As noted above, both donors and practitioners seek more clarity about what is and is not included in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. From the CDA team's interviews and document reviews and its own experience regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions, it is possible to derive pragmatic definitional clarity:

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"Conflict prevention and peacebuilding" activities are efforts that adopt goals and objectives aimed at preventing conflict or building peace; usually (but not always[6]) focused on a particular conflict zone – an area threatened by, in the midst of, or recovering from serious intergroup violence.

The range of issues discussed above (the context, the programme approach, the intermingling of multiple programme agendas) make setting predetermined boundaries difficult, as they would either be inapplicable to all contexts or so broad as to be unclear. This leaves us with the *nature of the intervention* and *its goals and objectives* as the critical consistent factors that determine whether an activity can be classified as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding intervention. When a policy or programme adopts goals to make a difference in the key driving factors of conflict, it becomes a legitimate subject for a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation – that is, it can be assessed to determine whether or not it achieves its intended impacts on peace or the prevention of violent conflict.

Consideration of the conflict context and an examination of an effort's goals, objectives and design features provide the best basis for ascertaining what are and are not conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. Merely having such goals does not determine whether an intervention is *effective* according to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria. (The criteria for evaluating effectiveness are discussed in Section III.)

Donors may also decide to exercise their option to examine the impacts on peace of various interventions that do not have conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals, because those efforts have the potential for influencing the driving factors of conflict in a conflict-affected or conflict-prone zone. The closer look at several programme issues that follows will illustrate this distinction, as well as demonstrate the discretionary application of conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria in an evaluation.

A dialogue programme among the leaders of four contending political parties – each with its own armed militia – aimed at building relationships, identifying common goals and initiating informal negotiations leading to official negotiations would fall into the first column of the matrix above. Its goals indicate the intention to produce a significant impact on peace. Such a programme would always be held accountable to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation standards.

A women's health programme that aims to make improvements in child health, nutrition, women's access to services and health education would normally be considered a straightforward development effort (in the far right column of the matrix), and an evaluation would apply standard development evaluation techniques. However, if such a programme is undertaken in a conflict zone and adopts programme goals aimed at fostering greater co-operation among women from conflicting groups in order to contribute to peace, it qualifies as a conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme (falling in the central "mixed" column of the matrix). In that case, the programme could be evaluated for: achievements of the primary programme objectives (increasing women's access to health services, improving child health, etc.); the programme's conflict sensitivity; and *also* its performance in contributing to conflict prevention and peacebuilding specifically. While the core five DAC Evaluation Criteria would be applied in any case, evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding performance specifically may include additional criteria (as outlined in Section IV).

Similarly, a police reform programme may be part of an effort to strengthen the rule of law in a country. Falling into the far right column, it may not require a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation if it is implemented in a country where the risks of conflict are negligible. If, however, the

6. For instance, the land mines campaign and other issues of global policy making that affect the dynamics of many conflicts are not necessarily located only in conflict zones.

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programme is also designed to mitigate significant risks of violent conflict by reducing discrimination in the application of justice or by increasing access to justice by disadvantaged minorities, then it would move to the centre column and a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation would be relevant.

In both of these cases – the women's health programme and the police reform effort – even if donors or other interested groups have no explicit goals in relation to conflict or peace (*i.e.* they are in the far column), they may decide to apply conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria. At first glance this might appear "unfair". Why would donors hold a programme that did not aim to affect peace accountable to a peacebuilding standard?

They might do this for several policy-related reasons. First, they might wish to examine in depth the impacts of *any/all* interventions on conflict dynamics, especially if the donor's overall goal is to influence the driving factors of conflict. For instance, large-scale economic programmes may have a profound influence on a conflict in certain settings, and it would be worthwhile to understand those effects. Second, in fragile states or settings found to be vulnerable to conflict (that is, where early warning data predict that violence might break out), policy makers may wish to harness most/all intervention tools available to support the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts. Finally, conflict analysis might reveal that certain issues, such as discrimination by police forces, are particularly relevant to the driving forces of conflict, and so make it relevant to evaluate the impacts of such programmes regardless of their original stated objectives.

See Annex 4 for a summary of the principles guiding the discussion above.

C. Clarifying the difference between conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention and peacebuilding

The confusion of definitions leads many to assume (falsely) that by being "conflict-sensitive," they are *ipso facto* also doing peacebuilding work. Using the intervention's goals and objectives as the determining criteria for conflict prevention and peacebuilding boundaries helps to clarify the essential difference between conflict-sensitive policies and programming and conflict prevention or peacebuilding efforts. It is clear that not all initiatives undertaken in an area of conflict are conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

For example, humanitarian assistance to war victims is intended to alleviate human suffering rather than to build peace. However, because experience shows that every programme carried out in a conflict context becomes a part of that context – and therefore also a part of the conflict – such programmes must be accountable for their inadvertent side effects on the conflict. For any programme undertaken in a conflict area, therefore, conflict sensitivity is essential to understanding these side effects and ensuring that they are positive rather than negative. The Do No Harm framework was developed precisely as a conflict sensitivity tool to enable such analysis with regard to programme impacts on intergroup "dividers and connectors".[7]

All efforts (policies, programmes, projects) carried out either in a conflict area or in relation to a conflict must be conflict-sensitive. That is, they must analyse how their presence and actions will affect

7. This strategy for analysis broadly characterises the context of conflict as containing two sets of factors: dividers and connectors. Connectors are positive factors for peace and cohesion. Dividers are negative factors or tensions that may lead to violent conflict or weaknesses in a community's ability to resolve conflicts nonviolently. Categories useful for disaggregating these factors include: systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, values and interests, experiences, symbols and occasions.

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the local dynamics of the conflict. Interventions that intend to prevent conflict and build peace must, in addition to being conflict-sensitive, be accountable for their relevance and appropriateness to the specific factors that drive and shape that conflict. Here it is important to note that non-conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts must be conflict-sensitive, while conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives must be *both* conflict-sensitive *and* accountable to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria.

D. Particular challenges of conflict prevention

Much has been written about the notion of conflict prevention – or more precisely, the prevention of armed/violent conflict. Theorists posit a difference between "operational prevention", which usually entails some form of crisis intervention, and "structural prevention", which aims at transforming key social/economic/political factors that, if left unaddressed, could lead to violent conflict in the future. Some of the dimensions of the two categories are presented in Table 1.2 below.

The operational prevention side is easier to manage from an evaluation perspective, as the tools and actors are relatively limited and the goals clearer. On the other hand, few such efforts have been subjected to thorough evaluation, partly because the interventions are often undertaken separately and behind the scenes by government actors in a highly political environment. Nevertheless, it should be relatively easy to develop clear criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of operational prevention efforts.

Table 1.2. **Operational vs. structural prevention**

Operational prevention	**Operational prevention**	**Structural prevention**
Time frame	Urgent, crisis-oriented	Longer term
Actors	Diplomats (bilateral and multilateral), military, civil society, international organisations	Wide range of potential actors: multilateral, governmental, civil society
Approaches & tools	Crisis intervention; quiet diplomacy; political pressure; threats of military intervention or economic sanctions; dialogue and negotiation between conflicting parties	Democratic institution-building; relationship-building; prejudice reduction; power-sharing arrangements; reduction of social and economic inequalities; promotion of rule of law; security sector reform; education; etc.

Structural prevention poses three problems in relation to classification.

First, the category can include all modes of international assistance by a multitude of actors at all levels, hence creating a truly fuzzy boundary. The modes of intervention in structural prevention include economic development; democratic governance/political development; security; intergroup relations; justice/rule of law; human rights; and construction of a culture of peace.[8] Donors and programme implementers tend to lump all these into the conflict prevention and peacebuilding basket and to subject them to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria, without considering which programmes ought to be held to such standards under which circumstances.

Second, much of the programming focused on structural change challenges existing power structures, and therefore generates tension. Each of the modes of intervention may, depending on how it is performed, actually create conflict, at least in the short term. This goes beyond the issue of conflict

8. Many of these are included in the Utstein report's palette.

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sensitivity, which largely asks how a programme is implemented (who is hired, who benefits, who is legitimised, etc.). Rather, this broad agenda of structural change by its very nature tends to generate friction, because it challenges the prevailing structures of power and privilege. Promoting human rights, encouraging participatory democratic mechanisms and redressing economic disparities will spark tension and sometimes even violence, because the success of such measures poses a threat to powerful people. This suggests that such programmes need to anticipate the conflicts that are apt to arise, and build conflict management mechanisms into their programme designs (an approach that extends beyond conflict sensitivity), if they are to be effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes.

Finally, people assume (falsely) that (all) advances in critical structural areas (democratisation, economic development, rule of law, etc.) will also contribute to reducing conflict and promoting peace. Many donor-funded programmes and policies are undertaken on the assumption that progress towards liberalisation, prosperity, human rights and democracy (as defined in Western/Northern agendas) will contribute to peace.[9] Many people assert, almost as a matter of faith, that poverty reduction will also reduce conflict. Similarly, democratic governance structures are assumed to mitigate violence. In fact, the evidence shows that some of these efforts make a positive contribution while others have a negative effect or miss the mark in relation to conflict. All such assumptions, and the programmes that are based on them, should be subject to rigorous scrutiny in a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation.

E. A core set of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities

The CDA team has considered the question of whether there are any kinds of programmes that must *always* be considered to be peacebuilding (or conflict prevention) by definition. If so, these would form a core set of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme types. The team found a few programmes that should always be accountable to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria, because they occur in the context of conflict *and* incorporate broader peacebuilding goals.

Some of these take place in a so-called "post-conflict"[10] setting: demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR); demobilisation, disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR); recovery, return and reintegration (RRR); and transitional justice programmes (truth and reconciliation commissions, war crimes tribunals, etc.). Peacekeeping operations are most often undertaken in a prevention mode as well.

Thus a fundamental policy question is whether all DDR, transitional justice and post-conflict peacekeeping programmes should automatically be judged according to how well they address the underlying conflict dynamics and contribute to Peace Writ Large.

Evidence shows that a high percentage of the armed conflicts around the world are repeat rounds of violence from previous conflagrations and are attributable to the failure of the peace process to address the key driving factors of conflict (Collier *et al.*, 2003). As a matter of policy, then, should post-conflict programmes of *all types* be designed to contribute to peace? Should they include peacebuilding goals, and then be held accountable in an evaluation as to how well they accomplish them? There is strong evidence to suggest that such interventions should always be held to conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria. Similarly, evaluations of all development interventions in fragile states judged to be conflict-prone ought to assess the impacts of the interventions on the risks of violent conflict.

9. Such an assumption is an example of a theory of change, described later in this report and in Annex 6.

10. "Post-conflict" is almost always a misnomer: while the war/violence may have ceased and a political settlement achieved, the underlying conflict dynamics are seldom addressed.

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II. Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Evaluations: Special Issues

A. Framing issues: Conflict analysis, demystifying impacts, considering indicators

Conflict analysis is central

Evaluations in all fields benefit from baseline data or other concrete knowledge about the circumstances in which programming has occurred. In conflict prevention and peacebuilding, there is strong agreement among policy makers, practitioners, donors and academics that programming must be based on real understanding of the conflict which the intervention intends to affect. There is also growing agreement that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluators need that understanding as the basis for assessing an effort's relevance. As there is strong evidence that conflict analysis is essential for performing effective work, the CDA team finds such analysis equally essential for effectively evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding.[11]

Many people carry out "*context* analysis" believing it to be "*conflict* analysis". A context analysis seeks a broad understanding of the entire political, economic and social (historical, environmental, etc.) scene. A conflict analysis is more narrowly focused on the specific elements of that broader picture that may trigger or propel the conflict. The latter may indeed include a range of political, economic, social, historical and other factors, but it focuses on the ones that currently directly influence the shape and dynamics of a conflict. The point is that not everything in a context is equally relevant to a conflict. While all aspects of a context may interact with a conflict, not all are useful prospects for conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. Therefore, based on its reviews, the CDA team found that it is important to make a clear distinction between these two analytical frameworks as a step toward improving the effectiveness – and understanding of effectiveness – of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming.

Some interviewees noted that use of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIAs) tends to diffuse programmers' focus to a wider range of contextual factors that may or may not be immediately pertinent to preventing or resolving a given conflict. Some felt that PCIAs "generate lots of lists" of socio-economic-political-historical-etc. factors affecting conflict; on the other hand, they offer little direction on how to prioritise these factors and translate them into an analysis that is relevant and provides guidance on intervention strategies targeting the key driving factors of a conflict. The process of analysing conflict can and should also include identification of the factors that are contributing positively to progress towards peace, as these often provide a base upon which to build additional initiatives.

Another misdirection of conflict analysis concerns "root causes". Practitioners and academics noted that it is important to gain an understanding of the origins of a conflict, which are typically embedded in structures, institutions and history. However, the problem raised in interviews is that a focus on the original (as some interpret "root") causes can distort later understandings. Interventions that might have been highly useful in the early months of a war may be irrelevant or counterproductive after a war has continued for three or four years, because the factors and dynamics change constantly. To the extent that

11. Conflict sensitivity also requires at least a basic conflict analysis, such as the "dividers/connectors" analysis from the Do No Harm framework.

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root cause analysis focuses attention on long-standing issues to the exclusion of proximate, new and emerging ones, it can prove detrimental to effective programming. Of course, if long-standing structural issues remain critical factors, they must be included in current analyses and strategising.

Effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding work requires a focused understanding of both the specific factors currently pertinent to that specific conflict zone, and the specific actors who are engaged in conflict or who must be engaged in ending conflict. It is important that evaluators understand these factors about conflict in order to assess how well a programme relates to a particular conflict at a particular time. They must either perform or have access to a valid, up-to-date conflict analysis.

Demystifying impacts

There was broad agreement that attempts to assess the impacts (as opposed to outputs or outcomes) of programmes pose special problems. Some feel such assessments are not even possible or desirable because they attempt to measure effects that are "too remote" or raise expectations of impact "too high." Much of the literature as well as many interviewees noted wide differences of opinion about what is actually meant by impacts. Most agree that impacts go beyond the immediate outcomes of programming, that they occur "at a higher level", and that they refer to longer-term effects rather than near-term outcomes. Most felt that it is difficult to attribute impacts to specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. An experienced evaluation expert commented on this debate:

> In some cases, the view that impacts must occur at high levels and be clearly attributable may be grounded in a specialised interpretation of impact assessments as evaluations that rely on randomised control trials [RCTs] or other experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation techniques designed to measure the difference between results with and without the intervention (counterfactual analysis). Such an interpretation is not defensible, given that the scope for RCTs is very narrow and that other methods for acquiring valid evaluation evidence exist.[12]

The dictionary definition of "impact" is simple: "the influence, effect or impression of one thing on another." This straightforward definition reveals the reality that impacts always happen. Some may be important and others trivial, but impacts are not always elusive and unreachable or impossible to find and assess. They happen as a result of any action or any programme. They are everyday occurrences and they are fit for evaluation.

In its "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management" (OECD, 2002 in Annex 3), the DAC defines impacts as "positive and negative, primary and secondary, long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended" (p. 24). This understanding of impacts has implications both for programming and for evaluations. It discourages the idea that it is not possible to see impacts until after a long time has passed – an assumption that too often makes it acceptable to ignore immediate results and remain unaccountable for how conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions actually relate to Peace Writ Large.

In the view of the CDA team, the confusion and disagreements surrounding terminology (outputs, outcomes and impacts) and the common preoccupation with the "remoteness" of impacts must not divert evaluation attention from assessing the many effects of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes on the conflict, whether intended or not. Evaluations should take account of individual programme impacts and cumulative, multi-programme impacts at the strategic or policy level. These are, as the DAC definition notes, primary and secondary, direct and indirect, positive and negative, intended and unintended.

12. Robert Piccioto, former Director of Evaluation at the World Bank, comment to the authors.

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Not all effects are equally worth investigating for a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation. The most important effects to investigate are those that relate in non-trivial ways to the conflict and to its key elements. Every component of a programme will have impacts on the conflict. A clear definition of conflict-relevant impacts (and not just outcomes or outputs) should make them easier to identify and assess, for both programmers and evaluators. To ignore them or to assert that they cannot be identified would be to miss much of what an evaluation should trace.

For clarity in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations, the following definition is proposed:

"Impacts" are the results or effects of any conflict prevention and peacebuilding intervention that lie beyond its immediate programme activities or sphere and constitute broader changes related to the conflict.

The challenge of these findings to donors is clear. In order to assess the impacts of interventions, they must not only assess direct and intended effects, but also determine whether those effects have an important impact on the conflict dynamic, as identified in a valid conflict analysis. Too often, funding is based on an international policy agenda rather than the realities of a particular conflict.

For example, much conflict prevention and peacebuilding funding in Kosovo focused on the return of refugees and IDPs, an effort that reflected international commitment to non-complicity in ethnic cleansing. A review of the effectiveness of these programmes with regard to conflict prevention and peacebuilding (rather than returns) found that they completely "missed the mark" by ignoring the key driving factors of the conflict, which remains the unresolved political status of Kosovo (CDA, 2006).[13] Similarly, programmes in Israel/Palestine, Kosovo and Sri Lanka based on the "contact theory" (that engaging groups in joint dialogue or co-operative activities will result in improved intergroup relations) should be evaluated for their relation to the real drivers of conflict in these areas. Assessments should examine how policy, funding, programme design and implementation cam link for greater effectiveness *vis-à-vis* the driving factors.

Considering conflict prevention and peacebuilding indicators

The CDA team found widespread dissatisfaction with and concern over the usefulness and appropriateness of having indicators assess conflict prevention and peacebuilding effectiveness. This did not reflect a resistance to being held accountable for results, or to collecting information about the changes connected with an intervention. Rather, it stemmed from experience that the tools for developing indicators and the indicators themselves, as used in the design and evaluation of programmes and policies, are frequently unhelpful since they often do not provide an accurate picture of the changes and are rarely accompanied by qualitative assessments of the operations under evaluation or their context.

Many people were concerned about the drive to develop universal indicators in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field, especially in relation to Peace Writ Large. There is still too much debate about what "peace" is to strictly define indicators of progress toward that goal. Furthermore, "universal" indicators may simply not be relevant or useful in a particular context.

13. In consultations with a wide range of people in communities, as well as in focused workshops bringing together international and local NGOs and international organisations, IDP and return issues were perceived to be a secondary factor that fed or reinforced nationalism and extremism. Indeed, the attention and funding channelled to return issues were seen as having exacerbated a driving factor of conflict: feelings of injustice and resentment among Kosovo-Albanians, who perceived an imbalance of aid toward minorities at the expense of their own development.

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Still, many said they find it easy to identify valid indicators in context once they have gained a good understanding of the conflict and robust and clear goals. Some have found it possible to identify categories of impacts for different kinds of activities and for different sectors. A few of these indicator categories were identified in the DAC workshops on dialogue and security sector reform, organised as part of this project for the DAC.

