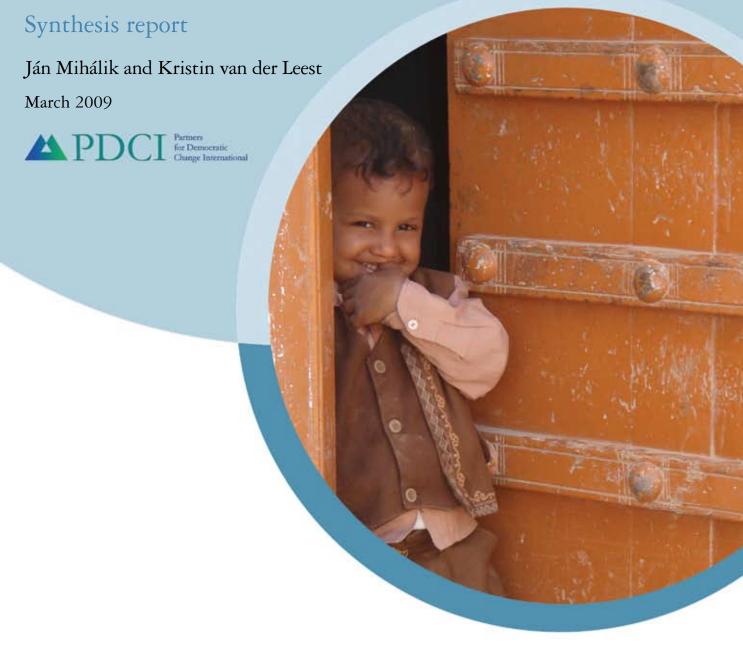## IFP CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING CLUSTER

DOES PEACEBUILDING MATTER IN DEVELOPMENT AID?

Reflections on Official Development Assistance of Seven European Countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain

Synthesis report

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March 2009

PDCI Partners for Democratic Change International

INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

ABOUT IFP

The Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) is a consortium led by International Alert and funded by the European Commission. IfP draws together the complementary geographic and thematic expertise of 10 civil society organisations (and their networks) with offices across the EU and in conflict-affected countries. Its aim is to develop and harness international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure that all stakeholders, including EU institutions, can access strong independent analysis in order to facilitate better informed and more evidence-based policy decisions.

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The members of the capacity-building cluster are PDCI, EPLO, Eliamep and FRIDE.

ABOUT PDCI

Partners for Democratic Change International (PDCI) is a global partnership of fifteen independent, local organisations in Europe, the Americas and the Middle East that work to advance civil society, good governance and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide. The PDCI Secretariat was established in 2006 to enhance network communication and expand contacts with both the EU institutions and the NGO community active in Brussels. To learn more, visit http://www.pdci-network.org.

ABOUT EPLO

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) is the platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks active in the field of peacebuilding, who share an interest in promoting sustainable peacebuilding policies among decision-makers in the European Union. To learn more, visit http://www.eplo.org.

ABOUT ELIAMEP

The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) is an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute. More information on ELIAMEP's research programmes, training activities, seminars and publications is available at www.eliamep.gr. ELIAMEP has also launched a new collective blog section, blogs@eliamep (http://blogs.eliamep.gr/en/) that aims to enrich public dialogue in areas related to research and educational activities in the field of European affairs, migration, transatlantic relations and security. To learn more, visit http://www.eliamep.gr.

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Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE) is a think tank based in Madrid that aims to provide the best and most innovative thinking on Europe's role in the international arena. It strives to break new ground in its core research interests of democratisation; peace, security and human rights; and humanitarian aid and development, and seeks to influence debate in governmental and non-governmental bodies through rigorous analysis rooted in the values of justice, equality and democracy.

As a prominent European think tank, FRIDE benefits from political independence, a diversity of views and the intellectual background of its international staff. Since its establishment in 1999, FRIDE has organised or participated in the creation and development of various projects that reinforce not only FRIDE's commitment to debate and analysis, but also to progressive action thinking. To learn more, visit http://www.fride.org.

DOES PEACEBUILDING MATTER IN DEVELOPMENT AID?

