

Improving the impact of Country Strategy Papers and programming on peace and stability



Lessons learned, best practice and recommendations from Saferworld's 3-year project in the Horn of Africa

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The regular revision and review of CSPs provide important opportunities to evaluate the impact of past strategies on conflict and to revise them to account for changing conflict dynamics on the ground. However, experience in the Horn of Africa has shown that conflict issues have not been systematically considered in the mid-term and annual reviews processes in most countries. The following are lessons learned and recommendations from the experience of Saferworld's projects in the Horn of Africa to which over a hundred of civil society leaders from the whole region have participated. They provide practical advice on how CSPs should be revised to ensure that they are sensitive to conflict dynamics and take full advantage of peace-building opportunities.

Evaluating the impact of past strategies on conflict dynamics to improve CSPs' conflict sensitivity in countries at risk

The focal areas for support in most countries remain primarily economic development sectors such as infrastructure, financial assistance, budget support and food security. Research in the Horn of Africa has shown that even where CSPs include a discussion of conflict risks, it is not clear how this has influenced strategic priorities for assistance or will be used to inform programmes in economic sectors. For instance, rural development programmes have the potential to reduce conflicts caused by livelihood insecurity and competition over water, land and pasture among pastoralist communities in the Horn of Africa, but could also inadvertently exacerbate conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, if they are not designed in a conflict-sensitive manner.

The project concluded that in its Country Strategy Papers the EC should:

1. use the Commission's "check list of root causes of conflict" as a starting point for a thorough actors-based conflict analysis, which includes the views of a wide range of stakeholders (lessons learnt from the European Commission)
2. evaluate the impact of past CSPs on conflict dynamics, and use this evaluation to inform the drafting of new CSPs (best practice in Uganda)
3. include specific indicators in CSPs that can be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of CSPs on conflict dynamics in the future
4. recommend that conflict analysis be systematically carried out at each stage of the programming process to consider how future EU's development assistance may impact on and interact with conflict environments
5. recommend that assessments of the conflict-impact of EU development assistance be used to inform programmes in focal areas of support, such as infrastructure and rural development.

Promoting tripartite dialogue between the EC, governments and non-state actors (NSAs)

Experience in the Horn of Africa has shown that sustained tripartite dialogue between EC officials, governments and NSAs is important to overcoming mistrust, establishing a positive working relationship between all stakeholders, and developing a shared understanding of how NSAs can effectively participate in policy processes, including EDF programming.

The project concluded that the EC should:

1. initiate and more actively stimulate dialogue with governments on their obligations to involve NSAs in the revision of CSPs under Cotonou (lessons learnt from Ethiopia)
2. review EU support to capacity-building for NSAs, with the aim of making this support more flexible, reducing delays, and simplifying procedures that place an unnecessary burden on NSAs that already have limited capacity (lessons learnt from all Horn countries)
3. appoint at least one focal person within each delegation with responsibility for liaising with NSAs and facilitating their participation in the CSP revision process, and in EDF programming more broadly (lessons learnt from Djibouti and Somalia)
4. make full use of the newly created separate instrument to provide direct financial support to NSAs, without requiring government approval (lessons learnt from all Horn countries).

Consulting with non-state actors (NSAs)

The Cotonou Agreement provides for NSA participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of EU development strategies and programmes. However, experience in the Horn of Africa shows that EC has not translated these principles into practice. The participation of NSAs in the revision of CSPs is crucial to ensuring that EU development co-operation responds to local needs and priorities, is locally owned, and contributes to good governance, peace and stability. For instance, in Uganda, civil society's input into the revision of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 2003-4 made an important contribution to the prominence of conflict issues within the revised PEAP and the development of a new 'pillar' dedicated to 'security, conflict resolution and disaster management'.

The project concluded that EC delegations should:

1. work with government and NSA representatives to develop and agree 'ground rules' for how consultations with NSAs will be conducted in the revision of CSPs (Uganda's best practice)
2. produce guidelines on best practice in involving NSAs in the revision of CSPs and in EDF programming processes
3. work with governments and NSAs in each country to agree a broader communication and dissemination strategy for the CSP revision process
4. ensure that information about the timetable and process for the revision of CSPs and NSA consultations, along with relevant documentation in appropriate languages, is disseminated to NSAs well in advance of planned consultations (lessons learnt from Rwanda)
5. give NSAs enough time to prepare and co-ordinate their input.

Saferworld and partners, Africa Peace Forum (APFO) and InterAfrica Group (IAG), have been working to strengthen dialogue between civil society, the EU and Horn governments on conflict prevention, since 1997 through a combination of advocacy, research and capacity building. Over a hundred of civil society leaders from the whole region have participated to the project. The most recent phase of the project, which began in 2003 and concluded in 2005, has focused on implementing the commitments made in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

For more information about the project, please visit our website at
http://www.saferworld.org.uk/en/eu_horn.html

For further information about Saferworld's work on the revision of EU Country Strategy Papers in Africa and on Saferworld's EU policy and advocacy work in Brussels, please contact:
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