In the CDA Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project, participants produced a list of Criteria of Effectiveness that provides a framework for assessing whether individual and cumulative efforts contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Some peace practitioners and donors have found these useful. CDA is working with a number of partners to test and refine these to incorporate additional learning. The current RPP Criteria of Effectiveness can be found in Annex 5.

Another concern is related to the potential "straitjacketing" effect of indicators. Some people were concerned that attempts to identify trackable indicators caused programmers to focus on small objectives and to undertake activities that were limited in relation to the large conflict, and therefore unlikely to have significant impacts on conflict prevention or peacebuilding. Others were concerned that agencies adapt programmes to fit pre-set indicators, and therefore that these programmes did not respond to changing circumstances. Several field practitioners claimed that specifying indicators in the design phase of a project did in fact limit their ability to respond flexibly and effectively to the dynamics of the conflict, making their programmes rigidly pursue inappropriate directions. Still others supported the use of indicators to monitor changes but not for evaluation. In addition, there is widespread belief that local peace ("peace writ little") will contribute to Peace Writ Large, and can provide reliable indicators of progress towards peace. In fact, there is no evidence to support this belief.

Many people raised doubts about the quality of indicators for measuring outcomes and impacts in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field in particular. Some felt that indicators are often limited to outputs – such as number of meetings, number of trainees, etc. – and do not indicate any changes that occur as a result of the activities. Where indicators of outcome or impact were identified, several examples were cited where these did not accurately represent the phenomenon they sought to measure in a particular context. While such issues are not particular to this field, the challenges of measuring outcomes and impacts seem particularly difficult in the complex, fluid contexts of conflict environments. In Kosovo for example, freedom of movement of minorities was used as an indicator of security. Later research discovered, however, that improvements in freedom of movement reflected neither real improvements in security nor improvements in minorities' sense of security. Similarly, a DDR programme used the number of soldiers demobilised as an indicator of impact. Yet this indicator is at best an output indicator: it does not necessarily show an improvement in security. Nor does it reflect the possibility that former combatants would re-mobilise if their economic and social circumstances did not improve or if political conditions deteriorated.

Finally, many were concerned that, in part because of the use of logframes, there is an overemphasis on quantifiable indicators even though conflict prevention and peacebuilding often involves non-quantifiable outcomes and impacts.[14] Social science research has reliable tools for assessing the quality of social relations. These could be utilised in monitoring and evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions to complement quantitative measures. Indicators and logframe tools thus may be used effectively, but the use of qualitative measures should be encouraged as well as a more

14. According to the OECD DAC "Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management" (2002 in Annex 3), a "logical framework" or logframe is a management tool used to improve the design of interventions, most often at the project level. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a programme or activity.

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flexible and evolving notion of indicators, some of which may be determined by participants in the peacebuilding process.

B. Special problems, conditions and expectations

There is broad evidence that evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding raises questions beyond the framing issues discussed above. While not unique to the field, these present special challenges to evaluators and should shape their work.

The political nature of peace processes and, hence, conflict prevention and peacebuilding work

All international assistance indirectly affects and is affected by political realities within the locales where aid operations take place. War and violence are shaped by political forces, so that any efforts to address conflicts must attempt to reshape those forces. Many colleagues familiar with conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations commented that those evaluations are inevitably influenced by political (with a small "p") and Political (with a capital "P") considerations.

Examples of the small "p" political factors important to such evaluations include the choice of evaluators (especially local team members who are themselves part of the conflict environment); the choice of evaluation methodology; choices regarding whom to interview and whom not; and the terminology employed in interviews and analyses.

The big "P" Political impacts cited included necessary interactions with diplomats and foreign ministries – which often entails overcoming communication barriers and differences in organisational cultures. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding work is also influenced by the individual foreign policy agendas under which donor and other governments operate, and by the difficulty of bringing the various foreign policy instruments into alignment within a single government (not to mention across multiple governments). There are also political barriers to assessing impacts honestly and openly. As these small and large factors affect the work, they also affect evaluation of that work.

Relationship with partner governments

The role of a partner government in a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation can also be problematic. The CDA team's review of evaluation approaches raised questions about whether and how evaluators can or should interact with local authorities and national governments. Governments are often directly involved in the conflict. Thus, conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes often seek not to co-operate with and strengthen governments, but to engage them – along with the "opposition" – in dialogue and political negotiation toward a peaceful settlement. While most agree that partner governments should be involved in evaluations, many advised against the government's taking a lead role or full partnership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. The concerns are similar to those expressed about participatory evaluations: if the government receiving assistance for conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities is a part of the conflict, then partnership with government in evaluation can bias the evaluation and have negative impacts on the conflict itself. Conversely, the evaluation may also exert an influence on the political dynamics and, as a result, influence the conflict ("Hawthorne effect") by involving contending forces in ways that enhance their legitimacy.

Unclear and unspecified goals

Many people noted that conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions are markedly less clear about their goals and objectives than other types of programming. One person interviewed said that the

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articulation of goals has become increasingly vague and "watered down," as donors have pushed for ever greater specificity in objectives and indicators and have asked for prompt evaluation of achievements (within a one-year time frame, for example). Many conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes state objectives in output terms (number of dialogue sessions held, number of people trained, etc.) or in outcome terms (more independent contacts between the two hostile groups; number of child soldiers finding long-term non-military employment), but do not consider the relationships of these to broader impacts or to the larger conflict, *i.e.* Peace Writ Large.

Implicit and unarticulated (as well as untested) theories of change

There is strong evidence that both conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and programmes are based on (or reflect implicit) theories or assumptions about what produces change and how peace is achieved. That is to say, policies and programmes all have a "logic" regarding what kinds of interventions produce what kinds of results and how these results are related to peace. A generic way of stating a conflict prevention and peacebuilding theory of change is: "If we do X [action], it will result in Y [progress towards peace]."

For instance, a programme focused on grassroots organising for peace might espouse the theory: "By mobilising enough people to pressure our politicians, we can induce them to negotiate for peace." An initial assessment of this theory would explore whether the targeted politicians are responsive to public pressures. It would ask: what is most likely to influence the specific leaders to change their positions and approaches to peace? Is grassroots mobilisation the most effective route to change? What is the potential for mobilising people? (Do people live in fear? Are the consequences of open dissent too high?) A later evaluation would examine how the theory played out in the actual circumstances. Was the programme really able to promote change in the way that it envisioned? Did the programme succeed in mobilising peace advocacy groups? What was the impact on political leaders? Did this turn out to be an effective theory of change?

There are many such theories of change (or theories of peacebuilding); most conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and programmes are combinations of two or more. Annex 6 provides a more extensive explanation of theories of change and a listing of those used most often. Each has some merit, capturing some reality that – in certain circumstances – has validity. However, experience shows that there is no universally applicable theory of change or theory of peace.

Many conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations are also driven by implicit theories and assumptions about how peace occurs. One evaluation expert noted that, "Ninety per cent of evaluations done by peacebuilders reassert assumptions." A threefold challenge to these evaluations is, therefore, to make such theories explicit; to avoid reasserting the evaluators' own pet theories; and to test the theories underlying the programme in relation to the specific conflict. This issue returns in Section IV, where there is a call for explicit exploration of the theories of change in the context of an evaluation. Also, considerable knowledge about security and development has accumulated in recent decades; reliable policy research should be taken into account.

Evaluation of programme processes as well as outcomes and impacts

Many documents and interviewees make the point that much of peace work involves processes. One of the main criticisms of the current state of the art of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations is that many assessments do not address the processes employed and encouraged by programming.

There are two aspects to this issue. First, because all conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions are undertaken in a "stream" of other events (the dynamics of the conflict and the other

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ongoing conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities), no intervention stands alone. Evaluations of activities therefore need to take account of how they fit into this "stream."

Second, many feel that evaluations should also assess the consistency of the means and ends of a programming approach and operations, including consistency with the values that underlie peacebuilding work. In other words, such assessments should examine whether or not i) the procedures and practices of the effort are conflict-sensitive (it is amazing how many programmes that claim to be conflict prevention and peacebuilding in their intent actually exacerbate intergroup tensions by their design or implementation); ii) the implementation staff employ appropriate work styles when interacting with parties of the conflict and to each other; and iii) the activities are inclusive, transparent, and balanced/unbiased.

Emotional/ideological commitments of conflict prevention and peacebuilding advocates and programmers

Conversations and literature reviews, as well as reviews of field programming, reveal the strong commitment that those who engage in conflict prevention and peacebuilding bring to their work. This commitment is admirable and often the source of courage, insight and dedicated involvement. However, emotional commitment can complicate attempts to carry out objective evaluations of strategies, policies, processes, outcomes and impacts. People believe so strongly in what they are doing and that it is right to be doing it, that they find it difficult to take a hard look at the work through rigorous evaluation. Remarkably, in this aspect the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field differs from most others – including humanitarian assistance, where people are also often motivated by deep moral concerns. This is because the ideological commitments of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmers are embodied in their implicit theories of peace, which drive their programming and may be threatened by in-depth assessment of their work. Humanitarians generally agree on the basic approaches to their work and the relationship between their work and desired outcomes. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners very often do not.

Fortunately, many peacebuilding practitioners balance their belief in the rightness of the work with a sharp awareness that peace is not achieved quickly and that we need to improve how we work. This shared sense underpins the practitioners' support for finding appropriate evaluation methods.

Evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding as interventions

Since conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations occur in the context of conflict, it follows that the approaches and processes of the evaluation are themselves interventions that may impact the conflict or recovery. This can best be understood by thinking of the effects of certain questions on people's perspective with regard to their conflict. It is possible to ask questions in such a way that distrust and hostility towards the "other side" is reinforced. It is also possible to ask questions in ways that enable people to step back and gain new insights into the driving factors of their conflict that may be helpful in its resolution. Moreover, the process of evaluation may put people in danger. Several evaluators spoke of incidents where someone they had questioned in the course of their evaluation work had been arrested or otherwise threatened.

Evaluators who do not know how to engage with conflict dynamics in positive ways may in fact do harm as they evaluate a programme. For this reason, all evaluators must be briefed about issues that are especially sensitive and that they may not be aware of. Further, conflict prevention and peacebuilding work and evaluations demand a means-ends link. To perform effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, many say, evaluators must act in accordance with the field's established principles, both individually and institutionally. The same holds for evaluations.

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C. Methodological issues in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations

Reviews of literature and conversations brought to light a number of factors that may affect the methodology used in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations.

Evaluation approaches and methods

Both the Fafo study and CDA's interviews and literature review suggest that a results-based framework is the most prevalent approach to design, monitoring and evaluation used in conflict prevention and peacebuilding by donors, development and humanitarian agencies and (increasingly) by conflict resolution agencies and evaluation consultants. The use of a results-based design, monitoring and evaluation process is seen by some people as a major improvement in practice. At the same time, several people noted that these frameworks are sometimes not used properly. Some claim that results-based frameworks may not be fully appropriate in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations because:

- The highly structured format of the framework leads programme designers to focus on filling in the boxes, at the expense of careful analysis and articulation of the programme theory. Further, the indicators developed from this process are not always reliable.
- These frameworks tend to reinforce linear causal relationships between outputs, outcomes and impact, and do not capture feedback loops or the effects of external factors.
- Goals are often vague or too grandiose to permit assessment of impact. For instance, a goal of "improving inter-community relations" sets the bar unrealistically high, and is not specific enough – what aspect of relations? what improvement means? etc. – to permit rigorous assessment. Therefore, the indicators developed in programme design to measure progress towards these goals are not robust.
- Assumptions are not articulated thoroughly and are often related to implementation of the programme (for instance, conflict is cited in the "risk analysis" section of the logframe as a threat to the project).
- They lead to an overemphasis on quantifiable indicators.
- Design and evaluation are not adequately linked to analysis of the conflict (just as the work itself is not), leading to a focus on a project rather than overall goals.
- They do not adequately allow for evaluation of unplanned but potentially significant impacts.

Scope and level of evaluation

There is widespread agreement that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations focused at the project level often fail to address impacts on Peace Writ Large. The Utstein report suggests that impact assessment should be removed from project evaluation and conducted instead at the "strategic" level, exploring whether the intervention strategy as a whole is working. Many advocate focusing project evaluations on contributions to "peace writ little" rather than Peace Writ Large. They argue that impact evaluations should assess the cumulative effects of multiple conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts at the level of the larger conflict. Such evaluations would analyse a set of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes in relation to the myriad other dynamics going on in the society that affect these efforts and the likelihood of achieving peace. Indeed, many are eager to find ways of evaluating at

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the broadest and most inclusive level of analysis. They stress that if a conflict is between two nation states, the level of analysis should be regional or even global; if the context is primarily a civil war, the level of analysis should be national.

The question of shifting the focus of evaluation of programme impacts to the "strategic" level raises two concerns. First, the term "strategic" is being used in several different ways: to refer to the level of evaluation (often meaning country level); to refer to the quality and relevance of the evaluation itself; and to refer to the programme theory of an agency or an intervention.

Second, some people note that evaluating a project only at the project and, in many cases, local level misses the relationship of activities at that level with activities at higher, national, or regional levels. Local conflicts are often interconnected with larger driving factors and interests. For example, one person reported that in a mediation process he was involved with, local people were checking regularly by mobile phone with people in the capital city regarding their positions in negotiating what was ostensibly a "local" conflict. At the same time, impacts at the local level may not be indicative of impact on the driving factors of conflict. For example, a large evaluation of a complex initiative designed to bring together people from conflicting groups on common projects found that the initiative did have some success in helping people deal with conflicts that originated at the local level; however, it had no effect on problems that originated at the national level that were the major drivers of violent conflict.

The conclusion from all these concerns is that an evaluation must examine the interactions among different levels and explore the (implicit or explicit) theories about how efforts to induce changes at the different levels interact. Thus, guidance will have to distinguish between evaluations of individual interventions and evaluations at the higher plane of country strategies. In principle both types of evaluation are needed, in order to illuminate local-national-regional-global interactions, and to ensure that there is no "disconnect" between micro and macro findings. Furthermore, conflict analyses should address the interaction among interventions, their consistency and linkages. At the same time, the limitations of evaluations of individual interventions, absent comprehensive assessments of the full range of interventions in the conflict zone, must be acknowledged.

Data collection

Not all data collection methods are useful or relevant for evaluations. For example, people note the practical and ethical difficulties of conducting controlled studies of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, even if this would generate the most "valid" results. Similarly, household surveys can provide important information (and are underutilised), but aggregation of data collected at the individual or household level may not accurately reflect broader achievements/impacts. While many programmes focus on the individual level, there is strong evidence that these do not necessarily "add up" – they cannot be aggregated in a simple way to ascertain the broader effects. Changes in multiple individuals' attitudes and values, for instance, may not be indicative of systemic change.

A number of special issues regarding the collection of reliable data arise in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. These include the following:

Access – Because the setting of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work is politically fraught, there are often obstacles limiting evaluators' access across conflicting groups. When there is a political motivation for limiting information and assessment, programme staff, policy makers and/or local authorities may block access to certain regions or groups.

Bias – Many people with whom an evaluator speaks will almost inevitably be biased because they are associated with a particular group, or because they have a personal interest in the outcome. Conflict

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prevention and peacebuilding evaluators need to be able to identify such biases and develop methods for obtaining valid assessments from a variety of more or less biased informants. Just as conflict prevention and peacebuilding work requires that peace practitioners recognise and accept the validity of many perspectives and "truths" (there is no one "truth" in a conflict), it is important for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluators not to accept (or construct) one truth. Again, this argues for detachment in carrying out a conflict analysis. Good conflict analysis requires an evaluator to weigh diverse judgements and to take account of the full range of perspectives available, in order to assess the way a programme may be interacting with and addressing the varied "truths" of opposing sides. In addition, many people noted that evaluations often rely on information only from individuals or groups who know or have participated in a conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme, or from people in one geographic area, such as capital cities. Therefore, evaluators need to develop and use appropriate methods of gathering information that reflect the differing perspectives on the conflict, including those stemming from geographic differences.

Security/Safety – Access may be limited by security considerations. Where there is conflict there is danger, both to evaluators and to those with whom they interact. Danger to evaluators may limit access to people and areas and lead to incomplete or biased evaluations. Several people spoke of having potential interviewees refuse to meet with them due to safety considerations.

Trauma – Some people raised problems associated with questioning traumatised people about programmes. Their responses may worsen the bias problem and reopen painful events that exacerbate mental anguish. Hence, the guidance should incorporate pertinent ethical principles.

Participatory methods

There was wide variation in opinion regarding whether and how to engage local people in evaluations. Some said it is always critically important to involve a range of local actors, as a way of ensuring that the analysis of the conflict – and therefore, analysis of the effectiveness of a conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity – is accurate. Some believe participatory evaluation methods increase local ownership, and improve the quality of indicators as well as interpretation and analysis of data. Those who took this position recognised that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations are interventions (as described above). Some believe that the evaluations should include a capacity-building component to increase local ownership and leave a legacy beyond the life of an intervention or evaluation. It was also noted that participatory assessments are not aimed primarily at evaluation *per se*, but rather at building trust and ownership in a peace process.

Others, however, stressed the potential for biased and distorted findings that could arise from participatory evaluation methodologies, when local people are themselves involved in a conflict. One person strongly felt that participatory evaluations should not automatically be assumed to be the best. He suggested that future evaluations should explore whether and how participatory methodologies affect the quality and results of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations in particular contexts.

Joint evaluations and cumulative impacts

Many feel that joint evaluations provide the best way of assessing the cumulative and overall impacts of international programming in a single conflict context. They believe that joint evaluations can address broader impact questions; increase the potential for objective and independent review, given the wider variety of viewpoints brought to the effort; facilitate mutual learning; reduce conflicting messages to recipient countries; encourage more harmonised and co-ordinated policies; and reduce the evaluation costs to partner countries. Increasing emphasis on sector-wide approaches, harmonisation of aid efforts and joint assistance strategies makes joint evaluations even more appealing, as it is difficult in conflict prevention and peacebuilding contexts to distinguish between different individual agencies' impacts.

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At the same time, as the DAC "Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations" (OECD, 2006 in Annex 3) notes, there are a number of challenges in implementing joint evaluations, including the fact that processes for co-ordinating joint work can be complicated and costly in terms of logistics and management; the need to reconcile differing methodologies; and the need to accommodate the varying political agendas of different donors. Joint evaluations may be difficult where the programmes and policies to be evaluated represent a variety of theories of change. There is also a danger that the focus of donor energy on working together can subvert local ownership of the evaluation process.

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III. Relevance of Existing DAC Evaluation Tools

The CDA team looked at two existing DAC guides for evaluation to consider their relevance to issues and approaches in evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities: DAC's "Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies" and the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance. It also reviewed the ALNAP[15] adaptation of the DAC Criteria to humanitarian assistance.

A. Guidance for evaluating humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies

There are similarities in the context – and hence in evaluation considerations – between humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies and conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming.