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Synthesis Report extracts the main findings from seven EU Member State case studies surveyed under the Capacity-Building and Training Cluster of the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP). Case studies were conducted in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain[1] in order to assess these countries' capacities to meet EU spending targets for official development assistance (ODA) and to analyse the position of peacebuilding within national ODA policies. Each case study analysed country-specific ODA policies by focusing on institutional mechanisms and key actors in managing and implementing ODA; the role and capacity of civil society organisations in influencing planning, implementation, and evaluation of ODA; and public awareness of and support for ODA.[2]

This report finds that international development cooperation has received growing attention during the last decade in all surveyed case-study countries. New EU Member States in particular are striving to adhere to their international commitments by further refining their ODA policies; enhancing the institutional structures for managing and implementing ODA; and increasing cooperation with and consultation of civil society organisations.

Likewise, practitioners, international donors, and policy-makers have progressively acknowledged peacebuilding as integral to effective development assistance. However, it is worth stressing that the links between peace and development are complex. Different actors often have different understandings of basic terms, concepts, and methods related to the field of peacebuilding and development cooperation. Policy-makers, donors, and civil-society actors need to make substantial steps towards reaching a shared understanding of peacebuilding and its relation to development assistance that would encourage greater coherence in planning, programming and implementation processes.

The recommendations target newer EU Member States in particular, but are applicable to all Member State donors. They aim at improving the integration of a peacebuilding approach at policy and programming levels in order to improve coordination and impact. The recommendations also emphasise the importance of including civil society in all phases of ODA planning and implementation, and enhancing public awareness of and support for peacebuilding within international development cooperation.

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1   The sample of countries was chosen to learn more about EU countries that have significantly developed their donor capacity but face remaining challenges in implementation (Greece, Portugal and Spain); those in the process of strengthening their ODA processes since accession to the EU (Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia); and one in the beginning stages of developing an ODA policy framework in line with international standards (Bulgaria).
2   The case studies are available at http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu.

INTRODUCTION

The seven country case studies were commissioned with the objective of assessing selected EU Member State capacities for meeting EU development assistance targets and increasing attention to peacebuilding within ODA processes. This report extracts a number of key challenges to integrating peacebuilding within ODA policies. Many of these relate directly to gaps in ODA planning, managing and implementation processes and structures. The report also identifies good practices that can and should be shared regionally between EU Member States as a means of improving ODA and peacebuilding policy, practice and impact. The findings are intended to contribute to the improvement of the overall coherence and effectiveness of ODA planning, management and implementation in these countries and, more broadly, in other EU Member States.

KEY FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES

The ODA institutional framework

'There is a clear difference between interpretation of meaning and motivations of assistance activities…
[I]t seems necessary to …experience exchange and debate… [leading] at least to a mutual understanding
about what ODA and peacebuilding mean and what they should accomplish'.
Ilowiecka-Tanska and Pejda, 2008[3]

An institutional framework for ODA is integral to the planning, management and implementation of international development cooperation. This framework should include specialised ODA management mechanisms, either placed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) or developed as an independent entity, for example a development ministry or agency, and inter-ministerial coordinating bodies that engage relevant ministries (at various levels) as well as civil society. The coherence of the institutional framework impacts first and foremost on the effectiveness of ODA planning processes.

In **Greece**, ODA interventions are the result of a "top-down" approach to policy formulation heavily influenced by the international frameworks for ODA. The government's engagement in international forums facilitated the process of knowledge transfer of key ODA concepts, including peacebuilding and human security, which easily filtered into policy and programming formulation processes. Extensive institutional re-structuring has also created the space for more comprehensive engagement with civil society in terms of funding opportunities, partnerships, and expert consultations.

Spain's development assistance structures and planning processes are decentralised, in keeping with its decentralised political structure. This requires a high degree of cooperation and organisation among the national ODA coordination mechanisms and local entities at regional levels. Decentralisation has opened the door to greater participation by a larger number of governmental actors at different political levels.

