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PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PCIA)

Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) is a tool and process for anticipating and assessing the risk for and the effects of development and humanitarian work on armed conflict and for peacebuilding.

This Tip Sheet aims to clarify what PCIA approaches entail, and what to consider when choosing a PCIA approach. The Tip Sheet seeks to support people involved in development cooperation and humanitarian aid so that they can systematically assess how their work will influence conflict and/or peace as well as identifying what kind of risks they might be confronted with when working in conflict zones.

Key messages

- PCIA aims at reducing the unintended negative effects of aid interventions on the conflict dynamics in the intervention area, and enhance its contribution to peacebuilding.

- There are many different uses of the term PCIA. It covers a wide range of different approaches. All PCIA approaches analyse the conflict situation and assess the implications for the intervention. The main difference between the various approaches is in how this is done – there are various ways of adapting the planned intervention based on the analysis.

- The more comprehensive PCIA approaches provide a systematic, step-by-step process to analyse not only conflict, but also the negative and positive effects of the intervention on peace and conflict. Comprehensive PCIA approaches assess the need for peacebuilding, as well as the conflict risks. Comprehensive PCIA approaches help to integrate findings into the project cycle and the policy level.

- PCIAs can be used before, during and after an intervention, for programme planning, mid-term reprogramming and/or evaluation of an intervention. If peacebuilding is explicitly targeted, PCIA approaches should be used throughout the entire project cycle and should also flow into the programme policy level.

INTRODUCTION

The discussion about PCIA originated in the mid-1990s after the tragic events surrounding the genocide in Rwanda, which led to increasing international awareness of the role of development cooperation in conflict and peacebuilding. This awareness went hand in hand with a demand to make explicit the underlying assumptions concerning the effects of aid on peace and conflict.

The evolution of PCIA has gone through different stages. Today we therefore do not find a common understanding of the PCIA concept. The term covers a wide range of different approaches that often vary considerably from the original concept.

Common to all PCIA approaches are an analysis of the conflict situation and the development of recommendations for an intervention to cope with a particular situation. Thus the goal of all approaches is to reduce possible negative effects on armed conflict and to enhance an intervention's contribution to peacebuilding.

KEY CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND ELEMENTS

Many different definitions of the PCIA concept exist today, as the PCIA debate has developed into a variety of directions. To fully grasp the concept, all the debates and approaches would have to be described. In summary, some of the key differences between the various PCIA approaches include:

- The analysis process: how systematically are the analysis linked to the resulting implications for an intervention?
- The understanding of "impact": in most PCIA approaches "impact" is not used in the same way as in the OECD glossary for evaluation (OECD: "outcomes" = short- and mid-term effects, and "impacts" = long-term effects). PCIAs generally use "impact" to refer to both immediate outcomes as well as longer-term effects.
- The level of intervention: most PCIA approaches focus on the project level of development interventions; only a few can also be used at a country programme and policy level.

- The purpose of the PCIA: some approaches are best used for project planning, others for mid-term assessments. A few can be used in multiple ways and can be integrated into the entire project cycle.
- The level of actors addressed: most PCIA approaches can be used by all kinds of actors. Some are tailored for a specific group, such as local or international NGOs, donors, joint multi-donor interventions, etc.

The more comprehensive PCIA approaches provide a systematic, step-by-step process using different methodologies to analyse not only conflict, but also the needs for peacebuilding, the conflict risks, as well as the negative and positive effects of an intervention on peace and conflict. They provide ways and means to integrate findings into an entire project cycle and can also be used at the country programme and policy level.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

PCIA has implications
1. on **planning** aid interventions on the project, programme and policy levels whenever these interventions are implemented in a zone of latent or manifest violent conflict;
2. on intervention in the **midst of a project cycle**, for example, when a conflict situation worsens or as a preparation for a next phase of the intervention;
3. on standard **development evaluations** in case they take place in a zone of latent or manifest violent conflict;
4. on the **entire project cycle** when dealing with peace-building interventions.

1. Integrating PCIA into the planning of development programme or aid project
PCIAs should be integrated into a standard planning process whenever interventions are implemented in a zone of latent or manifest armed conflict. The analysis of the conflict situation and the identification of the needs for peacebuilding in a given country and/or development sector can be part of a feasibility and baseline study prior to the interventions. During the programme or project planning workshop and the use of general assessment tools such as the "logical framework" exercise, the relevance

of an intervention for working in conflict and supporting peacebuilding indirectly through the development work is assessed, and planned activities are then adapted accordingly.