Two other factors raised in the humanitarian guidance are equally important in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. First is the parallel need for a clear statement of objectives as the basis for assessment of a programme's effects. However, whereas in humanitarian evaluations cause and effect links are clearly understood, when evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions the objectives would themselves need to be examined in order to determine whether or not they are the "right" objectives – that is, do they make sense in relation to the current conflict? In contrast, evaluations of humanitarian interventions seldom ask in the same way whether the supply of food or medical care is "right" when people are hungry or injured.

Second, in both types of intervention, policy evaluations should take precedence over project evaluations. The focus on "what happened?" and "why?" rather than linear cause and effect is as essential to understanding the cumulative impacts of multiple conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts as it is to understanding the overlapping forces that shape impacts of humanitarian assistance.

But there are also significant differences between the two that limit the direct applicability of the humanitarian assistance evaluation guidance to conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. They include the political nature of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work and its evaluation (as mentioned previously); the fact that a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation is itself an intervention in a conflict context (though this can be true for humanitarian assistance); issues regarding determination of the suitable unit of analysis; and the non-aggregation of individual effects.

An additional difference is the fact that humanitarian assistance involves the delivery of cash or material goods, often into a conflict environment. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities seldom involve the transfer of tangible resources, and when they do this is not the primary goal of the work. Interventions that involve "only" meetings, training, dialogue, mediation and other efforts to shift the range of conceivable political options differ greatly from those aimed toward meeting people's physical

15. "ALNAP" refers to the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, an international interagency forum working to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian action; it is based at the Overseas Development Institute in London.

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needs, particularly in terms of measurability and attribution. The primary goals of humanitarian assistance activities are socio-economic, while within conflict contexts the main challenge is to remain conflict-sensitive (though interventions do of course make positive and negative contributions to peace as well).

This last difference is well captured by the expressions "working in" conflict versus "working on" conflict. The difference is a powerful one; evaluations of the two types of work assess very different things. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations must consider whether the activity has affected key driving factors of the conflict, not simply whether the activity was conflict-sensitive.

As mentioned above, the review of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation approaches also raised questions about whether and how evaluators of peace activities can or should interact with local authorities and national governments. Because government authorities are often directly involved in the dynamics of conflict, the ways in which programming and evaluation interact with them are important.

B. The DAC Evaluation Criteria

The original five DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance are Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. These criteria were adapted by OECD in 1999 to apply to assessments of humanitarian assistance efforts, and further refined by ALNAP in 2006. The resulting DAC/ALNAP Criteria are: Relevance/Appropriateness, Connectedness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact (OECD, 1999 in Annex 3) (Beck, 2006 in Annex 2).[16] A number of interviewees felt that the five DAC Criteria for Evaluation Development Assistance are too broad for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. However, most felt that these two sets of criteria are both useful and can be adapted for use in that area.

In interviews and subsequently in the Oslo experts' meeting with representatives from both DAC networks and others, a number of adaptations were suggested. There was a general sense in Oslo that it should be possible to maintain the original DAC Criteria as the basis for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations rather than invent new specific criteria. Other participants suggested additional criteria.

The paragraphs that follow summarise the thinking (including areas of both agreement and disagreement) about criteria that emerged during the Oslo meeting. Section IV presents the proposed DAC Criteria for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Evaluation that resulted, along with associated specific evaluation questions.

Relevance/Appropriateness – Participants in the Oslo meeting agreed that the Relevance/Appropriateness criterion is central to conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions and evaluations. For emphasis and clarity, however, the criterion should have a strong conflict prevention and peacebuilding focus. Therefore, the questions to be asked by evaluators are: Is the intervention based on an accurate analysis of the conflict, and does it therefore address key driving factors or key driving constituencies of the conflict? Is it working on the right issues in this context at this time? Is the theory of change on which the activity/policy is based a logical or sensible one in this context at this time?

It should be noted that Relevance/Appropriateness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts at all levels not only might but should change over time, as circumstances in the conflict change. The questions above referring to "at this time" are essential aspects of assessment. An effort that may be

16. Quotations used below on the meaning of each criterion all come from the 2006 ALNAP document.

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relevant at one time may be completely irrelevant, or counterproductive, at another time in a conflict. Therefore, in testing for Relevance/Appropriateness, a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluator would also be assessing the responsiveness and flexibility of any policies or programmes.

Effectiveness – This dimension is essentially the same as with a development programme. Using the DAC Criterion, evaluators would ask: "Has the programme achieved its stated (or implicit) purpose, or can it reasonably be expected to do so, on the basis of its outputs?" To sharpen the criterion for conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes, many urged that the Effectiveness question be explicitly related to the Relevance criterion – that is to say, an assessment of effectiveness should explore how the stated objectives contribute to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This would mean that even if a programme or policy is "effective" in achieving some of its original, stated objectives (developmental, humanitarian, etc.), if it is not relevant specifically to the issues of the conflict, it would not be considered effective in terms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives.

Efficiency – Adapting the Efficiency Criterion for conflict prevention and peacebuilding poses challenges. For DAC, Efficiency "measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs", including a hypothetical comparison of possible alternative approaches that could have been used to achieve the same outputs. For conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts it is critical not to limit an assessment to "outputs" but to focus on the relationship of the outputs to the driving factors of conflict (or likely conflict). It is possible simply to ask how many people were trained through a conflict prevention workshop (outputs) and whether they claim that the workshop changed their perspectives (outcomes). However, a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation must also ask whether or not such a workshop, and the resultant change, had anything to do with the actual issues that underlie the conflict or the strategies needed to induce change. One could change many attitudes and still have no significant effect on a conflict, and thus be judged inefficient in a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation.

In discussing the application of the Efficiency Criterion to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, participants asked how one might calculate the costs or benefits of conflict prevention. In Oslo, some people noted that it is difficult to assign value to the benefits of a non-occurrence – *i.e.* that war did *not* happen. Similarly, there is little agreement on a way to assess how much peacebuilding costs. Most agreed that we do not have sufficient evidence to guide judgements regarding the relative value of different approaches measured against the resources expended, so it is difficult to establish a standard for assessing the relative costs of outcomes and impacts.

Others emphasised that the problems faced in assessing an activity based on the Efficiency Criterion are not limited to the conflict prevention and peacebuilding domain, and that the best approach is to relate actual and comparative costs: how does this particular programme or policy approach compare in costs to other options for achieving the same goal? They felt that this question should be included in any conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation. To be sure, the costs of conflict prevention and conflict management are often miniscule when compared with the costs of violent conflict, by almost any measure. But this fact should not justify an attitude of "it does not cost much, so why hold it to efficiency standards?" Not all conflict prevention activities are successful, so economy of resource use and selection of cost-effective intervention strategies are as important in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding domain as in development interventions.

Impact – As noted above in Section II.A, there is some confusion surrounding the definitions and dimensions of conflict prevention and peacebuilding impacts. DAC and ALNAP apply the Impact Criterion to the "wider effects" of an effort. They include differential effects in this assessment; for example on women and men, or other sub-groupings. Everyone agrees that it is critical for evaluators of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to look for and assess impacts. Again, based on the evidence observed, the

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CDA team feels strongly that this criterion should apply not only to long-term effects but also to immediate impacts, with an emphasis on the conflict dynamics. There was general agreement that the criterion is of particular importance in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as it relates to unexpected side effects of programmes and policies in that area, both positive and negative. The focus of an assessment of Impact would be established by the conflict analysis. Not all impacts are of interest to a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluator; the emphasis should be on those that relate specifically to intergroup relations and to the driving factors of the conflict.

For further discussion of impacts see the Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project's criteria in Annex 5.

Sustainability – The original DAC Criterion of Sustainability, as applied to development efforts, does not appear in the later DAC and ALNAP guides for humanitarian assistance. In conflict prevention and peacebuilding policy and programme design documents, there is a great deal of discussion about Sustainability as "ownership" of peace processes. However, conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme planners seldom consider the likelihood that when an effort is effective, there will be some people in any conflict setting who may attempt to spoil it. Evaluations should therefore examine the ways in which an activity has or has not anticipated and addressed those factors or individuals who will try to undo its effectiveness.

The other aspect of Sustainability for conflict prevention and peacebuilding is analogous to the sustainability of development efforts. A conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation should assess the degree to which the impetus or momentum of any effort has become integrated into local processes. This is what people refer to when they look for local people's "ownership" of peace processes. Questions to be asked include: Will a new institution designed to address conflicts survive? Will hard-won improvements in intergroup relationships persist in the face of challenges? Will the parties to a negotiated agreement honour and implement it? Will the resources necessary for implementation be forthcoming from national or international sources?

Connectedness – In humanitarian aid, the Criterion of Connectedness replaces that of Sustainability. It refers to the long-term impacts of short-term interventions, specifically to the longer-term (developmental and other) effects of immediate, life-saving humanitarian activities. For conflict prevention and peacebuilding, it is also useful for an evaluation team to assess the likely longer-term effects of efforts. However, these considerations can well be covered under the Criterion of Impact discussed above. Therefore, some Oslo workshop participants suggested that this criterion, borrowed from humanitarian evaluations, is not necessary for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, provided that it is embedded in Relevance or Impact.

However, most participants felt that it was important to reinterpret the Criterion of Connectedness to refer to the linkages between conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities (at different levels – micro-macro, across sectors, etc.). Interpreted in this way, Connectedness is an important measure for assessing conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. There is evidence (through the RPP project) that linkages among individual/personal changes and socio-political changes are critical for cumulative effectiveness; it is therefore necessary to develop a criterion that captures whether or not an effort has explicitly established such linkages. In fact the Criterion should be called *Linkages*, to avoid confusion with ALNAP's very differently defined term "Connectedness".

Coherence – As noted above, the adapted DAC and ALNAP Criteria for humanitarian action has added the criterion of Coherence. This refers to assessing activities undertaken by a range of actors (security, development, trade, military) to ensure that there is consistency and that all take account of humanitarian and human rights considerations.

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In Oslo, there was a great deal of discussion about the appropriateness of the Coherence Criterion for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Some felt strongly that if Coherence is not actively and continuously pursued in conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, activities will be constantly undermined or undone by approaches and actions undertaken by other branches of government, or other donors and partners. That is, Coherence was taken to mean "whole-of-government", "Three Ds/3Ds" (diplomacy, defence and development), and "harmonisation" and alignment among partners within and across the governments concerned. Given the "strategic gap" identified in the Utstein report, some argued that assessment of Coherence with long-term development would be essential for the assessment of Effectiveness and Impacts of conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions, from a Peace Writ Large perspective.

Others disagreed. They noted that while a lack of co-ordination, outright competition and contradiction often do appear to weaken the potential effects from multiple efforts, this does not necessarily mean that attaining coherence is desirable, particularly if actions are aligned in the wrong direction. As one person put it, "Coherence for development or security represents a hypothesis of change, rather than being proven always to contribute to more positive impacts on peace." His point was that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluators should look for and gather evidence regarding the extent to which alignment of actors' work does or does not support conflict prevention and peacebuilding effectiveness. To establish Coherence as a criterion against which to assess conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities would be to assume that Coherence always contributes to achieving results.

Specifically, two possible negative effects were noted. First, if external actors align all their policies and efforts, this could (and in some cases has) lessened the "ownership" by local actors of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. A question for further exploration and analysis in evaluations, therefore, was suggested: *whose* Coherence is to be assessed, and how, for improved conflict prevention and peacebuilding results? Second, there is some evidence that attempts to align conflict prevention and peacebuilding work with military and foreign policy efforts tends to submerge that work into the foreign policy/military agendas of one or more donors, thus distorting the analysis. Some noted that those who work in the development and peace sides of donor governments do not have any mandate to insist on Coherence among all other branches of government. Hence, evaluations that attempt to look for such Coherence could run into barriers of access and agreement (although this in itself could be informative).

Coverage – Within the humanitarian sphere, Coverage refers to whether all those in need have access to humanitarian assistance. Some people felt that Coverage was of particular importance in assessing policy-level conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. It may also apply, however, to programme efforts as well. An evaluator might ask: "Do donor policies effectively cover all conflicts or does donor funding adequately extend to all areas where conflicts occur? Or, are there still 'hidden conflicts' that receive little or no international attention?" This criterion would also apply to conflict prevention efforts, to assess whether sufficient attention was being paid to emerging violence.

Consistency with conflict prevention and peacebuilding values – Many people felt that this is one other criterion necessary for assessing conflict prevention and peacebuilding, one not sufficiently covered by DAC and ALNAP. In interviews, a number of people told of conflict prevention or peacebuilding activities in which the project staff were insensitive to others, biased in their judgements, and disrespectful of people with different opinions or approaches. For many, the behaviour of these individuals contradicted the intent of their programming to such a degree that the programme was undermined. In the RPP learning process also, the importance of using means that do not work at cross-purposes with peacebuilding ends came up repeatedly as an important factor affecting the quality and impacts of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

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A second aspect of Consistency raised by a number of people has to do with the importance of conflict sensitivity for conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Again, people cited instances in which an activity that was intended to have a positive effect had inadvertently exacerbated intergroup divisions and antagonisms, thus worsening relations and triggering further violence. For example, a democracy-building effort might concentrate on redressing previous social or political exclusion. But, by concentrating on equal access to power, the effort might threaten those who currently hold power and exacerbate tensions between the ethnic groups that they represent. In a violence prevention context, the challenge would be to mitigate a factor (exclusion) that could eventually lead to violence, while avoiding approaches that might precipitate backlash and violence in the shorter term.

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IV. Recommendations and Main Findings

Part 1 of this section suggests an overall approach to programme design and the elements essential to preparing evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. Part 2 lists the steps necessary in actually conducting the evaluation. The section includes recommendations from the CDA team that build on the more detailed discussions presented in Sections I, II and III. The ordering and relative importance of elements outlined here will vary according to the context and evaluation goals; listings should therefore not be viewed as consecutive steps. Although the two parts of the section are presented separately for clarity, it should be kept in mind that planning and conducting evaluations are inherently interrelated processes. Suggestions for future development of DAC guidance are also included.

1. Preparing the Evaluation

A. Getting programme design right: An aid to good evaluation

This report has not focused on effective programme design *per se*. However, there is consensus among donors and practitioners that good work at the design stage contributes greatly to achieving the learning goals of monitoring and evaluation systems. Based on the interviews and literature, several design elements can be identified that increase the effectiveness of the intervention itself and aid in its evaluation:

- A rigorous conflict analysis.
- A well-articulated theory of change.
- Well-formulated goals, objectives (linked at different levels) and activities that are relevant to the conflict (*i.e.* that address its key driving factors). [17]
- A process that integrates monitoring and evaluation from the beginning.

Many organisations lack sufficient resources to complete the steps outlined above. This leads to the recommendation below.

Recommendation:

Donors should encourage and indeed fund an inception phase of programming. This phase would provide time and resources for conflict analysis, for developing and testing goals and theories of change, and for formulation of appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems.

17. The CDA team found that if programme designers are able to formulate precise goals and specific objectives, it becomes relatively straightforward to develop good indicators.

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Box 4.1. **Guiding principles for evaluations**

- A conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation is itself an intervention in a conflict context and should respect the same principles of conflict sensitivity as any other intervention.
- From the beginning, an evaluation process should incorporate a plan for engaging specific audiences/constituencies regarding the findings, results, recommendations and/or lessons.
- An evaluation should contribute to a learning process that influences policy and programme (re)conceptualisation and/or (re)design.
- The first deliberate judgement of an activity should be at the proposal stage: assessment of a proposal for funding should employ criteria similar to those that will be used to evaluate the proposed activity during and after implementation.

B. Setting up the evaluation

A number of issues must be addressed when organising and conceptualising an evaluation exercise and drafting the relevant TORs. The recommendations that follow take the form of sets of questions to be answered. Ultimately, DAC guidance needs to provide advice on these issues, where possible. This section is intended for use by donor desk officers or others responsible for initiating an evaluation effort.

Deciding on the purpose and dimensions of the evaluation

The primary purpose of evaluations is to promote *learning* as well as *accountability*, so that the work of donors and implementing practitioners continually improves in effectiveness. To fulfil the learning purpose, an evaluation, review or assessment of a programme or policy should not be seen primarily as a written report. (It appears that most evaluation reports are read by very few people.) Instead, donors, evaluators and implementing organisations should incorporate more opportunities for presentation and discussion – of findings, recommendations and learning – with key audiences, including partner country representatives. Evaluations should engage a wide range of stakeholders in a mutual learning process that involves as many people as practicable and contributes to improving practice.

Different types of learning and feedback are possible, based on the given stage in a programming cycle:

- Monitoring systems collect information on key indicators over time, and provide a regular stream of feedback allowing for mid-course corrections (though that is not the only basis for redesign). Such systems can be a good way to keep track of rapidly changing conflict contexts.
- Mid-course evaluations or reviews assess a programme or policy in progress and likely to continue for some (often unstated) period, again either substantiating the prevailing design or establishing the basis for redesign/redirection, as well as providing early lessons.
- End-of-programme or end-of-policy evaluations provide an opportunity to assess the results and more substantial lessons learned from the intervention(s).
- A self-evaluation or internal review is sometimes appropriate in an evaluation process. This process of self-examination can be useful for an implementation team (at the project or programme level,

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or at the donor or whole-of-government strategic level). Intervention efforts often use the process as a simple means of mid-course review, but it can also be incorporated as one step in a larger evaluation exercise. Various tools and methods for self-evaluation exist, including participatory approaches that engage the implementation team in a group reflection process; individual survey/reflection exercises; and surveys, questionnaires and focus groups for and composed of direct programme participants.

Learning goals and the structure of the evaluation process also shift depending on the level of the evaluation – *e.g.* individual programmes, a specific sector, the cumulative impacts of multiple programmes in the same conflict zone, or broader policies.

Evaluation and mid-term reviews can be performed at a range of intervention levels: discrete projects; programmes (often comprised of several projects); country strategies (usually by a single donor); policy (application of a donor policy across several contexts); and a variety of multi-donor combinations in single or multiple contexts. The focus and structure of an evaluation effort will change considerably at these different levels.

Developing and institutionalising monitoring systems is deemed very important for ongoing learning for, and adaptation of, conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions. The data gathered in a monitoring process can be valuable for evaluators. Several interviewees warned, however, that monitoring is not evaluation – even if the purposes are related – and that, even if the data are valuable, they cannot be relied upon unquestioned but must be verified and triangulated.

Finally, donors and practitioners are interested in different levels of assessment. Some evaluations simply ask whether a programme delivered what was planned (outputs) – and so serve practically an accounting or auditing function. Others look at the programme's proximate outcomes (direct effects on participants, etc.); still others seek to assess programme impacts on the broader society. The impact level is emphasised here, as this poses the greatest challenge for donors and their partners and is the highest priority for learning in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field.

Recommendation:

The Terms of Reference should reflect decisions regarding the purposes and dimensions of the evaluation, among many other aspects. Specifically, the following questions should be considered:

- Why is this evaluation being conducted at this time? Is it truly an evaluation, or is the intent to set up or review a monitoring system? If it is an evaluation, is it a mid-term review or a summative evaluation?
- What is the purpose of the evaluation? Is it mostly about accountability (performance against objective within budget) or about programme effectiveness and/or impacts?
- If the main concern is about uses of funds and performance of activities, what main lines of inquiry will the evaluation take? (See sub-section 2.D below.)
- If the main concern is about effectiveness and impact, what are the main lines of inquiry?