All case study countries have or are in the process of establishing specialised structures to manage ODA processes, particularly in Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Poland. It is clear that for peacebuilding to be nested effectively, a comprehensive and coherent ODA institutional framework is required that accommodates international knowledge transfer,[4] multi-level political dialogue, and organised consultation with civil society.

ODA Programming Cycles

'As regards the public authorities, there is a strong need for capacity-building in planning, managing and assessing ODA – particularly as the volume of aid increases. This requires tapping into relevant ODA knowledge and experience, and drawing from expertise and best practice from other Member States or from the EU itself'.
Gropas, 2008[5]

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3   I. Iowiecka-Tanska and M. Pejda (2008). *Poland official development assistance and peacebuilding*, 9. Available at http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Polish_Official_development_assistance_and_peacebuilding.pdf.
4   Not all case-study countries are part of the OECD-DAC Peer Review, an effective knowledge-sharing forum for ODA donors. A regional mechanism for sharing experience would benefit newer EU Member State donors including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia.
5   R. Gropas (2008). *Ten years of Greek development cooperation and peacebuilding: Challenges and recommendations*, 6. Available at http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Ten_years_of_greek_development_cooperation_and_peacebuilding.pdf.

ODA programming cycles span planning, implementation and evaluation phases. How ODA interventions are programmed at a technical level will directly influence their impact in recipient countries. The case studies reveal that ODA coherence is undermined specifically at the level of programming due to issues ranging from inadequate strategic planning, underdeveloped coordination between relevant ministries, insufficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and lack of qualified ODA personnel.

At present, the **Polish** MFA directly controls only 20 percent of bilateral ODA resources. These are allocated through a restricted reserve of the state budget on a yearly basis. The diffusion of ODA responsibility to different government ministries and dependence on yearly budgetary cycles hinders the emergence of longer-term ODA strategic planning and a more comprehensive, long-term approach to peacebuilding within ODA policies and programming.

The **Czech Republic** is currently transforming its international development cooperation system. Key changes include the establishment of a centralised management and implementation agency as well as an interdepartmental coordinating body. However, at present, there is limited staff in the MFA dealing specifically with ODA issues (in the MFA in general, in specialised ODA bodies, and at the embassy level in the field) to effectively manage ODA planning, programming and implementation processes.

ODA programming cycles differ in each of the case study countries. However, a peacebuilding approach is more effectively integrated when there are already longer-term ODA strategic planning processes in place. The lack of qualified and knowledgeable personnel at management level is an obstacle to such strategic planning.

The Peacebuilding Approach within ODA Policy

'For peacebuilding to become more effective it should permeate all areas of the state's external action (trade, defence, immigration, etc.)'.

Bustelo and Aguirre, 2008[6]

The case study countries are integrating peacebuilding as a key aspect of ODA processes in different degrees and through different strategies. The next step is to mainstream peacebuilding into all areas of external action (both at national and at EU level) through a process which continues to engage the active involvement of civil society.

The state-building approach underpins current **Portuguese** international development cooperation efforts. This is in line with its geographic country priorities, several of which are regarded as fragile states/situations. Although the state-building approach is a long-term process into which peacebuilding feeds, such interventions are nonetheless still developed on a case-by-case basis. This is true for peacebuilding interventions in general as well.

The **Spanish** government adopted the Peacebuilding Strategy for Spanish Cooperation in 2007 after extensive consultation with civil society. The strategy identifies peacebuilding as a strategic line of cooperation within Spanish ODA and recognises peacebuilding as an approach that links security and development. In the Spanish context, integrating peacebuilding has enabled a more holistic approach to development cooperation using a broad array of instruments to address the roots of conflict.

Peacebuilding is integrated in ODA policy to varying degrees in the case-study countries. Good practices have been set by the development of a specific peacebuilding strategy in Spain and by the inclusion of peacebuilding as a strand within ODA documents in Portugal. However, peacebuilding has yet to permeate other areas of national external action in the countries covered by the case studies and requires additional strategies for its mainstreaming in relevant policy areas.