2. Mid-term-PCIA aims at assessing the relevance, risks for and effects of aid interventions on peace and conflict and is usually conducted as a separate exercise.

3. Integrating PCIA into standard development evaluations
When an evaluation of a development intervention in a conflict prone area is planned, some additional criteria and questions need to be added to the standard OECD criteria and questions (see the "Do no harm" Tip Sheet).

PCIAs have been conducted by COPRET in Nepal, Central Asia, Angola, Macedonia, Ecuador and Rwanda.

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KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN GETTING INVOLVED

When one is planning to conduct a PCIA, it is necessary to ask why one is doing a PCIA and to find out what the exact interests and needs of the organisation, programme or project are. A first key question is whether an organisation intends to focus on development cooperation in an area where there is conflict (working in conflict), or if it is specifically also seeking to address the conflict and build peace (i.e. work on conflict)? After this basic question, organisations often want answers to one or several of the following questions. Answering these can support clarification and the tailoring of the process. This can be a first step to the right choice of a PCIA approach:

- How can one systematically plan a new intervention in a conflict zone?
- How can I assess risks due to conflict?

- What are the effects of a specific programme or project on the conflict situation, and how can interventions be improved?
- How does an entire country programme affect the conflict and peace situation?
- How do PCIA methodologies work, what are their respective benefits and limitations, which one is best suited to the organisations needs?
- How can the peace and conflict lens be integrated into an organisation's planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures?

After these questions have been clarified the appropriate PCIA approach can be selected, and the process can be tailored to the specific needs of the organisation(s) and related intervention(s).

Three comprehensive PCIA approaches

The 'Do no harm' approach build on the essential findings of the 'Local capacities for peace' project and has come up with an analysis matrix for project planning and check lists for assessing negative and positive effects of the project on the intervention based on an analysis of so called dividers and connectors. With the help of these tools the project's intervention design is checked against the findings and can be adapted accordingly in order to build local capacities for peace through the aid project. The implementation of the 'Do no harm' approach has been mainly taken up by International NGOs in the field through training their local partner NGOs in applying the tools. 'Do no harm' is a separate assessment tools that needs to be applied in addition to routine development or humanitarian planning or monitoring tools. It's wide application and thus awareness building created in the field can be seen as a major success story.

'Hands on PCIA' is also an approach that walks project staff during a process-oriented workshop through different consecutive steps from the analysis of conflict to the assessment of risks, opportunities and effects. PCIA enables the user to adapt the intervention design accordingly and aims at also supporting local capacities for peace. Bush's PCIA has been disseminated in different local languages and aims at empowering local actors and communities to apply PCIA by themselves as a means of counteracting outside dominances.

The 'Aid for Peace' approach seeks to facilitate the planning and evaluation of peacebuilding, development and humanitarian interventions in conflict zones and provide a common methodological framework for use by different actors and levels of interventions (macro, sector, program, project). The 'Aid for Peace' framework consists of four parts: Part 1 analyses the peacebuilding needs in a given country, area or region, part 2 assesses the peacebuilding relevance of the intervention, part 3 assesses or anticipates expected or manifest effects of the conflict on the intervention activities (conflict risks), and part 4 assesses or anticipates expected or manifest effects of the intervention on the conflict dynamics and the peacebuilding process (peace and conflict outcomes and impact). Based on this framework 'Aid for Peace' provides the user with different applications forms: for a) planning (for development actors an integration of the framework into the Project Cycle Management has been developed) and b) evaluations (for development and humanitarian evaluations an integration of the framework into the OECD/DAC and ALNAP criteria has been developed) and c) a PCIA like separate assessment framework is also provided. 'Aid for Peace' makes also use of many tools as provided by other approaches and integrated them in a transparent and systematic way.

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– Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, A quarterly review journal, Washington/Harare.

LINKS

PCIA concepts and tools
Berghof Handbook, www.berghof-handbook.net/
Collaborative for Development Action, www.cdainc.com
International Alert/Saferworld, www.conflictsensitivity.org
swisspeace, www.swisspeace.org/koff/t_tools.htm
GTZ, www.gtz.de/crisisprevention

Conflict and peace analysis information
International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict, www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/
Conflict Resolution information source, www.crinfo.org/
Conflict Management Toolkit, http://cmtoolkit.sais-jhu.edu
International Crisis Group, www.crisisweb.org