Clarifying projected uses of the evaluation

The purpose and dimensions of an evaluation are closely linked to its ultimate anticipated uses. Design and execution should be guided by a thorough understanding of what the evaluation will be used for.

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Recommendation:

It is important to consider the following:

- How will the evaluation be used? For programme or policy redesign? Renewed funding decisions? For the design of future similar programmes or policies?
- Who are the audiences for the findings, and how will they be engaged? What steps have been taken to make such engagement effective?
- How will the results be communicated, and to whom?
- What are the roles of partner country officials or other groups receiving the findings?
- What strategies will encourage use of the findings and lessons by donors and practitioners?
- What is the plan regarding presentation and discussion of findings, recommendations and learning with key audiences, such as field staff and managers of the implementing organisation; partner organisations; key local officials; donor representatives in the field; and headquarters staff of the donor and implementing organisation?
- What are the appropriate venues for an open exchange of ideas for programme redesign (goals, objectives, strategies, theories of change, activities)? As a practical matter, how will the findings feed into programme redesign and/or policy making?

Deciding on level and scope

Evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the strategic level, as defined in the Utstein report, asks "whether the intervention strategy as a whole is working" (Smith, 2004a, p. 14). Projects, as well as programmes and policies, can and should be evaluated at this level. Specifically, in addition to assessing the implementation and management of projects, evaluators should always ask whether the interventions have or are connected to a strategy that is based on a reasonable theory of change in the particular conflict.

Recommendations:

The following questions must be discussed:

- What is the "level" of the evaluation? (Community level, a focus on specific institutions, or a national or regional level?)
- How far along the "results chain" (outputsà outcomes à impacts) will the review/evaluation reach? Will the evaluation look for immediate and longer-term impacts on programme participants, on institutions, on the larger society and/or on broad conflict dynamics? How will it do so?

For single-donor efforts, will the exercise assess:

- A single project?
- Several projects comprising a programme?

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- The entire range of programmes by a single donor in a particular country or region ("country strategy review")?

- A particular type of programme implemented in multiple contexts (*e.g.* police reform programmes in six countries)?

- The application and implementation of a specific donor policy within a single context or across multiple contexts?

For multiple donors undertaking a joint evaluation effort, will the exercise assess:

- Selected programmes of multiple donors in the same context?

- All programmes by multiple donors in a conflict context (*i.e.* the "country strategy" of multiple donors)?

- How will the joint effort be organised and funded?

Considering approaches and methodologies

While there is no one "right" methodology to address all the special conditions of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, a number of evaluation approaches may be appropriate in a particular circumstance (Church and Rogers, 2006). It is worthwhile to explore the applicability and efficacy of evaluation approaches that do not require the generation of indicators, such as "most significant change", "theory-based evaluation", "goal-free evaluation" and participatory evaluation. These may prove more useful than indicator-based approaches, such as the logframe and results framework. Depending on the context, objectives and scope of the evaluation, some options include:

- *Results-based evaluation approaches*, which assess whether interventions have achieved planned results (outputs, outcomes or impacts).

- *Goal-free evaluation approaches*, in which the evaluator examines the actual results, outcomes and impacts of interventions rather than verifying achievement of expected results or pre-stated objectives.

- *"Most significant change" approaches*, which use participants' stories to identify the impacts of the intervention. Participants are invited to write stories of "significant change" and then participate in dialogue (within a group) about them, to make explicit what individuals and the wider group define and value as "significant change".

- *Action evaluation*, in which the evaluator works with the intervention team, participants and donors in an iterative process throughout the life of an intervention to define goals, examine assumptions and values underlying those goals, and define and implement methods for testing whether the goals are being met.

- *Theory-based evaluation*, which documents the assumptions implicit in a programme design and identifies the data required to test these assumptions. This approach can work both with the activity itself (how the effort will contribute to the overall goals) and with the implementation theory (the assumptions underlying the detailed implementation choices regarding participants, issues, locations, timing, etc.). Given the importance of articulating and testing theories of change, there was a strong suggestion in Oslo that theory-based evaluation would be relevant for testing

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programme and intervention theories. It is recommended that a theory-based approach be included in the pilot testing of future guidance, to gather further evidence about its use in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This is not an exhaustive list, and approaches may be combined to meet the needs of a specific evaluation. As yet, no methodology is foolproof for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Recommendations:

The advantages and disadvantages of a particular approach to evaluation should be weighed, taking into account the purposes and questions of the evaluation, the context in which it is taking place, and its scope, budget and timing.

Although different approaches may be used for conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation, there are common principles that should be followed in order to strengthen the validity and rigour of the evaluation:

- *Inclusiveness* – Methodologies should be rigorous about including the full range of points of view. In particular, evaluations should include perspectives both from within and outside the capital, as well as the perspectives of the variety of groups and sub-groups (actors and their constituencies) involved in the conflict, even if the interventions work only with one side. Some sampling methodologies – random sampling, for instance – fail to be fully inclusive. Where data collection is difficult because of lack of access or security concerns, other methods – including consulting with "proxies" – should be employed to ensure inclusion of perspectives from all sides of a conflict.

- *Testing the theory of change* – Methodologies should generate specific data/evidence that tests the assumptions comprising the theory of change embedded in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities: their *relevance* to the conflict and the context; and their *plausibility*, *i.e.* whether the evaluated activity's strategies, outputs and outcomes are likely to lead to desirable impacts on the nature of the conflict and its drivers.

- *Mixed-method approaches* – The evaluation should draw on both qualitative and quantitative methods and evidence. Single-method evaluations are not adequate for conflict prevention and peacebuilding analysis.

- *Rigour of evidence* – The data and information used should be triangulated where possible. Information sources should be transparent and reliable.

- *Unexpected impacts* – Processes and techniques for identifying and assessing both planned and unplanned or unexpected impacts, both positive and negative, should be used.

- *Ethics* – Ethical issues that may arise during the evaluation should be addressed at the outset, in the Terms of Reference.[18] Articulating ethical standards for the evaluation can help manage the politics of an evaluation (both with a little "p" and with a capital "P") and protect the evaluation from political pressures that may undermine its validity and usefulness.

18. While as yet there are no fully agreed, binding ethical standards for evaluation, the ethical principles of a number of national and regional evaluation associations are quite similar, in effect representing growing agreement.

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With regard to the use of participatory evaluation, donors and evaluators should consider when and how to involve local people – from government to beneficiaries and others – in the design of the evaluation, based on:

- The degree of politicisation and polarisation in the situation and the degree to which a shared definition of the problem exists. That is, is it possible to define a set of indicators, criteria or domains for change that is shared by all major groups of stakeholders?

- The power relations among the various parties and their relation to the programme. What is the danger that one perspective or group will dominate the process of defining indicators or evaluating success?

- Is it possible to access all relevant stakeholder points of view at all critical stages of the participatory process? Are all sides able to participate – if not equally, at least in a substantial and meaningful way – in the evaluation?

Much has been written about evaluation methods. Hence, DAC guidance should refer to relevant sources but need not repeat all of the wisdom and best practices provided in various evaluation manuals. Future guidance should indicate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to evaluation as an aid to choosing a methodology for specific conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations. A brief overview of "pros" and "cons" of various approaches is contained in *Designing for Results,* the guide to evaluation of peacebuilding by Church and Rogers (2006), and these could be developed further during the guidance piloting phase and afterward.

Taking timing and logistical issues into consideration

With regard to timing, there was wide agreement among those consulted that end-of-project evaluations are often not useful and likely to be ignored/filed away (*i.e.* not used for learning). Many urge that monitoring and evaluation be carried out "just in time", "constantly" or "frequently". Evaluation should be performed so as to inform policy discussion and/or indicate programme adjustments for improved effectiveness. Many linked the process of evaluation to the dynamics of a conflict itself, which requires constant reassessment and changes in approach.

Recommendation:

Factors to consider regarding the conditions for evaluation should include the following:

- What is the current stage in the planning/implementation cycle of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding programme or policy? Is this a timely moment for rethinking directions and strategies?

- Will conflict prevention and peacebuilding policy makers or programmers be able to make the changes needed? Do they know that change is needed?

- What is happening in the conflict? Have there been recent changes in the dynamics that call for rethinking programmes?

- In what stage is the conflict cycle? How do the political and security conditions influence the prospects for evaluation?

- In what stage is the programming cycle? Has the intervention effort been in place long enough to provide useful experience and learning?

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- Is this an appropriate moment for the proposed exercise, in terms of programme development, implementation, etc.?
- How long has it been since any previous evaluation or review was performed?
- Are there any logistical issues that must be taken into consideration (security restrictions, weather patterns, major national holidays, access to transport, etc.)?
- How will the evaluation be funded and managed?

Developing Terms of Reference

All of the considerations and questions outlined above will have implications for the development of Terms of Reference (TORs) for the evaluator or evaluation team. Future DAC guidance should provide sample TORs. Among the many important details to be included, TORs should specify:

- The kind of exercise expected: mid-course review, final evaluation, etc.
- The level of analysis expected: project, programme, country strategy, multi-donor, etc.
- Whether to assess outputs, outcomes, and/or impacts.

Selecting an evaluator or evaluation team

The extent of evaluators' experience with conflict prevention and peacebuilding varies greatly. Some interviewees voiced strong reservations about their competence while others expressed warm appreciation for their skills and motivations. Three qualifications seem particularly important for evaluators to have: i) knowledge of evaluation methods; ii) knowledge of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field; and iii) an appropriate style of working. In general, most people who provided input to this report feel that a team needs to have complementary skills, and that people who are themselves knowledgeable conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners are critically important to the quality of evaluations.

Questions to ask while selecting evaluators include:

- What are the necessary attributes (skills, experience, relationships) of an evaluator or evaluation team, given the purposes of the evaluation and the main lines of inquiry?
- In particular, does the team have demonstrated knowledge of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field and practice; the ability to perform conflict analysis; experience with relevant evaluation approaches and methods; experience in the country/region involved; language skills?
- What is the working style of prospective evaluators? Do they: i) demonstrate skills and comfort working in potentially dangerous and politically sensitive situations in a calm, non-threatening manner; ii) employ interpersonal approaches that are transparent and trusting, and that evoke trust; and iii) exhibit skills for managing conflicts and tension?

Recommendations:

At a minimum, as conflict prevention and peacebuilding grounding, evaluators need:

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- To know the "state of the art" in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field under examination, as well as the cautions about how various activities do and do not "add up" to real impacts on the broader peace and security situation.

- To recognise that a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation is itself an intervention, so that they approach their task mindful of the effects their work will have on moving toward peace or away from conflict.

- Knowledge of and skills in developing conflict analyses and evaluation methods.

At a minimum, in terms of style, evaluators need:

- Ability and comfort working in dangerous situations (calm, non-threatening, not overly adventurous).

- Interpersonal approaches that are transparent and trusting, that evoke trust, and that are gender- and culturally sensitive.

- Skills for managing conflict and tension.

C. Additional issues to consider

Joint evaluations

Joint evaluations (across several donors and programmes) should be promoted because they can generate more learning about whether things "add up". Cumulative evaluations look more broadly at many (or even all) interventions in a particular conflict zone to assess the combined impacts from those multiple efforts. At the same time, the politics of multiple actors will need to be handled carefully so as not to confuse and weaken evaluation and to ensure that the learning is sufficient to justify the extra costs.

A number of practical suggestions are contained in the DAC Network on Development Evaluation working paper, "Joint Evaluations: Recent Experiences, Lessons Learned and Options for the Future" (OECD, 2005a in Annex 2) as well as in the DAC "Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations" (OECD, 2006 in Annex 3). A facilitator might be added to the evaluation team to assist the actors in defining questions and terms of reference, and to deal with the differences in approach, methodology and focus that may arise during the course of a joint evaluation. Finally, when joint evaluations are performed, it is critical to include local people so that "external agendas" (*i.e.* donor agendas) do not overwhelm partner country interests and local concerns.

Partner country roles

The role of partner countries in evaluation requires additional considerations in light of the potential involvement of government, or parts of government, in the conflict itself. The question is not whether the government ought to participate, but how. Co-sponsorship of an evaluation is inappropriate if the government is party to the conflict. Considerations for defining the role of the partner countries should be based on an analysis of the potential for bias or the appearance of bias in the evaluation and the potential for government involvement in evaluation to impact the conflict itself.

Development and use of indicators

There is no single proved methodology for preventing violence and building peace. This reality led many with whom the CDA team spoke to be concerned by recent donor emphases on establishing

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standard (or universal) conflict prevention and peacebuilding indicators, specifying detailed logframe analyses of intended activities and linking evaluations to funding decisions. Many note that they now view evaluations as carried out "only" or "primarily" to meet a donor requirement.

Given the extent of unknown variables, evaluations in the coming years should be directed toward gathering evidence and learning from it, and on testing and challenging commonly held theories and assumptions about peace and conflict, rather than on establishing fixed universal indicators of peace/conflict. Clarity on indicators (and whether or not they can be generalised in a useful way) may emerge in the process, but the focus and approach at this time should avoid over-emphasis on indicators as the benchmark for evaluation.

Because the state of the art of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming is not settled, upcoming evaluations should focus on gathering experience and analysing it cumulatively and comparatively across contexts, to improve our collective learning.

2. Conducting the Evaluation

What follows is a summary of the elements necessary in conducting an evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. Included are the recommended key steps and important considerations for evaluators and their partners working in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. Part 2 also addresses next steps in improving practice in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation in general, and in developing DAC guidance in particular.

Although the suggested elements are presented in a linear fashion, an evaluation may implement them in a different order. Those designing each exercise will select those elements most relevant to their situation and then develop an appropriate sequence.

A. Obtain or perform a conflict analysis

Evaluators should begin by conducting a conflict analysis. This will serve as the (necessary) basis for determining the relevance and impacts of the policy/programme. Such an analysis provides an understanding of the key driving factors and actors of the conflict, and how they interact. If the programme has been updating a conflict analysis on a regular basis, and if the evaluator finds that analysis accurate, it can be used in lieu of the evaluator producing his/her own analysis.

A conflict analysis is distinct from a context analysis.

A **context analysis** seeks to understand, broadly, the entire political, economic and social (historical, environmental, etc.) scene.

A **conflict analysis** concentrates on the elements of the broad picture that propel the conflict. It includes political, economic, social and historical (etc.) factors, but focuses on those that directly influence the shape and dynamics of the conflict.

A conflict analysis should:

- Include all perspectives of all contending parties.

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- Identify key driving factors of the conflict (major contributing elements, without which the conflict either would not exist or would be significantly different; these can be long-term structural issues, more immediate triggers or anything in between, as identified by people in the situation).

- Identify positive factors in the situation and/or actors exerting an influence towards peace – which can, in many cases, serve as the basis for further peace initiatives.

- Show the dynamics/relationships among the driving factors.

- Differentiate which factors are more and less important to the conflict.

- Include a stakeholder and key actor analysis (people/constituencies that perpetuate or mitigate the conflict).

- Reflect the current stage of and evolving trends in the conflict.

Ideally, programme designers will have performed a conflict analysis during the design phase. Unfortunately, that ideal is only rarely realised. If an original analysis exists, it can serve as one form of baseline, enabling comparison with a current conflict analysis. Otherwise evaluators can perform a current analysis, and through the data collection process determine what the conflict situation was at the beginning of the programme, to develop a basis for comparison.

The level of effort devoted to a conflict analysis must be scaled to the scope of the evaluation or review. The evaluation of a single project or a relatively contained programme may call for a short and simple analysis exercise, while that of a whole range of programmes in the same context or a whole country study would warrant more resources devoted to producing a fuller conflict analysis. At the relatively simple end of the spectrum, peace practitioners and evaluation teams have shown that it is possible to produce a valid analysis in a few days of effort, with data collection activities and participatory processes spread over a couple of weeks.[19] More extensive analysis processes take several weeks and involve larger teams of researchers. CDA recommends that DAC guidance should describe how to conduct a conflict analysis – including both the short-and-simple and more comprehensive versions – and refer to various templates and models used by donors.

A conflict analysis can in itself be a politically charged effort, and therefore must adhere to conflict sensitivity guidelines. It is not always possible to get all competing perspectives (from the different parties or people who can represent those views) in the same room at the same time. It is however possible, by talking with the different people separately, to gain an understanding of the different views of the conflict.

It is not necessary to gain consensus on the nature of the conflict. The contending groups will not agree on what the conflict is about. The conflict analysis can and should incorporate contrasting perspectives.

Conflict analysis must also be performed at the level appropriate to the peacebuilding intervention. That is, if the programme focuses on a particular province or sub-region, it is important to understand the conflict dynamics at that level while also analysing the impacts of other levels (national to local, regional to national, etc.) on programme decisions. If the effort has addressed mainly national level dynamics, the analysis should concentrate at that level but also show how local-level and regional factors influence the national level. A strategic-level evaluation, country study, or assessment of multiple government initiatives

19. See for instance Woodrow, 2006.

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(by for example defence, development and foreign affairs) would require an analysis that covered aspects relevant to that level of focus.

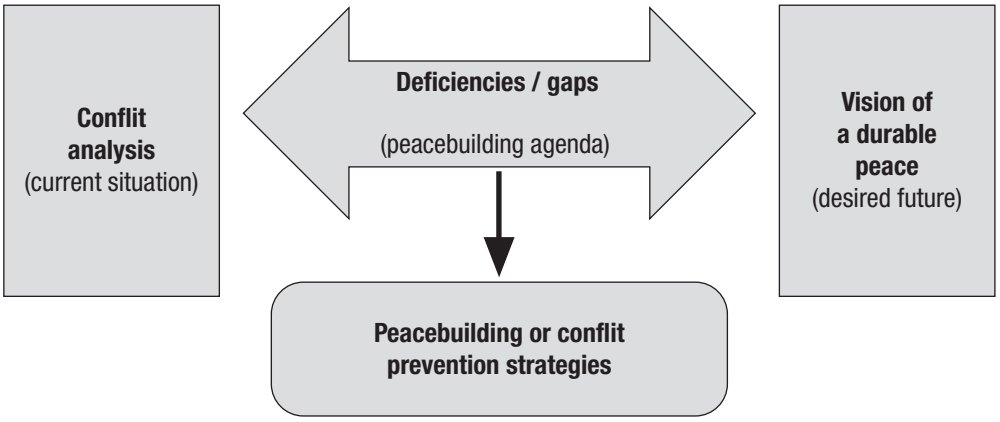
People from the situation may identify external factors that influence the conflict. Examples include the impacts of international assistance (emergency aid, development, peacebuilding), trade (legal or illegal, *i.e.* arms traffic), actions or policies of neighbour states (safe haven for armed movements, incursions, etc.) and other actions by the international community (embargoes/sanctions, direct support to rebel movements or to a repressive government, UN resolutions, etc.).