The Role of Civil Society

Civil society organisations in all case study countries are relative newcomers to the field of ODA and peacebuilding. The sector was not organised, or did not organise itself, to participate in international development cooperation

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6   M.G. Bustelo and M. Aguirre (2008). *Cross-sector peacebuilding capacities, Country case study: Spain*, p.7. Available at http://www. initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/Cross_sector_peacebuilding_capacities.pdf.

processes in a meaningful way, i.e., to influence policy formulation and/or programming cycles, or to act as implementing partners. Active involvement of civil society in ODA and peacebuilding processes is a key challenge facing donors. However, it can be effectively addressed through the development of consultative mechanisms and processes, select funding opportunities and capacity building.

The consultation mechanisms and processes in place in **Bulgaria** are not sufficient to ensure proper communication of information or to allow informed civil society representatives to truly influence policy development. The effect is that CSOs cannot act as effective implementing partners and the public more generally is not aware of the impact of Bulgarian ODA and peacebuilding practices.

Within **Spain**, the academic community within civil society has been engaged in peacebuilding issues to a limited degree. The Spanish case study characterises Spanish academic culture as "inward-looking", and while academic work captures key international cooperation debates, the focus is conceptual rather than practical. As a result, academics do not influence decision- and policy-makers on peacebuilding and cross-cutting issues to the extent possible.

ODA processes formally engage the civil society sector in all phases of ODA policy formulation and implementation, as institutionalised through MFA policy documents in the case study countries. In reality, however, NGOs and the academic community do not participate fully in ODA processes. As a result, civil society is not well-placed to influence policy formulation and programming cycles, or to serve as effective implementing partners. This is particularly true in newer EU Member States, where CSOs are traditional recipients of capacity-building development assistance and are not positioned to influence policy formulation processes regarding ODA at national or international levels.

Public Awareness of and Support for Peacebuilding

'There is a high level of support for international development cooperation, although there is little knowledge of the mechanisms and actors involved. Peacebuilding for the majority of the population is identified with overseas military deployment…'.
Bustelo and Aguirre, 2008[7]

'What is also causing concern is that citizens are poorly informed about various types of international peace operations'.
Prebilič and Vuga, 2008[8]

Opinion polls and surveys in case study countries reveal an important gap between public support for and public awareness of peacebuilding and international development cooperation more generally. Levels of public support are linked directly to levels of public awareness, although not always in a straightforward manner; the key finding is that levels of knowledge are low in all countries surveyed, even in those where public support for the concept of international development cooperation is high. Clearly, to increase or sustain high levels of public support, more attention needs to be paid to enhancing public awareness of peacebuilding.

Public support for **Slovenian** engagement in "peacebuilding" activities is decreasing according to recent polls. This is most likely due to a correlation of "peacebuilding" with "peace missions", especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan. This underlines the necessity of targeted peacebuilding information campaigns that clearly delineate between the various strands of peace work, including peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Public support for peacebuilding and ODA is not (yet) a "push factor" in pressuring the **Greek** government to further enhance its ODA capacities or engage more proactively to influence international ODA agendas. Greek support for ODA activities in its immediate neighbourhood or in response to humanitarian emergencies is high. However, it is not clear that a development assistance "culture" has emerged among the public that could withstand economic downturns, political crises, and/or strategic shifts in ODA geographic priorities.

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7   Ibid., p.7.
8   V. Prebilič, U. Svete and J. Vuga (2008). *Slovenia and peacebuilding*, p.27. Available at http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/pdf/ SLOVENIA_AND_PEACEBUILDING.pdf.

Public awareness of peacebuilding varies greatly in the case study countries. In newer EU Member States, the term is either not widely known (such as in Poland, Czech Republic or Bulgaria) or is misunderstood (as in Slovenia). It is clear that public awareness is critical to public support. Public support is highest where a development assistance "culture" has emerged, even if knowledge of the specifics of ODA processes (such as mechanisms and actors involved) is limited. Where ODA and peacebuilding are considered societal "values", such as in Spain, there is greater opportunity for the public to act as a "push" factor in further enhancing international development cooperation processes.