B. Identify intervention goals and assess the theory of change

Determine the intended positive direction of the peacebuilding intervention. It will be important to understand what positive conditions the intervention or programme hopes to create – a specific future vision (beyond generalities) of a durable peace. Such a future vision, when contrasted with the current situation (as described in the conflict analysis), can clarify "peacebuilding deficiencies" or gaps[20] (Figure 1) that in turn form the basis for strategy formation.

Some activities will already have an explicit vision built into their design. Others will either be less explicit or deliberately avoid any such statements, for political or diplomatic reasons. It is possible and important for an evaluator to elicit the future vision as part of the evaluation process, especially in discussions with the implementation team.

Figure 4.1. **Mapping conflict prevention and peacebuilding goals and strategies**



It is also important to identify and assess the underlying theory of change of the intervention, whether at the strategic or programme level. The theory of change represents how the interveners (policy makers, programme designers, implementers) assume that their strategies can bring about their goals (vision of peace) in this context. A generic way of stating a conflict prevention and peacebuilding theory of change is: "If we do X [action], it will result in Y [progress towards peace]." Theories of change are embedded (often implicitly) in intervention strategies at the project, programme, whole-country and policy levels.

20. The definition of "peacebuilding deficiencies" or gaps illustrated in Figure 1 is adapted, with some changes in terminology, from "Thoughts about Relevance", a short paper based on the Peace and Conflict Assessment methodology of BMZ, described in "Sector Strategy for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Transformation, and Peacebuilding in German Development Cooperation" (BMZ, 2005).

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An evaluation must consider whether the effort is progressing towards the planned goals – in other words, whether the theory of change is proving correct. (See Annex 6 for a more complete explanation of theories of change, including illustrative examples.)

While there are numerous, common "generic" theories or general hypotheses regarding how change/peace occurs, which can be fairly easily listed, an evaluator must work with implementers to identify the *specific* theories embedded in the design of the intervention in question, and determine whether the assumptions have proved true.

C. Gather and analyse data/information

Obtain the "story" of the programme, including people's own explanations of why it unfolded the way it did. Gather information from i) programme documents and reports, ii) monitoring data (if available) and iii) interviews with programme staff, partner organisations, local/national officials, participants, the appropriate stakeholders and relevant members of the public.

Evaluation itself must be recognised and carried out as the intervention it is. Data collection in particular can exert negative or positive effects on the conflict. Participatory data collection may prove valuable, but should be used with caution because of the potential partisanship of many local people and the dynamics of power and dominance in conflict settings.

D. Examine the effort against various criteria

Explore the peace effort (project, programme, policy, country strategy, multi-donor effort) against criteria. Each evaluation effort must determine the most important criteria and the detailed questions (lines of inquiry) that are most appropriate for the type of intervention, the stage of implementation, and other political and organisational factors. Application of relevant criteria is a central element of an evaluation. (See Annex 4 for a discussion of the types of intervention that are considered conflict prevention and peacebuilding.)

The criteria listed here below are adapted from the standard five DAC Evaluation Criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) and the adapted DAC/ALNAP Criteria for assessing humanitarian assistance efforts (Relevance/Appropriateness, Connectedness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact).

They constitute a "menu" of potential lenses through which the intervention can be viewed. The CDA team felt that some of them are *essential* to evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, while others are optional. The criteria will vary in their applicability to specific evaluations. For instance, issues of Coverage and Coherence might be most useful for strategic or policy-level evaluations. In addition to the criteria presented below, the RPP "Criteria of Effectiveness/Impact" can be used to help determine whether any conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity, large or small, is having a positive impact on Peace Writ Large (see Annex 5).

The DAC criterion that refers to means-ends consistency should always be used to assess gender and other inclusiveness, as well as cultural sensitivity, for all interventions. In addition, for many interventions, criteria of gender inclusiveness and impacts, cultural sensitivity and conflict sensitivity, should also be applied.

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Below, specific questions have been added to illustrate how each criterion might apply to a conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation. The questions linked to the suggested criteria should be viewed as illustrative/explanatory. Each evaluation exercise will need to generate a set of specific questions appropriate to its circumstances.

The DAC Criteria, as adapted for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, are:

Relevance/Appropriateness:

- Is the conflict prevention and peacebuilding intervention based on an accurate analysis of the conflict?
- Does it therefore address key driving factors or key actors in the conflict?
- Is it working on the right issues in this context at this time (*i.e.* is it up-to-date)?
- Is the theory of change on which the activity/policy is based a logical or sensible one in this context at this time?
- Has the effort responded flexibly to changing circumstances over time?

Effectiveness:

- Has the intervention achieved its stated (or implicit) purpose, or can it reasonably be expected to do so on the basis of its outputs?
- Are the stated goals and objectives relevant to issues central to the conflict?
- Is the effort achieving progress in a reasonable time frame? Is it possible to accelerate the process? Should the effort be slowed down for any reason?

Efficiency:

- Does the intervention deliver its outputs and outcomes in an efficient manner (results against costs)? By what qualitative or quantitative measures?
- How does this particular programme or policy approach compare in terms of cost to other options for achieving the same goal?

Impact:

"Impacts" are the results or effects of any conflict prevention and peacebuilding intervention that lie beyond its immediate programme activities or sphere and constitute broader changes in the conflict. (See further discussion on assessing impacts in the sub-section on results chains below.)

- *For individual projects/programmes/policies*: What are the primary and secondary, direct and indirect, positive and negative, intended and unintended, immediate and long-term, short-term and lasting effects of the effort? Does the activity impact significantly on key conflict or peace factors?
- *For multi-programme and multi-donor evaluations:* What are the combined and cumulative effects, primary and secondary, direct and indirect, positive and negative, intended and unintended,

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immediate and long-term, short-term and lasting, of the multiple efforts? How do these impact key conflict or peace elements?

Sustainability:

- Will new institutions designed to address conflicts survive? Are they being used?
- Will hard-won improvements in intergroup relationships persist in the face of challenges?
- Will the parties to a negotiated agreement honour and implement it? Are effective mechanisms in place to facilitate implementation?
- Will the resources necessary for implementation be forthcoming from national or international sources?
- Have those who benefit from ongoing conflict or who would resist movement towards peace ("spoilers") been addressed adequately?

Linkages (replaces "Connectedness")

- Are individual and grassroots projects or programmes linked to higher levels (national, regional) and to parallel efforts in other domains (micro-macro, across sectors)?
- Do country-level initiatives account for regional/international dimensions of the conflict or link to efforts that do so?
- Do interventions focused on key decision makers or power brokers link effectively with efforts to engage larger populations and constituencies – and *vice versa*?
- Are efforts aimed at promoting individual changes in behaviour, skills and attitudes linked with change efforts at the socio-political level?
- Are different efforts contradictory or undermining each other?

Coverage:

- Do donor policies effectively cover all conflicts, or does donor funding adequately reach all areas where conflicts occur?
- Are there "hidden conflicts" that receive little or no international attention?
- Is sufficient attention being paid to emerging violence and conflict prevention in potentially violent regions?

Consistency with conflict prevention and peacebuilding values:

- Are implementation staff members sensitive to others, unbiased in their judgements, and respectful of people with different opinions or approaches?
- Are the means of the intervention consistent with peacebuilding ends? For instance, are agencies that promote participatory processes taking decisions in participatory ways themselves? Are

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interventions that promote multi-ethnicity or intergroup dialogue practicing those principles in their management of the intervention?

- Is the intervention conflict-sensitive, or does it inadvertently exacerbate intergroup divisions and antagonisms?

Coherence:

Participants in the DAC networks are currently not in full agreement regarding the appropriateness of Coherence as a criterion for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions. Therefore, the following questions are intended as a framework for gathering additional evidence on this issue:

- Are efforts to co-ordinate/align conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming or policies (across agencies, donor governments, partner governments) resulting in improved effectiveness and greater positive impacts on peace, or not?

- What are the effects – positive and negative – on conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities of "whole-of-government" approaches and policy alignments among diplomacy, security, development and other branches of donor governments?

- How do co-ordination efforts affect local ownership of peace processes (by partner government officials, civil society actors, etc.)?

E. Analyse the results chain[21]

Analyse the information gathered and assess the effort's outputs, outcomes and impacts (as appropriate for the evaluation's objectives and scope) by following the widely accepted "results chain". Assessment of impacts requires special consideration (as mentioned above).

Outputs – To what extent has the programme delivered the planned activities, services and products? If it has not, why not? What unplanned outputs has it delivered?

Outcomes – What are the immediate/proximate results of the programme – on direct participants, beneficiaries, partners, institutions, policies, etc.?

Impacts – How is the intervention already affecting the broader society and the broader conflict, and what are likely future impacts?

Assessment of impact should refer back to the conflict analysis: how has the situation changed over time, and what is the likely contribution of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding intervention to those changes?

Evaluators should identify and assess impacts on the issues or factors that are key to the conflict. They should also discuss likely (or verifiable) longer-term, more substantive impacts that can be seen to contribute to the larger peace, as indicated by assessment of the relevance and plausibility of the theory

21. A results chain is the causal sequence for an intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback (OECD, 2002 in Annex 3).

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of change. It is not necessary to hold a conflict prevention and peacebuilding effort to an ultimate standard of "achieving peace", but the evaluation should identify the effects of the intervention on the conflict environment.

In evaluating the impacts of a conflict prevention and peacebuilding effort, it may be more feasible to determine whether the evaluation object is making a *contribution* to positive change, rather than trying to show direct, individual *attribution* for larger observed changes. The latter may in fact be the result of a composite of multiple interventions and other external factors.

F. Assess for conflict sensitivity

As noted elsewhere in this report, all programmes operating in a conflict context must be held accountable for conflict sensitivity. Therefore, an evaluation should use the Do No Harm framework or a similar tool to assess that dimension.

G. Examine the relationship to policies

Determine what policies (country strategies, broader policy statements, specific approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding) apply to the intervention being evaluated. Do the activities that are the focus of the evaluation square with the relevant policies? If the project is judged successful yet does not comply with policies, what does this suggest regarding the effectiveness and relevance of the policies themselves? If the evaluation assesses multiple interventions in the same conflict zone, to what extent do they all comply or not with the policies? What does the success or failure of an activity suggest about the policy? (For instance, if the interventions comply with the policy yet appear to fail, what are the implications for the policy?)

H. Engage in a learning process

Implement the plans (determined in the preparation stage) for follow-up and dissemination of lessons learned. The evaluator/evaluation team may play specific roles in this process, but normally follow-up is mainly the responsibility of the person or unit that commissioned the evaluation.

Box 4.2. Future DAC actions and next steps in developing guidance

1. *Producing draft guidance* – As stated earlier, this report is intended to contribute to the drafting of guidance for evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes and policies. To that end, it should be used to elicit consultation with and feedback from a wide group of donor representatives and practitioners. The feedback received will then be incorporated into a guidance document.

2. *Donor experimentation with evaluations* – The resulting draft guidance could then be used as the basis for a concerted effort by donors to implement evaluations of as many conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes as possible over the next two years, with careful documentation of the processes used, the Terms of Reference (TORs), the lessons learned about the evaluation process, and programme content issues. This effort should include the experimentation with joint and cumulative evaluations noted above, as well as application of the guidance to single-programme evaluation efforts.

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Box 4.2. **Future DAC actions and next steps in developing guidance** *(cont.)*

3. *An evaluation of evaluations* – The accumulated evaluations from the experimentation in Point 2 could provide the basis for a comparative evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations, in order to learn what kinds of evaluation have proved useful and which evaluation processes and methods produced those lessons.

4. *Annual review of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations* – In order to facilitate learning about evaluations, OECD/DAC could convene an annual session to examine a set of evaluations performed during the previous year, perform cross-case analysis, and derive ongoing lessons to inform subsequent evaluations.

5. *Policy review* – Over time, the review of a range of interventions will provide evidence that should inform a review of the policies of individual donors, as well as OECD/DAC policies and guidelines. In particular, the connections between economic factors and peace and the effects of efforts towards coherence should be examined.

A final note: Keep it simple

People involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities commonly speak about how complicated conflict is, and therefore how complicated peacemaking is. The very terms now in use – such as "complex emergency" and "fragile state" – indicate the general agreement that these situations are extremely complex and difficult. But some of the practitioners with whom the CDA team spoke noted that some in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field are probably over-complicating issues and that doing so provides an excuse for ineffectiveness and lack of accountability. They urged that conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations avoid long discussions of complexity in the context, as these impede analysis of the effectiveness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Rather than "proving" their sophistication and knowledge by discussing all contextual factors that have potential or hypothetical relevance or not, *evaluations should focus on how conflict prevention and peacebuilding interventions interact with the key factors and actors that drive the conflict*. Simplicity would then be achieved without denying the complexity of the conflict's causes and dynamics.

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Annex 1

Interviewees

Category/Name	Organisation	Country/Nationality
Evaluation specialists		
Michael Lund	Private consultant + MSI	United States
Cheyanne Church	Private consultant + Tufts University	Canada
Tony Vaux	Private consultant/Channel Research	United Kingdom
Arne Strand	Private consultant	Norway
Jonathan Goodhand	University of London	United Kingdom
DAC Steering Group		
Jennifer Stuttle	DFID	United Kingdom
Bjorn Holmberg	SIDA	Sweden
Agnete Eriksen	NORAD	Norway
Other DAC		
Jill Tirnauer	USAID (formerly with CMM)	United States
Ruairi O'Connell	DFID (Balkans)	United Kingdom
Patrick Merrienne	DFID (Central Africa)	United Kingdom
Steve Ainsworth	DFID (Sri Lanka)	United Kingdom
Rob Wilkinson	DFID/CHASE	United Kingdom
Private donors		
Melanie Greenberg	Cypress Fund (formerly with Hewlett Foundation)	United States
Multilaterals		
Ron Parker + team	World Bank (IEG)	Mixed group
Andrew Russell	UNDP Cyprus	Canada
Jaco Cilliers	UNDP Cyprus	South Africa
Gay Rosenblum-Kumar	UN/DESA	United States
Implementers/Practitioners		
Dan Smith	International Alert	United Kingdom
Tale Steen-Johnson	Norwegian Church Aid	Norway
Mohammed Abu-Nimer	American University	Palestine
Howard Wolpe	Woodrow Wilson Center	United States
Pamela Aall	US Institute of Peace	United States
Anton Baare	DDR specialist/consultant	Denmark
Emmanuel Bombande	WANEP	Ghana
Susan Hackley	Harvard Program on Negotiation	United States
Rebecca Bern	Mercy Corps	United States
Frédéric Kama-Kama Tutu	Peace Tree Network	DR Congo

Total interviews: 28

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Annex 2

General Bibliography

This first bibliography below includes literature regarding conflict analysis, peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA), conflict sensitivity, general evaluation methods and practice, evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and literature relevant to issues of conflict prevention and peacebuilding boundaries. Policy documents are covered separately in Annex 3. A number of evaluations and evaluation methodologies provided by interviewees as representative of best efforts were also examined, along with CDA's own experience and the evaluations of some NGO efforts (*e.g.* Search for Common Ground, the Burundi Leadership Training Programme, and International Alert) that are public. The bibliography is not exhaustive.

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Annex 4

Who should use the DAC conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding evaluation guidance and for which Types of Intervention?

In some domains of work it is relatively easy to determine which programmes should be subjected to evaluation guidance. For instance, the DAC has developed criteria and guidance for development programmes and for humanitarian assistance. There is little apparent confusion over which programmes "fit" in these categories and should therefore use the relevant evaluation guidance. In the peacebuilding and conflict prevention world, however, there is much controversy over what is or is not included within the field – and therefore over which interventions should be accountable to DAC guidance. Some donor representatives wish to know which programming types and policy approaches should be the "target" of forthcoming guidance, while others want the discretion to use the guidance in a tailor-made fashion, based on specific situations and needs.

This section is intended to meet both sets of expectations. First, it lists questions designed to help potential users in determining whether the guidance is applicable to a programme or policy that they wish to examine. This provides a framework for decision making regarding the pertinence of the guidance to specific evaluation objects (projects, programmes, country strategies, policies, etc.) Second, it proposes a provisional list of programmes to help potential users categorise areas within the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. It presents a chart of common types of programming, while at the same time identifying the challenges of drawing clear boundaries within the contested field.

Potential users and applications of the guidance

This section explores the following questions:

- *Who* should use this guidance?
- To what programmes should the guidance *always* be applied?
- What other programmes might use the guidance on a *discretionary* basis?

Who might use future guidance: Potential audiences

A number of groups might use this guidance, or draw on it for evaluation or review of programmes or policies that, in one way or another, touch upon issues of conflict and peace. The main audiences are donors:

- Desk officers in donor headquarters who have the task of organising the evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes or policies.
- Donor desk officers managing development and/or humanitarian aid programmes that have implications for peace and conflict.
- Evaluation departments in donor organisations advising other departments regarding the evaluation of peacebuilding and conflict prevention programming.

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- Individual evaluators or evaluation teams under contract to perform specific evaluations of programmes/policies.
- Field staffs of donors.

The guidance may also prove valuable to others, such as:

- Peacebuilding practitioners and practitioner organisations, in the field or headquarters.
- Networks of peacebuilding or evaluation practitioners.
- Academic researchers and conflict theorists.
- Developing countries' evaluators working in conflict-affected or conflict-prone regions.

Universal accountability for conflict sensitivity

All projects, programmes and policies at all levels and all settings should be conflict-sensitive. This is already enshrined in OECD/DAC policies, and the policies of most individual donors.[22] *However, conflict sensitivity focuses on "doing no harm" and does not always address proactive measures that promote peacebuilding or conflict prevention*. We should be clear about the difference.

Conflict sensitivity requires those who are designing and implementing all interventions (humanitarian, development or peacebuilding) in a potential or actual conflict context to account for the inadvertent impacts of those interventions on conflict dynamics. At a minimum, they must avoid the negative and unintended consequences resulting from the way such efforts are carried out: distribution policies, staffing, behaviour of international staff, decision making, etc. Additionally, they should recognise opportunities for reducing intergroup divisions and reinforcing intergroup connectors that exist in the conflict area. Application of conflict sensitivity frameworks (Do No Harm or other similar instruments) prompts organisations to analyse their positive and negative effects on the conflict, and to take measures to minimise or correct those effects. Conflict sensitivity does *not* require a full conflict analysis or explicit relevance to key driving factors, triggers or actors of conflict. Conflict sensitivity is not, therefore, the same as peacebuilding.

Of course, such efforts *can* have positive impacts on peace – although usually not deliberately, even when aimed primarily at feeding and sheltering people or promoting sustainable development. As explained below, conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria can be applied to those programming features that are making a positive contribution to either reinforcing intergroup connectors, or more directly addressing key driving factors and actors in the conflict.

The conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria, presented elsewhere in the guidance, go beyond conflict sensitivity and apply broader standards of effectiveness. A conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation not only asks whether the effort has avoided inadvertent negative impacts or reinforced existing intergroup connectors – it also assesses whether the effort has made a contribution to peace through relevance to key driving factors and important constituencies. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes must also be held accountable to conflict sensitivity standards, but the conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria go beyond those.