The Greek and Czech case studies highlight that media sources are more interested in covering humanitarian disasters where the impact of interventions is immediately evident. However, the media could play a bigger role in disseminating information about the importance of international development cooperation, its impact, and how it can contribute to greater stability. The media is also an important channel of information about peacebuilding, and could assist in clarifying what the term means and the role it plays in external actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, based on the key findings and challenges, provide guidance for concrete action for integrating peacebuilding into ODA policies at decision- and policy-making levels of bilateral and multilateral donors, including the European Commission. Nonetheless, successful implementation of these recommendations requires the active participation and cooperation of other stakeholders as well (CSOs, academia, third country governments, etc.). In order for the peacebuilding dimension to be integrated holistically within ODA policies, five main areas of action are needed: enhancing understanding and recognition of peacebuilding; supporting better ODA coordination and management; developing regional forums for ODA knowledge-sharing; engaging the support of civil society; and increasing public awareness, and thereby support for, ODA and peacebuilding. The recommendations target newer EU Member States in particular, but are applicable to all EU Member State donors.

1. Enhance understanding and recognition of peacebuilding, and build capacities to operationalise peacebuilding as an integral aspect of ODA policies.
- Include peacebuilding in basic ODA policy documents in order to set the basis for the inclusion of the topic in derived policies and documents.
- Ensure that the mechanisms and legal frameworks for aid are specifically designed to include peacebuilding projects and interventions. This means, for example, that they allow for long-term multi-year projects, and explicitly include peacebuilding (rather than only "poverty reduction") goals and objectives.
- Support the creation of small, cross-sector communities of actors at the national level who understand and strive for mainstreaming peacebuilding into national aid policies and practices; encourage the same at the regional level amongst donors in order to develop forums for exchange of experiences and best practices, especially among donors with different development assistance traditions.
- Create and finance training and awareness-raising programmes for development practitioners and professionals that explain peacebuilding and its inter-relatedness with existing cross-cutting issues of development policies; encourage development actors to analyse their development interventions from a conflict-sensitive perspective and identify concrete peacebuilding activities that contribute to achieving the desired development impact.

2. Create and support necessary conditions for coordination at all levels to facilitate strategic planning, programming and implementation processes.
- Create structures and systems that require and enable direct horizontal communication between stakeholders on all levels (for example, between departments of different ministries, lower-ranking officers of public institutions with staff of implementing organisations, etc.).
- Ensure sufficient time for development of longer-term strategic approaches to ODA and specifically peacebuilding initiatives within ODA programming cycles.

3. Create a learning environment at both institutional and public levels and ensure impact evaluation of policies, programmes and actions.
- Ensure that a budget-line for external evaluation of the actions is set at EU as well as national levels to assess impact of ODA interventions.
- Systematically integrate peacebuilding potential assessment in ODA programme and project design, and where it applies develop indicators to monitor and evaluate ODA according to peacebuilding objectives.
- Publish budget expenditure reports about ODA interventions on MFA and other relevant ministry websites, including information on the types of projects implemented, amounts allocated, amounts spent, and impact assessments. These should be accessible to the public as well, particularly NGOs.

- Support communication and mutual learning between new as well as older donor countries in the form of peer reviews or similar instruments. These should be organised at a regional, European level in forums that promote knowledge-sharing, including sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

4. Develop and/or enhance mechanisms for structured consultation with civil society in donor and recipient countries, including capacity-building support.
- Support establishment of platforms/events/projects that allow and facilitate regular informal exchange between stakeholders (e.g., decision-makers, public bodies, academia, CSOs) with involvement of partners from target countries.
- Support building capacities of umbrella organisations of NGDOs (NGDO platforms) to organise and stimulate discourse about cross-cutting issues among their members and enhance awareness about policies and concepts in use.

5. Develop and/or enhance ODA communication strategies and campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of ODA and peacebuilding policies and practice.
- Finance public awareness-raising campaigns that will help acknowledge and get public support for long-term civilian-based peace-oriented interventions.
- Actively engage the support of NGOs and the media to channel ODA messages to the broader public. The media in particular plays an important role in public awareness and channelling government messages to the public, and should be mobilised more systematically by the government to publicise its ODA activities and their impact.
- Strategically communicate peacebuilding potentials and successes (where applicable) related to ODA through regular press releases.

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