22. Some note that the application/enforcement of the principle is not uniform – many people and programmes in the field still violate the standards, even when they are aware of them.

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Which intervention types call for this guidance?

DAC evaluation guidance can be applied to a range of intervention types, outlined below. Guidance is mainly conceived as applying to the first two categories (explicit peacebuilding and conflict prevention). Such efforts should *always* be accountable to these guidelines, and the criteria included in them.

Guidance may also be used to assess development and humanitarian work that is either contributing to peace or has the potential to do so. This application is discretionary, and depends on the particular circumstances, donor policies, political sensitivity of interventions, stage of conflict, and overall strategies of influence adopted by the international community.

Explicit peacebuilding efforts

These are interventions in a context where there is ongoing or recently halted violence. They have incorporated specific goals or objectives that deliberately seek to exert a positive effect on the conflict.

Primary evaluation inquiry: Is this effort making a relevant contribution to durable peace, by deliberately and effectively addressing key driving factors of conflict among crucial conflict actors/constituencies?

Explicit conflict prevention efforts

These are interventions that have adopted specific conflict-related goals and objectives in a context in which there are indications, through early warning systems or other mechanisms of alert, that violence is likely in the short or long term. Operational prevention undertakes urgent interventions to avert or de-escalate tensions, while structural prevention seeks to address socio-political factors that, if not addressed, can be expected to lead to violence in the future.

Primary evaluation inquiry: Is this effort making a relevant contribution to preventing violence, either by intervening swiftly to avert escalating violence or by addressing long-term structural factors of conflict?

Development programmes in conflict-prone contexts

These are interventions in a conflict context (long-term structural issues but not yet overt violence; ongoing violent conflict; or post-violence) that are primarily aimed at development objectives, such as health, education, infrastructure, business development, etc., and have the potential for making a positive contribution to peace.

Primary evaluation inquiry: Is this effort maximising the potential for contributing to durable peace, by incorporating in its design elements that account for or address the key social tensions that have been identified as driving factors of past, current or potential conflict?

Application of conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria to these efforts sets a higher performance standard in terms of contribution to peace, one that extends beyond the critically important "Do No Harm" principle that underlies conflict sensitivity. In some cases the question will be whether existing development efforts (projects, programmes, policies) can be better oriented, through redesign, to make a stronger contribution to peace and/or conflict prevention. In other cases the original design may have included conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives, in which case the evaluation must determine whether the intervention, as conceived and implemented, is having the intended impacts.

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Conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria should be applied to development interventions when:

- The effort has adopted explicit peacebuilding or conflict prevention goals and objectives (in addition to its development aims).
- The effort is seen to be making a contribution to peace, even if inadvertently.
- Programme implementers and/or donors wish to explore how to increase the positive impact of the effort on the conflict.

Humanitarian assistance programmes in a conflict context

These are interventions in a conflict context (long-term structural issues but not yet overt violence; ongoing violent conflict; or post-violence) that are primarily aimed at humanitarian objectives (food aid, emergency health, shelter, survival, protection, etc.) and have the potential for making a positive contribution to peace.

Primary evaluation inquiry: Is this effort maximising the potential for contributing to durable peace, by incorporating in its design elements that account for or address the key driving factors of conflict?

Application of conflict prevention and peacebuilding criteria to these efforts sets a higher performance standard in terms of contribution to peace, one that extends beyond the critically important Do No Harm principle that underlies conflict sensitivity. In some cases the question will be whether current humanitarian assistance efforts (projects, programmes, policies) can be better oriented, through redesign, to make a stronger contribution to peace and/or conflict prevention. In other cases the original design may have included conflict prevention and peacebuilding objectives, in which case the evaluation must determine whether the intervention, as conceived and implemented, is having the intended impacts.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluation criteria should be applied to humanitarian interventions when:

- The effort has adopted explicit peacebuilding or conflict prevention goals and objectives (in addition to its humanitarian assistance aims).
- The effort is seen to be making a contribution to peace, even if inadvertently.
- Programme implementers and/or donors wish to explore how to increase the positive impact of the effort on the conflict.

The categories of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming

The Utstein report presented a "palette" of peacebuilding programmes in four categories: security, socio-economic foundations, political framework, and reconciliation and justice. Those categories were developed to reflect the programmes surveyed in the Utstein process, which were selected from programmes supported by the four donor countries involved. The palette was not intended to be comprehensive.

Table 4.1. uses essentially the same four categories as the Utstein palette but adds other programming approaches to each of the categories, in an effort to include a wider range of intervention types and to

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reflect the findings of recent policy research. The third category ("Political Framework" in the Utstein report) has been renamed "Political Structures and Policies". The fourth category ("Reconciliation and Justice" in the Utstein report) has been renamed "Justice, Truth & Reconciliation Culture".

A word of warning: Attempts to develop a comprehensive catalogue of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming types is dangerous, for two reasons. First, potential users may be led to view the inventory as *the* list – *i.e.* to believe that anything that falls outside is not conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Second, they may assume that everything on the list is automatically conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, despite considerable evidence that many of the programme approaches enumerated fail to contribute to peace in many circumstances. Therefore, the accompanying list is illustrative. It should be used with caution: not all kinds of peacebuilding and conflict prevention work can be found there, and not all types on the list will automatically contribute to peace.

The types of activities listed below can, under certain circumstances, contribute to Peace Writ Large, but there is no guarantee that *any* of them will do so. Some may even do harm. Nor is this a comprehensive list – other types of activities may also be conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Table 4.1. **Range of conflict prevention and peacebuilding approaches**

Socio-economic foundations	**A Culture of justice, truth and reconciliation**
Balanced physical reconstruction	Dialogue among conflicting groups (elites)
Sound and equitable economic management	Dialogue for change of attitudes/perceptions
Equitable distribution of benefits from poverty reduction programmes	Grassroots dialogue/negotiation
Promotion of gender equality	Relationship-building among conflicting groups
Equitable access to health care, education, social services and safety nets	Enhancing dispute resolution systems
Repatriation/reintegration of refugees and IDPs	Prejudice reduction/diversity training
Employment and social inclusion projects	Trauma healing
Sustainable use of (and equitable access to) natural resources	Transitional justice processes/war crimes trials
Practical projects aimed at promoting contacts and understanding	Reparations
	Future visioning
	Capacity-building/conflict skills training
	Peace education/conflict resolution education
Political structures and policies	**Security**
Democratisation/electoral processes	De-mining campaigns
Civil society development	Small arms and light weapons reduction
Freedoms of press, expression, etc.	Demobilisation, disarmament and rehabilitation(DDR) of (ex-)combatants, soldiers
Media development/conflict sensitisation	Security sector reform (police, military, intelligence…)
Improved access/power sharing	Community policing
Participatory processes, transparency, government accountability	Peacekeeping
Rule of law/access to justice	Nonviolent interposition/observers
Human rights monitoring, protection, development	Nonviolent accompaniment
Governance and anti-corruption programmes	

Source: Adapted from the "Utstein palette" (Smith, 2004a, pp. 27-28).

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Annex 5

Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Criteria of Effectiveness

Challenges for assessing effectiveness

Assessing an intervention's contribution to Peace Writ Large is difficult. Most peacebuilding interventions are discrete efforts aimed at affecting one (often small) piece of the puzzle, and no one effort can do everything. Attribution of social impacts to particular peace activities is even more difficult. As one practitioner noted: "Peace requires that many people work at many levels in different ways, and, with all this work, you cannot tell who is responsible for what." Moreover, when the goal of "just and sustainable peace" is so grand, and progress toward it immeasurable in its multitude of small steps, it is difficult to know whether or when a particular outcome is significant for peace.

Yet an effort is not necessarily ineffective just because it does not fully accomplish the lofty goals of ending violent conflict or building sustainable just structures. Are there criteria for determining which programmes have a more (or less) significant impact? Against what benchmarks can agencies identify whether their programmes have contributed to progress? How can agencies judge, as they are planning their programmes, which of the wide range of possible approaches will have the most significant impacts on the conflict?

Programme effectiveness vs. peace effectiveness

RPP's review of experience identified two levels of effectiveness:

- *Programme level* – At this level, agencies assess whether a specific activity (*e.g.* peace education, dialogue workshop, income generation project) is achieving its intended goals.

- *Peace Writ Large level* – The effectiveness question at this level asks whether, in meeting specific programme goals, an intervention is making a contribution to broader socio-political change. This requires assessing changes in the overall environment that may or may not have resulted from the project, programme, or policy. RPP found that this question – whether results represent a significant contribution to peace – was rarely asked. Rather, the connection between an activity and its impact on Peace Writ Large was assumed.

Nonetheless, practitioners involved in the RPP process affirmed that they *do* want to understand the connection between their peace efforts and ultimate impacts, and that they are dissatisfied with the way interventions are currently assessed.

Six Criteria of Effectiveness

From analysis of the RPP case studies and practitioners' reflection on their own experiences, the RPP process produced six Criteria of Effectiveness by which to assess, across a broad range of contexts and programming approaches, whether a peace effort is having a meaningful impact at the level of Peace Writ

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Large. These Criteria can be used in programme planning to ensure that specific programme goals are linked to the large and long-term goal of Peace Writ Large. They can be used to guide the development of impact indicators in specific contexts. Moreover, they can be used during programme implementation to reflect on effectiveness and guide mid-course changes, and as a basis for evaluation after the programme has been completed.

An intervention is more effective to the extent that:

- The effort addresses the driving factors, people and dynamics that are key to the conflict.
- The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions or mechanisms that deal meaningfully with grievances or injustices when these are key to the conflict. To reform or build institutions that are unrelated to the actual drivers of a specific conflict would be ineffective.
- The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop independent initiatives that reduce dividers, increase or support connectors, or address causes of conflict. This Criterion underlines the importance of "ownership" and sustainability of actions and efforts to bring about peace, as well as creating momentum for peace, involving more people. Yet not all participant or community initiatives are effective peace initiatives; the more the initiatives reduce the things that are dividers or sources of tension, reinforce things that connect people in spite of the conflict, or address the forces driving the conflict, the more effective they are.
- The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence. One way of addressing and including key people who promote and continue conflict (*e.g.* warlords, spoilers) is to help *more* people develop the ability to resist the manipulation and provocations of negative *key* people.
- The effort results in an increase in people's security and in their sense of security. This Criterion reflects positive changes both at the socio-political level (in people's public lives) and at the individual level as people gain a sense of security.
- The effort results in meaningful improvement in relations among groups in conflict. This Criterion reflects the importance of the relationship between conflicting groups, in terms of transforming polarised (and polarising) attitudes, behaviours and interactions to tolerant and co-operative ones, as a necessary precondition for addressing the underlying problems and grievances driving the conflict.

The Criteria are cumulative

The experience gathered through RPP suggests that the Effectiveness Criteria are cumulative. Peace efforts that meet more of the Criteria are more effective than those that meet only one of them.

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Annex 6

Theories of Change

A useful first step in enhancing strategies in conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming and evaluation is to become more explicit about underlying assumptions regarding how change comes about – that is, theories of how to achieve peace. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities are carried out based on specific ideas and goals concerning what they hope to achieve. Such decisions are based on a number of factors – including assumptions about how to bring about peace and theories about how to bring about change. Peace practitioners select methods, approaches and tactics that are rooted in a range of "theories" of how peace can be achieved in a specific context. It is important to disclose these "theories of change", both to test the theories against the realities of the conflict and to provide the basis for evaluating progress towards related objectives.

Such theories can take the simple format: "We believe that by doing X (action) successfully, we will produce Y (movement towards peace)." However, in many cases such theories are subconscious and unstated. They are embedded in the skills and approaches that conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners and policy makers have learned, the capacities of their organisations, personal attachments to favourite methodologies, and the individual perspectives various decision makers bring to the peacebuilding process. Ideas about what will contribute to peace may also be dictated by donor objectives or international political dynamics and policies.

Theories of peacebuilding include those presented at the end of this annex, though a systematic inquiry into ongoing and past conflict prevention and peacebuilding work would likely reveal other theories underlying peacebuilding programmes.[23] Note that these theories are *not* mutually exclusive—a single programme can be based on two or more of them.

Some theories focus on *who* needs to change: which individuals and groups in society or which relationships need to change. Other theories concentrate on *what* needs to change: an institution, a policy, a social norm. Still other theories are tied directly to a particular methodology or approach: *how* the change can or should happen.

Evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding theories of change

The impacts, effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability of a conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity rest to a large extent on the accuracy of its underlying theory of change. A false or incomplete theory may be a key explanatory factor for the failure of a programme, project or policy. In contrast, good theories (based on an up-to-date, thorough conflict analysis) contribute to effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding action and successful interventions. Analysis of the theory of change is therefore a key aspect of any evaluation. The pertinent theory should be reviewed in the evaluation report and be covered in the evaluation's findings, conclusions and lessons learned. Such analysis will help contribute to a more refined understanding of how to bring about change for peace.

23. An initial list of these theories was derived from reviewing the Reflecting on Peace Practice cases studies; see http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=RPP&pname=Reflecting%20on%20Peace%20Practice for a full list of the case studies.

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When conducting an evaluation, the evaluator or evaluation team should ascertain the theories of change of the peacebuilding intervention in question. While they are often variations on the generic theories presented in the table at the end of this annex, for the purpose of evaluation the theories should be reframed using the intervention's particular terms and in relation to the specific context.

At times the theories in operation are obvious, even if unstated, in programme proposals and other documents. More often, the theories need to be uncovered through interviews with implementing staff and other stakeholders – or can be confirmed by those discussions. The evaluation process may also reveal that different staff members are proceeding on different assumptions (theories) about how their efforts will promote change towards peace. Thus, the evaluation process itself can be useful for helping to clarify this important dimension of intervention strategy.

The two real-life examples that follow illustrate these points.

Example 1: Evaluating grassroots conflict prevention in Liberia

In the wake of the 14-year civil war in Liberia, a large international NGO received donor funding to develop Community Peace Councils (CPCs), a community-based mechanism for resolving a range of disputes, with an explicitly inter-ethnic approach. The CPCs were designed to promote greater democratic participation through leadership development. In a parallel component, the programme organised a process of dialogue and negotiation (labelled "Forums") at the village level among key leaders from the often mutually hostile ethnic groups – searching for ways for the groups to live together again after they had done so much damage to each other during the war.

The evaluation team first identified underlying theories of change and programme assumptions (derived mainly from discussions with local and international staff members) for the two components:

Theories of change for the Community Peace Councils:

Theory #1: By establishing a new community-level mechanism for handling a range of dispute types, we will contribute to keeping the peace and avoiding incidents that have the potential for escalating into serious violence.

Theory #2: By creating inclusive structures for community problem solving, we can improve communication, respect, and productive interactions among subgroups in the community, and improve the access of disenfranchised groups to decision making.

Theory #3: By creating a new leadership group infused with democratic concepts and provided with critical skills, we can foster more effective and responsive leadership.

Theories of change for the Forums:

Theory #1: If we bring together influential representatives and other community members of both (all) ethnic groups that are experiencing tension to engage in dialogue and negotiate formal agreements regarding outstanding issues, we can improve inter-ethnic relations and develop the basis for long-term coexistence.

Theory #2: If we can negotiate the basis for coexistence among influential people at the national level and key local leaders of contending ethnic groups, it will become more possible to settle individual disputes over such issues as land claims.

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The evaluation team then discussed whether and how these theories of change were appropriate for the situation in Liberia, and how they were playing out in the programme. To begin, the team conducted an updated conflict analysis based on interviews and focus groups with a wide range of people in the communities themselves.

The team then examined whether the programme was having the effects envisioned in the theory of change. In the case of the Community Peace Councils, for example, the team examined the kinds of conflicts the CPCs handled, and whether those conflicts had the potential for escalating and inciting widespread violence. If they did, then the CPCs would directly contribute to stopping a key factor in violent conflict. If, however, those conflicts were unconnected to the driving factors of the conflict or the local-level conflict handling mechanisms were not able to address the types of conflict most likely to escalate, then the CPCs would make little or no contribution to Peace Writ Large.

The evaluation team found that the CPCs were, for the most part, *not* handling the most serious and volatile disputes, which concerned land issues. The team then explored whether this was due to a failure in programme implementation or, alternatively, to a theory of change that was incomplete or inaccurate. The main conclusion was that while the CPCs were set up and trained well, as communities were repopulated and traditional leadership patterns were re-established the CPCs were mostly excluded from handling land issues. At the same time, the hope (and theory) regarding alternative leadership models proved unfounded, as traditional leaders gained control over the CPCs or used them to address issues they preferred to have someone else deal with. The evaluation recommended that the agency work to expand the mandate and capability of the CPCs for handling land disputes, by connecting them to land commissions and other emerging government structures. It should also be said that the CPCs did represent a useful developmental advance, even if they were unable to fulfil, as completely as hoped, a contribution to Peace Writ Large.

In contrast to the CPCs, which were only partly successful, the Forum effort was making a significant contribution to addressing serious social fractures between hostile ethnic groups inhabiting the same areas. In other words, the theories of change underlying the programme were proving true. Although the evaluation occurred as the programme was just gaining full momentum, all indications were that it would continue to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation.

Example 2: The impact of international peacebuilding policies and programming in Kosovo

CDA performed an extensive study regarding the reasons for the recurrence of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo in the spring of 2004, and the relationship of that violence to policies and programmes undertaken by the international community. Among other things, the study identified the theories of change underlying the various approaches to improving ethnic relations. As is often the case, these underlying theories were strongly influenced by the policies and (unspoken) assumptions of the international community. The multiple aid and development programmes were directly linked to implementation of internationally established Standards for Kosovo and widely held beliefs regarding refugee returns, inter-ethnic relations, and a future multi-ethnic state as the basis for peacebuilding.

The Kosovo example concerns many agencies and multiple programmes. The study identified major programming approaches and associated theories of change – some of which are listed here – and then examined the effectiveness of each of these programming approaches and their relationship (if any) to preventing violence.

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A. Inter-ethnic and inter-religion dialogue

In Kosovo, the bulk of what agencies and community members identified as peacebuilding was labelled "dialogue". "Dialogue" encompassed a wide range of activities: from social contact to structured conversations about identity and promotion of mutual understanding, to problem solving related to concrete issues and to negotiation and mediation of agreements on land use in the Municipal Working Groups on Return. The most frequent theories of change for dialogue efforts in Kosovo were:

Theory #1: By involving Kosovar Serbs and Albanians in mutual discussions, we can develop the conditions for the safe, successful and peaceful return of IDPs to their homes. This in turn will promote reintegration and stabilisation of the environment, and will reverse one of the negative consequences of the conflict.

Theory #2: If we engage community members in participatory approaches to decision making and implementation of development activities, we can strengthen community relationships.

Theory #3: If we promote co-operation across ethnic lines regarding non-political issues of common interest (HIV/AIDS, drug use, business and entrepreneurship, women's rights, infrastructure, etc.), we can build stronger inter-ethnic ties and understanding.

B. Training and peace education

Training in conflict resolution, human rights, nonviolent communication and related topics was carried out in many communities and, with dialogue, was one of the most popular approaches to peacebuilding programming. Youth camps, peace camps, archaeological camps, art camps and many others were widespread, as were multi-ethnic programmes of technical training in computers, project management, marketing, and other technical or professional topics. To a lesser extent, school-based peace education programmes were developed, including human rights education and tolerance education for children.

Theory #1: If we provide people with better skills for conflict resolution, this will increase the ability of communities to settle disputes nonviolently and reduce the likelihood of inter-ethnic violence.

Theory #2: If people talk and play together they will build relationships and break down stereotypes.

C. Multi-ethnic projects and institutions

Along with dialogue and training, joint (inter-ethnic) projects and institutions comprised a significant proportion of peacebuilding programming in the communities included in the Kosovo study. Some of the projects were the outcome of or follow-up to dialogue, aiming to take the communication and relationship-building beyond mere talk.

Theory #1: If we develop activities that provide economic benefits to both ethnic communities (economic interdependence), people will have incentives to resist efforts to incite violence against each other.

Theory #2: If we provide opportunities for people to work together on practical issues across ethnic lines, it will help break down mistrust and negative stereotypes, as well as develop habits of co-operation.

Theory #3: If people have jobs and economic stability, they will be less hostile to the other ethnic group.

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D. Democratic governance and capacity-building

Many international donors, agencies and NGOs have implemented peacebuilding activities designed to strengthen municipal government institutions to support integration of minorities, better communication and dialogue, and sustainable returns.

Theory #1: If we can improve administration and service delivery and establish non-discriminatory policies, this will reduce inter-ethnic tensions and demonstrate the viability of a multi-ethnic Kosovo.

E. Media

Two approaches dominated the media programming. The first aimed to build independent, objective media. The second aimed to build multi-ethnic media, with multi-ethnic staff and multi-ethnic programming.

Theory #1: If local media provide objective, non-inflammatory information and a venue for open debate, that will contribute to improved inter-ethnic relationships.

Theory #2: If we build multi-ethnic media (staff and programming), that will promote mutual respect and the values of multiculturalism.

Many programmes and policies integrated several approaches and theories of change. For example, a programme to facilitate returns of Kosovo Serb minorities included several activities and approaches reflecting a combination of different theories:

- Dialogue between the host community and returnees was facilitated on the assumption that dialogue would allay fears and re-establish relationships that would allow returnees to return to their homes in peace (Theory A #1).
- Multi-ethnic committees to decide community priorities for development aid (Theory A #2).
- Training in conflict resolution and technical subjects (Theory B #2).
- Provision of equipment and seeds to a multi-ethnic agricultural co-operative (Theories C #1 and #2).

Once the theories had been identified, they could be assessed in relation to the driving factors of conflict and the factors contributing to the absence of violence in some places in March 2004. The Kosovo study identified patterns of inter-ethnic violence and factors that contributed to the prevention of inter-ethnic violence, through extensive interviews in communities (including some that experienced violence in March 2004 and some that did not). The team then examined the programming approaches and their relationship (if any) to the factors that helped communities avoid violence.

The study found that the failure of peacebuilding programming to achieve desired impacts was due in part to faulty theories of change, and in part to problems in programme design and implementation.

Design problems included failures in the participant selection processes, fragmentation of programming, insufficient follow-up and limited resources for "soft" aspects of programming. In terms of implementation strategy, returnees were not central actors with respect to violence, although they were important victims of the conflict. The channelling of aid to returnees and communities with returns, it turned out, prompted resentment, increasing inter-ethnic divisions rather than improving relations between groups.

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In part, the theory of change on which the programming was based was faulty. With respect to inter-ethnic dialogue between host communities and returnees, the study found that while dialogue activities opened space for inter-ethnic interaction that might otherwise not have happened, and had some powerful personal effects and led to some co-operative activities across ethnic lines, they neither strengthened community relationships nor led to collective opposition to violence.

The assumption that the changes in attitude resulting from dialogue would lead to changes in political attitudes and actions, or trickle down to influence others in the community or trickle up to influence key decision makers, proved to be wrong. In both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities, implicit intra-community pressures, or "rules of the game", restricted the boundaries of permissible interaction to generally non-visible business interactions, and made maintenance and expansion of inter-ethnic linkages difficult.

Table 6.1. **Common theories of change**

Theory of change	Methods (examples only)
Individual change: If we transform the consciousness, attitudes, behaviours and skills of many individuals, we will create a critical mass of people who will advocate peace effectively.	Individual change through training, personal transformation or consciousness-raising workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups; trauma healing.
Healthy relationships and connections: Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for peacebuilding. If we can break down isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups, we will enable progress on key issues.	Processes of intergroup dialogue; networking; relationship-building processes; joint efforts and practical programmes on substantive problems.
Withdrawal of the resources for war: Wars require vast amounts of material (weapons, supplies, transport, etc.) and human capital. If we can interrupt the supply of people and goods to the war-making system, it will collapse and peace will become possible.	Campaigns aimed at cutting off funds/national budgets for war; conscientious objection and/or resistance to military service; international arms control; arms (and other) embargoes and boycotts.
Reduction of violence: If we reduce the levels of violence perpetrated by combatants and/or their representatives, we will increase the chances of bringing security and peace.	Cease-fires; creation of zones of peace; withdrawal/retreat from direct engagement; introduction of peacekeeping forces/interposition; observation missions; accompaniment efforts; promotion of nonviolent methods for achieving political/social/economic ends; reform of security sector institutions (military, police, justice system/courts, prisons).
Social justice: If we address the underlying issues of injustice, oppression/exploitation, threats to identity and security, and peoples' sense of injury/victimisation, it will reduce the drivers of conflict and open up space for peace.	Long-term campaigns for social and structural change; truth and reconciliation processes; changes in social institutions, laws, regulations, and economic systems.
Good governance: Peace is secured by establishing stable/reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice, and fair allocation of resources.	New constitutional and governance arrangements/entities; power-sharing structures; development of human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption; establishment of democratic/equitable economic structures; economic development; democratisation; elections and election monitoring; increased participation and access to decision making.

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Theory of change	Methods (examples only)
Political elites: If we change the political calculus and perception of interests of key political (and other) leaders, they will take the necessary steps to bring peace.	Raise the costs and reduce the benefits for political elites of continuing war and increase the incentives for peace; engage active and influential constituencies in favour of peace; withdraw international support/funding for warring parties.
Grassroots mobilisation: "When the people lead, the leaders will follow." If we mobilise enough opposition to war, political leaders will be forced to bring peace.	Mobilise grassroots groups to either oppose war or to advocate positive action; use of the media; nonviolent direct action campaigns; education/mobilisation effort; organising advocacy groups; dramatic/public events to raise consciousness.
Peace agreements/accords: Some form of political settlement is a prerequisite to peace – we must support a negotiation process among key parties to the conflict and violence.	Official negotiations among representatives of key parties; "track 1½" and "track 2" dialogues among influential persons; civil society dialogues in support of negotiations.
Economic action: People make personal decisions, and decision makers make policy decisions based on a system of rewards/incentives and punishment/sanctions that are essentially economic in nature. If we can change the economies associated with war-making, we can bring peace.	Use of government or financial institutions to change supply and demand dynamics; control incentive and reward systems; boycotts and embargoes.
Public attitudes: War and violence are partly motivated by prejudice, mispercep¬tions, and intolerance of difference. We can promote peace by using the media (television and radio) to change public attitudes and build greater tolerance in society.	TV and radio programmes that promote tolerance; modelling tolerant behaviour; symbolic acts of solidarity/unity; dialogue among groups in conflict, with subsequent publicity.
Transitional justice: Societies that have experienced deep trauma and social dislocation need a process for handling grievances, identifying what happened, and holding perpetrators accountable. Addressing these issues will enable people to move on to reconstruct a peaceful and prosperous society.	Truth and reconciliation commissions; criminal prosecutions and war crimes tribunals; reparations; community reconciliation processes; traditional rites and ceremonies; institutional reforms.
Community reintegration: If we enable displaced people (IDPs/refugees) to return to their homes and live in relative harmony with their neighbours, we will contribute to security and economic recovery.	Negotiation and problem solving to enable returns; intergroup dialogue; ex-combatant-community engagement; processes for handling land claims; trauma healing.
Culture of peace: If we transform cultural and societal norms, values and behaviours to reject violence, support dialogue and negotiation, and address the fundamental causes of the conflict, we can develop the long-term conditions for peace.	Peace education; poverty eradication; reduction of social inequalities; promotion of human rights; ensuring gender equality; fostering democratic participation; advancing tolerance; enhancing the free flow of information/knowledge; reducing the production of and traffic in arms.

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Annex 7

Application of General Evaluation Guidance to Specific Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Domains of Work

The Terms of Reference (see Annex 8) for preparing this research instruct CDA to prepare an annex offering direction or advice on evaluating specific domains of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming. It was assumed that, in addition to the generic issues raised in the core report, each area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work – for example dialogue, security system reform (SSR), conflict prevention and peacebuilding training – would present evaluators with specific challenges.

To prepare this annex, CDA and the DAC Networks' Steering Group agreed to conduct two special workshops, one dealing with dialogue and one with SSR, where specialists would help identify the special considerations for their fields. The resulting draft specialised application (sometimes called a "drill-down") for dialogue is included below. The SSR evaluation material has been incorporated into a comprehensive DAC manual on SSR programming, available separately.

In addition, CDA agreed to draft a sample of the advice needed on a subject it examined closely with peace practitioners through the Reflecting on Peace Practice project (RPP) – namely conflict prevention and peacebuilding training programmes. This draft is intended to: a) test the extent to which the generic evaluation principles and issues raised in this report are sufficient to cover evaluations of specific areas; b) explore whether there are special issues that arise in each potential conflict prevention and peacebuilding field; and c) provide guidance to evaluators on how to ask the right questions and assess the right things in relation to conflict prevention and peacebuilding training. We have based this Annex, as noted, on RPP findings.

A. Evaluating training programmes: Special issues, special considerations

Characteristics to note:

- Experience shows that conflict prevention and peacebuilding training is very often a "default" programme. If things are going badly and one does not know what to do about it, one can always do some "useful" (or what one assumes to be useful) training.

- Training is often undertaken because it is an identifiable event, for which one can count the number of people trained, the length of training and the curriculum; one can even provide an assessment of the training experience through trainees' evaluations.

- Training by itself is never a conflict prevention and peacebuilding "stand-alone" strategy; it is often only a weak tactic. Unless training is linked to a specific strategic plan for addressing the key issues of the conflict or affecting key people, it will have no discernable effect on peace.

Basic Framework: As with all conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes, evaluators would need to:

- Start with a valid, up-to-date analysis of the conflict.

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- Examine the theory of change on which a conflict prevention and peacebuilding training programme is based.

- Determine the relevance of this theory of change, and the particular design of the training programme, to the key driving factors and actors of the conflict.

Theories of change for training:

There are two theories of change that often underlie conflict prevention and peacebuilding training programmes.

Theory #1: If we provide people with new understanding and /or skills they will become more effective in making peace. Refinements of this theory may include:

— Specification of which people.

— Specification of which understanding.

— Specification of which skills.

— Specification of how these people with this understanding/these skills will be able to use them to address in some reasonable way the key driving factors or to affect key people in the conflict.

Theory #2: Local conflict prevention and peacebuilding organisations will be more effective at peacebuilding if we build their institutional capacity through training. Refinements to this theory may include:

— Specification of which organisations.

— Specification of the important activities/functions that they need to perform more effectively.

— Specification of the institutional capacities they need for preceding refinement.

— Specification of the skills needed that can be provided through training.

Questions for evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding training:

- What is the broader strategy for change into which this training or capacity-building is supposed to fit? What is the theory of change implicit in this strategy?

- How does this theory of change relate to the realities of this particular conflict at this particular time (relevance to conflict analysis)?

- Are the people being trained the "right" people? That is, are they in a position, and in the best position of all people, to use the knowledge or skills of the training to affect a key driving factor, or to strongly influence key people, in this conflict at this time?

- Are the local organisations being trained the "right" organisations? Are they in a position and in the best position of all organisations to use the capacities/skills of the training to affect key driving factors, or to strongly influence key people, in this conflict at this time?

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- Is the training designed to give these people or these organisations the right skills or knowledge or capacities that they need to affect key driving factors or strongly influence key people in relation to this conflict at this time (content of training, duration of training, methodology of training)?

- Is there a planned follow-up to the training to ensure that these people can use this knowledge or these skills in the way planned? (Will they be monitored and mentored? Are there systems in place for mutual support of the trainees? Will they be in danger if they use this training? Will they have time to use it? Do they need to be paid to use it? Are there mechanisms for them to get "refresher" training? etc.).

- How long will it take for this training to have any discernable impact on Peace Writ Large in this context? Is this the best use of conflict prevention and peacebuilding resources, given other options for programming that exist?

- What evidence can the evaluator cite to back up the findings in each of the above areas?

B. Evaluating dialogue programming: Definitions, special challenges, considerations

Definition of dialogue

Evaluating dialogue is made difficult by the broad and loose use of the term and the resultant ambiguity of the boundaries of dialogue. "Dialogue" means many things to many people. It is not an end in itself, but a tool or method that can be applied in many contexts for many purposes, including for goals unrelated to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The multitude of activities categorised as "dialogue" and the large variation in focus, outcomes and quality have generated dialogue fatigue and cynicism.

While there is no consensus on a precise definition of dialogue, there is broad agreement on elements that comprise "dialogue" in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding:

- It is a deliberate process. It does not include any or all conversations or social interactions among groups.

- It encourages (and provides opportunities for) disagreeing protagonists to talk with each other, in face-to-face interaction or indirectly. The protagonists include parties to a conflict or potential conflict, or factions within a party.

- It is an organised form of communication when constructive discourse is difficult or blocked.

- Its purpose is to have a positive influence on the conflict.

- There are a number of key variable dimensions of dialogue:

- A range of goals, from simply improving communication and relationships to recommending political solutions in negotiations.

- A range of issues addressed.

- Varying degrees to which the process is carefully designed or evolves based on the needs and interests of the group.

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- A range of participants, from grassroots community members to mid-level influentials to high-level political operatives with connections to decision makers.

- A range of third party functions and roles.

It is important to distinguish "dialogue" from "negotiation." Negotiation is a formal process with formal obligations to honour agreements reached. A dialogue is more open-ended regarding the result and the relationship of the participants to decision makers. Successful negotiations almost always include an element of meaningful dialogue, but dialogue does not always lead to negotiation or agreement.

Special challenges regarding dialogue

The link to methodology. Dialogue is an instrument for change, not the change itself. Consequently, evaluation of dialogue cannot be limited to the process itself, or to the participants in it, but must assess what the dialogue leads to. In order to capture the impacts of dialogues, evaluations need to occur over the long term, at times long after the programme has ended.

Timing of evaluations. A "snapshot" at the end of (or at an event during) a programme may not capture the outcomes or impacts of the dialogue; it is difficult to know *when* those will occur. Some dialogues that at first appear to have been successful ultimately lead to nothing. It may take years before participants are able to leverage the relationships and insights gained in dialogue sessions to influence a peace process. A successful dialogue process (*e.g.* one that resulted in a consensus document on a solution) could have a disastrous impact on the conflict by mobilising opposition to peace.

Tracing and measuring impacts. Several aspects of dialogue processes make it difficult or unwise to attempt to measure impacts. First, an evaluation would need to try to measure what is not quantifiable, such as personal relationships that become operative in different contexts. Second, there can be negative impacts of attribution. Dialogue processes are often off-the-record and confidential. This makes it difficult for an evaluator to trace near- and long-term impacts, in part because participants themselves may not want to go on record as having participated or having gained anything from the dialogue.

Moreover, in a successful dialogue, participants will come to embrace the process and its outcomes as their own, and may not be willing or able to acknowledge the instrumental role of the dialogue. In these circumstances, a high-profile evaluation may undermine the impact of the dialogue on the conflict; public exposure may draw negative political attention to the process and its outcomes, or may undermine the impact by taking credit for ideas generated by the dialogue. Third, even under the best of circumstances, attribution can be difficult. Participants in these dialogues often also participate in other processes, making it difficult, even for participants themselves, to attribute specific changes to the dialogue process itself.

Changing indicators over time. The indicators of progress or impact should, in a successful dialogue process, change over time, depending on the context in which the dialogue is taking place and the evolution of the dialogue process itself. By the tenth meeting or interaction the process should have progressed, and the indicators of change will need to change as well.

Methods and evaluation criteria. Dialogue for conflict prevention and peacebuilding work has more in common with international diplomacy, social psychology and politics than with humanitarian and development activity. Evaluation criteria and methods used in relief and development practice may only be partially relevant.

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Considerations in evaluating dialogue

Conflict analysis

As with all evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activity, an evaluator needs to start with an up-to-date analysis of the conflict. With dialogue programmes, an evaluator looks at the following:

- Is the dialogue addressing driving factors or issues of conflict? As dialogue can be used in multiple contexts to address any kind of dispute, community conflict, policy development, etc., it is important for conflict prevention and peacebuilding purposes to establish that the dialogue is addressing issues important for the broader conflict.

- How does the dialogue interact with the politics of the situation? What are the politics of the intervention? To assess this, the evaluator would need to do a political analysis (in addition to the conflict analysis), and in particular a power analysis.

Assessing the theory of change

The test for effectiveness of dialogue lies in its impact on the socio-political sphere beyond the participants in the dialogue progress. As the time frame for these impacts to happen may be very long, an evaluator's "snapshots" of the process need to take into account the broader context and look for evidence of robust strategic thinking, including:

- How does the dialogue plan to affect the key driving factors of conflict? Is the dialogue relevant to the conflict?

- Is dialogue the appropriate option? Criteria for assessing whether dialogue is appropriate include:

  — Is there a demand by key people?

  — Will it assist in getting parties to the peace table (pre-negotiation), overcoming deadlock or difficulties (negotiation stage), reviving negotiations (when they collapse) or implementing or increasing ownership of agreements (implementation stage)?

  — Is there no other intervention possible, even while it is important to keep key groups in contact in anticipation of later developments that allow deeper engagement?

  — Is it necessary to make a larger political process more inclusive (due to power differentials, key groups excluded, etc.)?

  — Are there parties that need to be brought into the process but that are otherwise considered anathema (because they are corrupt, violent, abusers of human rights, considered to be "terrorists", motivated by greed, traffickers in arms, recruiters of child soldiers…)?

- Dialogue is not appropriate when:

  — It duplicates other efforts under way, or communication is already effective and productive.

  — It poses danger for participants.

  — It reinforces power differentials.

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— Conflict analysis suggests that other kinds of efforts would be more useful.

- Who is part of the dialogue? Does the dialogue include or address key people to the conflict? "Key" people are not necessarily decision makers, but people or groups that are determined, through the conflict analysis, to have a significant influence on whether and how the conflict continues or not. Who is left out of the dialogue? How has the dialogue planned to deal with "spoilers" and opponents of the peace process?

- Have possible threats to the dialogue and to the impacts of the dialogue been considered?

Assessing programme quality

One of the reasons for cynicism about dialogue has been its variable quality and the lack of evidence of follow-on action from them. While there is as yet no formal consensus in the field of standards of practice, there are some implicit standards that cut across the range of dialogue practices. An evaluator might look at these in assessing quality:

- Is communication open?

- Is there respect for differing points of view?

Applying the DAC Evaluation Criteria

In applying the DAC Evaluation Criteria and the criterion on Linkages, special questions and considerations relevant to dialogue should be taken into account.

Relevance/appropriateness. Is this dialogue with these participants to address these issues using this process relevant, or the right ones, in these circumstances?

Effectiveness. Has the dialogue achieved its stated goals? Are the goals relevant to the driving factors of conflict? How?

Efficiency. Are outputs and outcomes delivered in an efficient manner? What were alternative methods to achieving the goals of the dialogue? How does this dialogue compare in cost and time to other avenues for achieving the same goal? Is the effort achieving progress in reasonable time?

Impact. What are the results or effects of the dialogue – going beyond the immediate programme activities, sphere and participants – that constitute broader change in the conflict?

Dialogue can be evaluated at three levels, each of which needs its own indicators:

- Evaluation of the effects on individual participants (changes in attitudes, perceptions and behaviours). These individual/personal effects are not sufficient to constitute "impact" on the broader conflict.

- Evaluation of the overall project, of which the dialogue is a part, looking at follow-on actions, transfer effects, etc.

- Evaluation of the project impacts on the conflict.

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Measuring these impacts at any level is difficult, and potentially costly and time-consuming. In light also of the non-quantifiable quality of many of the impacts and the difficulty of attribution, the focus should be on generating *independently verifiable evidence* of outcomes and impacts, rather than measurement of them. In this context, evaluations should draw more on methods and tools from political science, policy analysis and social psychology in developing methodology.

Sustainability. Will hard-won improvements in intergroup relations hold in the face of challenges? Are effective mechanisms in place to implement products of the dialogue? Have those who benefit from ongoing conflict or resist peace ("spoilers") been addressed adequately?

Linkages. Are individual and grassroots programmes linked to higher levels ("key people")? Are dialogues focused on "key people" linked to efforts to engage larger constituencies? Are dialogues focused on promoting changes in people's behaviour, skills and attitudes linked with change efforts at the socio-political level? Are dialogues linked to parallel efforts in other domains (*e.g.* in different sectors)? Are different efforts contradictory or undermining each other?

Developing indicators

Specific indicators are difficult to establish in the absence of specification of the goals or objectives of the dialogue and the specific context in which the dialogue is taking place. However, it is possible to identify common types of impacts of dialogue at each level. Programme designers and evaluators would then need to identify which are most relevant and appropriate in the particular context, and develop context-specific indicators to verify the results. At each level, the evaluator should still ask whether the changes and the indicators associated with them are *relevant* to the conflict's driving factors, and how.

Participant level (changes in participants in the dialogue)

- Changed perceptions about the conflict (more accurate, more balanced, more empathetic, inclusive, fewer stereotypes).
- More positive attitudes towards the opposing side.
- Insights into the conflict, new ideas, new analyses.
- More co-operative orientation towards and skills for dealing with the conflict, less blaming.
- Positive relationships with the opposing side, including trust.
- Better communication and understanding.
- Increased consciousness and skills regarding the effects of language on others.
- Greater hope, confidence and energy for the work towards peace.
- Greater clarity about one's own interests and priorities.

Project /programme level (what is done by participants as a result of the dialogue)

- Individual participants become effective conflict resolvers in official roles.
- Participants reduce vitriol or public rhetoric, use of inflammatory language.

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- Dialogue participants take specific actions in their professional or political capacities that show increased responsiveness to the concerns of the opposing side.
- Public recognition of the legitimate interests of the opposing side.
- The dialogue process or the relationships built survive destabilising or hostile acts.
- There is continuity of connection and contact.
- The group produces something concrete/specific on issues related to the conflict.

Social-political level

- Adoption of ideas into official structures or political negotiations (transfer effect).
- Changed vision of the problem and/or solutions; more common vision among elites or in public across conflict lines, possibly reflected in changed language for speaking about conflict.
- Breaking of taboos – putting the previously unthinkable on the table.
- Changes in public opinion, as indicated by reduced levels of fear of the opposing side, reduced tension, reduced use of inflammatory language and content in the media.
- Rising demands by peace constituencies: mobilisation of large numbers of people voicing demands for peace or support for negotiations that political leaders cannot ignore (large-scale demonstrations, lobbying campaigns, large peace meetings/conferences, establishment of peace structures and mechanisms).

Organisation of the evaluation

The evaluation of a dialogue effort will itself be an intervention with its own impacts. Special considerations for dialogue about the organisation of the evaluation include:

- *Timing of the evaluation*. Is this the right time? Would an evaluation at this moment be disruptive to the dialogue? What effect would an evaluation have on morale? Would an evaluation provoke political reaction that could undermine the dialogue, by calling attention to the dialogue, or by inadvertently feeding political forces in opposition to a peace process? Would an evaluation put participants in dialogue at personal or political risk?
- *Composition of the evaluation team*. In order to minimise potential harm from the evaluation and ensure an accurate assessment of the dialogue, evaluators should be acceptable by both (or all) sides, who ideally should be consulted on the identity of the team. In addition, the evaluators need to understand the conflict well, as seen and experienced by internal actors who are able to interpret the political and social meanings of behaviours and outcomes.

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Annex 8

Consultant Terms of Reference Developing Guidance for Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities: an Approach Paper

Introduction

The DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation (CPDC) and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation are collaborating on the development of guidance for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, an area where only minimal guidance already exists. The two networks have agreed to commission a consultant to develop an approach paper that provides in-depth exploration of the options for practical guidance for conflict prevention and peacebuilding at programming and policy levels.

The approach paper will require tasks such as a literature review of key DAC and donor agency policies and guidance on evaluation and on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and in-depth interviews with a select number of key informants. The approach paper will explore and define possible ways forward, highlight the main methodological issues and recommend next steps for developing guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

This will build on work previously carried out by the DAC Evaluation Network, by the CPDC and by the Utstein Group.[24] The consultant(s) should review and utilise relevant DAC, donor and other publications, including the DAC guidance documents on conflict prevention and security system reform as well as the recently developed issues briefs on conflict prevention and peacebuilding (www.oecd.org/dac/conflict) and the guidance documents available on the DAC Network on Development Evaluation website (www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork), along with a draft report that seeks to review substantive and methodological lessons from past evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities.

Questions and challenges: Towards developing guidance for evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities

In developing the approach paper, the style and approach of the Network on Development Evaluation publication "Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies" (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/50/2667294.pdf) should be considered as a possible loose framework/model for developing conflict prevention and peacebuilding guidance in this field. The consultant(s) will, therefore, first undertake a detailed analytic review of the humanitarian guidance, as well as other guidance developed by DAC member agencies, and determine if any areas of this text or others could be transferable to future conflict prevention and peacebuilding guidance. New areas and issues will also need to be added. The humanitarian Guidance should be used only as a basic model on which to build, rather than as a fixed formula or constraining framework.

24. The Utstein study was a review of the peacebuilding experience of Germany, Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom.

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The following sections provide a working outline of possible questions to be addressed in the approach paper. In addition to the outline and issues raised below, it will be important to look at related cross-cutting questions such as: i) the need for assessing gender sensitivity of conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmes; ii) the need to assess whether a rights perspective has been mainstreamed/included in the programmes; iii) a reference to violence in evaluations, and how the programme evaluated contributed to reduce violence/violent conflict; and iv) some consideration of whether/how HIV and AIDS prevention is covered in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations, as this is becoming an increasing problem in conflict-affected countries and regions – especially in Africa. This outline should be seen as a working guide and not as a straitjacket. The consultant(s) is (are) encouraged to adopt the scope and flexibility necessary for creative thinking in developing thematic areas and ideas in the approach paper and for proposing content for future guidance.

1) *An overview of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities and current evaluation practices: The value added of DAC guidance*

An introduction could provide a broad but concise overview of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding environment, using available policy documents. The introduction should cover the question of why guidance is needed in this area and outline the key audiences for guidance and their evaluation needs.

Questions to be addressed may include: What, in brief, is the operational meaning of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities? What are the characteristics of modern-day conflict environments? What kind of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities are most commonly undertaken and by which agencies? What do we mean by evaluation of these activities? What is the need for and purpose of undertaking evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities? What is the present situation with regard to the frequency, rigour and robustness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations? What is the purpose and value added of the new guidance? What would be a suitable methodology and approach for developing guidance?

2) *Analysing and developing guidance for conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities: Differences from traditional evaluations*

The approach paper should look at how guidance might outline the main generic differences involved in evaluating, on the one hand, conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities and, on the other, both "conventional" development programmes and humanitarian aid interventions. Differences to be explored in this scene-setting overview could include, but should not be limited to, the following:

- The particular difficulties involved in defining conflict prevention and peacebuilding – for example, it can be difficult to determine when conflict ends or peace begins. The consultant(s) is (are) required not to devise methodologies to answer such questions but rather to acknowledge that in any given context debates may exist about whether the environment is one of "peace" or "conflict". It will be helpful to look at how agencies shape their programmes differently according to the context in a conflict-affected or prone country.

- The particular importance of the political nature of conflict prevention and peacebuilding and of its ideological context or country-specific situations as they relate to the donor community, government agencies, NGOs, national and regional actors, etc.

- The goals and challenges of not working "around" but "in" and "on" conflict situations should be considered. The latter is the main approach of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities; the study should therefore address approaches taken by different donors in terms of being proactive and working "on" conflict.

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- The "high stakes" nature of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, *e.g.* misconstrued projects/programmes, can lead to an increased risk of conflict. The consequent value of a "Do No Harm" approach and conflict sensitivity by working "in" and not "around" conflict situations.

- The importance of policy coherence – whole-of-government approaches to issues involving diplomacy, defence, trade policy, etc. at the donor and partner-country levels – due to the interconnected nature of causal factors.

- The cross-border, regional, sub-regional and international context of many conflicts.

- The question of applying the principles of the Paris Declaration in a fragile state or in a context where key stakeholders may be protagonists in the conflict. How do principles of ownership and alignment apply in this context, and what are the challenges?

- The problem of vested interests (military, political, other) that may lose out from the success of a project/programme, and the possible need for rigorous stakeholder analysis.

- The particular importance of looking at the effect of an individual project/programme on the wider Peace Writ Large within any given context, *e.g.* the difficulties of demonstrating the links between micro projects and macro Peace Writ Large.

- The particular importance of UN and NGO actors in conflict environments.

- The data deficit and particular difficulties in establishing good baseline information. With the possible absence of "hard data" in conflict situations, what other methods can be used to qualify/quantify sources other than data?

- Lessons learned should also be reflected in the analysis; DAC Guidance and issues briefs could be helpful in that endeavour (see www.oecd.org/dac/conflict).

- Participatory approaches to evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities and the perceptions of stakeholders, in particular the poor, are also critical in these contexts.

3) *Options for guidance on programme design and management*

Based on the above overview of the context, the approach paper should consider recommending steps for conflict prevention and peacebuilding practitioners to build into project/programme design and management to facilitate their evaluation. Issues to be covered would include, but should not be limited to, the importance of:

- Articulating and clarifying objectives at the planning stage.

- Working according to the principles of results-based management.

- Developing robust baselines and monitoring systems.

- Carefully considering the different needs of the intended end-users/audiences.

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4) *Recommendations for practical guidance on evaluation*

This section of the approach paper should consider some of the core questions related to providing guidance for undertaking evaluations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. It should underline the key point that evaluations in this field must be designed in a conflict-sensitive manner, with a special emphasis on the obstacles and possible incentives to achieving this. In addition to areas covered in the humanitarian guidance, issues could include:

- What kinds of evaluation and research methods are generally more suitable in conflict environments – *e.g.* qualitative versus quantitative or mixed-method approaches? How can the design of an evaluation methodology be informed by the political economy and/or by conflict analysis tools? What are the advantages or disadvantages of using theory-based evaluation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities?

- What is the particular value of policy evaluations in conflict environments? What are the difficulties of demonstrating the links between micro projects and macro Peace Writ Large? How could we look at evaluating all conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities within one conflict or national context?

- What is the role of conflict analysis when evaluating the relevance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities? How is it possible to make use of other conflict analysis tools and Post-conflict Impact Assessments (PCIAs)?

- The importance of triangulation in a context where stakeholders may have firm ideological standpoints and/or their perceptions may be affected by trauma or perceived danger.

- The importance of protecting the security and safety of the evaluation team, while addressing the need for evaluations to take account of work done in potentially more insecure rural areas.

- The ethical responsibility to protect the security and anonymity of evaluation informants.

- How can evaluators make the links between the micro and macro levels, and to what extent can any existing national policy framework such as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) be used to frame the approach?

- Are joint evaluations more suitable in a context where multiple programmes are affecting the same Peace Writ Large?

- How can steps be taken towards addressing the "strategic deficit" in conflict prevention and peacebuilding evaluations, as identified by the Utstein report? How can evaluations assess the relevance of donor projects/programmes to country-specific and broader policies?

- How should the timing of evaluation be planned in a conflict prevention or peacebuilding environment?

- How can a lack of baseline information be addressed by the evaluators?

- How applicable are the five standard DAC Criteria to a conflict environment? Do they need modifying or adapting to the conflict context, and are any additional criteria needed?

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5) *Annex: Categorising conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities for evaluation guidance*

The approach paper for developing guidance on undertaking evaluations in conflict-prone and/or conflict-affected settings should be supplemented by a short discussion piece (5-10 pages) that categorises the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding for evaluation purposes and serves as an annex to the main approach paper.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding work encompasses a number of distinct policy areas (for example, from security and development to governance, state building, peacekeeping operations and support for truth and reconciliation), together with a wide variety of activities. Given such a broad domain, it is anticipated that – while guidance could provide generic advice across the conflict contexts – more specific advice/direction will also be required within each conflict prevention and peacebuilding category. The purpose of this annex is to discuss a breakdown of the conflict prevention and peacebuilding domain and to differentiate each category from the point of view of how evaluations could be undertaken. The annex should also provide preliminary proposals on specific key issues/questions that would be pertinent for an evaluation team for each category within the domain of activities.

There have been a number of categorisations of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, including the "palette" concept contained in the Utstein study. However, none has attempted to categorise conflict prevention and peacebuilding for evaluation purposes. Issues that may be pertinent to defining the categories relate to the type of actors involved, the level of local ownership, political/conflict environmental factors and the scope of the activities being undertaken (whether focused on regional, national or local actors/institutions). Developing a clear picture of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities as practiced by most agencies will be informed by the literature review and the interview process.

Overview of activities

1. Develop an *inception report* that would provide: a presentation and justification of the methodology chosen to approach the task; the feasibility of the Terms of Reference – the questions, scope, time, budget and foreseen methodology; and deviations from TORs, with justifications for these.

2. To underpin the work, undertake *a focused literature review* of key DAC and donor agency policies/guidance on evaluation on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, with particular attention to the useful information to be drawn from the DAC Guidance on Humanitarian Assistance.

3. Conduct *in-depth interviews* with a select number of key informants (15-20) by telephone, including members of the Networks on Evaluation and Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation. The list of interviewees will be agreed with the DAC Secretariat.

4. *Review and map the breadth of activities* conducted in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to be included in the annex, with a view to categorising the various areas for the purpose of future evaluation.

5. Conduct *analytical work and conceptual thinking* to develop and write an approach paper covering preliminary recommendations for guidance for evaluation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities and policies.

6. *Present and discuss the findings of the draft approach paper* at a workshop in Oslo planned for the 3rd quarter of 2006. The consultant(s) should also prepare break-out group discussion topics based on questions raised in the approach paper and provide inputs to the agenda.

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7. *Finalise and submit a final approach paper* that is of publishable quality following discussion and feedback at the workshop.

Budget, inputs and competencies

The consultant(s) should develop a detailed budget proposal and suggest the number of necessary person days in order to complete the tasks, also indicating any other individuals who may support this work (with relevant CVs) if working in a team. At least eight to ten weeks of full-time work is envisaged, followed by intermittent work through end-2006. The detailed budget proposal – and information on the full team, if relevant – should be included in an annex to the inception report.

The consultant(s) will need solid experience of donor practices in development co-operation and a background in: 1) conflict prevention/peacebuilding/security programming; 2) conflict assessment/conflict analysis; 3) evaluation methodology and implementation; and 4) communications and writing skills.

Timing and outputs

The consultancy is expected to begin in May 2006.

The consultant(s) will first be asked to provide an *inception report* (8-10 pages) for the approach paper within three to four weeks of the signature of the contract. The inception report will then be reviewed and considered for approval by the Steering Group. Once agreement has been reached on the inception report, the consultant(s) will be asked to begin work on the approach paper.

A *first draft of the approach paper* (approximately 30 pages + 5-10 page annex) should be provided for preliminary review and feedback by the DAC Secretariat within six to eight weeks of approval of the inception report. As noted, under "Activities" the consultant(s) will be asked to undertake a literature review to explore the options for guidance in this area, as well as interviews with a select number of key informants and the other activities described above for the development of the approach paper.

The *full-draft approach paper* (approximately 30 pages + 5-10-page annex) is due for submission within two to four weeks after approval of the draft approach paper. The draft approach paper, which should provide information on the scope, audiences and preliminary findings for guidance in this field, will be presented and reviewed at a workshop envisaged for the 3rd quarter of 2006. Therefore, a draft list of topics for break-out group discussions at the workshop, based on questions raised in the approach paper, should also be provided with the full-draft approach paper. This work may involve wider input to the workshop agenda.

A *final revised version of the approach paper* – that is, reworked in view of the outcomes of the workshop and of publishable quality – should be submitted within two to three weeks following completion of the workshop.

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ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES

Towards DAC Guidance

This report outlines an approach for developing guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. It draws on a broad document review and interviews with key experts. First, the report specifies which types of work can be considered conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, distinguishing between conflict sensitivity and conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. The challenges of evaluating in this field are discussed and recommendations are made on key concepts and important elements for the process, including conducting a conflict analysis; examining theories of change; understanding impacts; programming to support evaluation; and choosing evaluation methodologies and approaches. The report also looks at the applicability of existing DAC tools, and adapts the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance to the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field. Finally, it outlines the next steps for the DAC networks in developing guidance.

This report on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities is a result of a joint project of the DAC Networks on Development Evaluation and on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation and represents a step forward in developing forthcoming DAC guidance on evaluating conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. The document was prepared by Mary B. Anderson, Diana Chigas, and Peter Woodrow of CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA), based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. The two networks commented on this document prior to its publication. The findings of this research are being used in the preparation of draft DAC guidance, which will be completed by the two networks in the winter of 2007. The draft guidance will be used for evaluations in the field during a one year application phase, then revised and finalized at the end of 2008. Please note: This report has been revised in light of comments and replaces the previous version of 13 March 2007.

www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationnetwork