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Community-based Approaches to Peacebuilding in Conflict-affected and Fragile Contexts

Issues Paper

Huma Haider
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Introduction

The impact of violent conflict and fragility on a country's society, economy and political governance is devastating and encompassing. The effects can be tangible and visible, including killed and injured civilians, destroyed or derelict bridges and wells, and damaged or inadequate health and education facilities. They can also be intangible, such as the collapse of state institutions, mistrust in government, the destruction of social relationships, psychological trauma and pervasive fear. Addressing both types of effects are essential in conflict-affected and fragile contexts.

The 'community' has often proven to be resilient in such contexts, providing survival and coping mechanisms for insecurity and fragility. Experience has shown that even in areas of sheer desolation, social life and organisational systems can readily re-emerge within community networks. (Pouligny, 2005) Growing attention has thus been paid in recent years to the adoption of community-based approaches to help address the extensive needs in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Fragile contexts are situations in which 'state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population'. (OECD DAC, 2007) Conflict-affected contexts encompass situations prior to, during and after armed conflict.

This paper explores the rationale behind community-based approaches; and key issues, challenges and considerations in designing and implementing such approaches. It highlights overarching issues across sectors and country-contexts, with particular focus on implications specific to conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Section one provides an overview of community-based approaches to peacebuilding, including a brief look at typology and community institutions. Section two outlines the key aims of community-based approaches and how these aims are approached. It also discusses the various challenges in fulfilling these aims and how these challenges can be addressed. Section three highlights key considerations in the planning, execution and monitoring of community-based approaches, including the set up of participatory, community institutions and funding mechanisms. Section four examines issues of sustainability. In particular, it discusses linking community processes to government in order to ensure greater impact and consolidation of community-based interventions. The final section provides an annotated bibliography of specific case studies and evaluations of community-based approaches, highlighting lessons learned and policy recommendations.

1. What are community-based approaches to peacebuilding?

Community-based approaches (CBA) seek to empower local community groups and institutions by giving the community direct control over investment decisions, project planning, execution and monitoring, through a process that emphasises inclusive participation and management. The basic premise for demand-led approaches is that local communities are better placed to identify their shared needs and the actions necessary to meet them. Taking charge of these processes contributes to a sense of community ownership, which can contribute to the sustainability of interventions.

The community-based approach has been adopted in fragile and conflict-affected societies. It can be an effective approach to peacebuilding, defined as the range of measures necessary to transform conflict towards sustainable, peaceful relations and outcomes. (Lederach, 1995) Since public institutions are often weak in conflict and fragile settings, community-based approaches can be used to re-connect the state with its citizens and to strengthen local governance. Community-based processes and their participatory community forums can also

be used to build social capital in divided societies by providing safe spaces for interaction, communication and joint decision-making. Such processes can help to overcome mistrust and set a precedent for peaceful and constructive management of local disputes.

Community-based approaches can be adopted in various stages of conflict and fragility. They can be used as a means of prevention, for example, or to prepare communities for peace processes. Modifications to community-based interventions would have to be made depending on the stage of conflict and fragility. Community acceptance of government involvement and the relative strength of local and national governance structures are of particular importance in determining to what extent to link community processes to the state.

Types of community-based approaches for peacebuilding

Community-based approaches are relevant across many sectors. They can be applied to individual community-level projects or as a component of wider national programmes. They can be focused primarily on achieving development outcomes, such as service delivery and good governance. Although such interventions have the potential to contribute to securing peace, they do not necessarily result in peacebuilding. Rather, community-based peacebuilding interventions often seek to transform relationships; to collaborate with a wide range of actors beyond the development community, including diplomatic actors and in some cases, parties to the conflict; and to link to broader peace strategies. A project that aims to achieve development outcomes, such as service delivery, could be seen as a peacebuilding project, if it seeks as well to bring together groups across conflict divides to work together to fulfil the need for services. The following are some examples of the possible types of community-based approaches for peacebuilding.

- **Security**

Community-based policing is an approach that brings together the police, civil society and local communities to jointly take responsibility for and develop solutions to local safety and security. Community-based approaches have also been adopted for de-mining and weapons collection. De-mobilised combatants have been involved in de-mining as a way to facilitate local reintegration.

- **Socioeconomic recovery**

Community-based approaches have been adopted to provide for services (health and education, in particular), infrastructure, natural resource and environmental management, livelihoods and employment generation – for example through the formation of cooperatives. Many of these initiatives have been designed and implemented with particular attention to fostering social capital, cooperation across divides, and the foundation for reintegration and reconciliatory processes.

- **Media, communication and civic education**

Community-based radio stations and other forms of media, broadcast in multiple languages, seek to promote dialogue and debate on key issues in society. Many also seek to promote reconciliatory processes and civic education. Community video units are another form of participatory communication, whereby people present their own ideas on key issues. Local videographers seek to promote social change by documenting the views and concerns of different groups in society such that they can learn about each other. Theatre productions and puppet shows, designed and conducted by communities, have also been used for outreach education – to teach peaceful dispute resolution and human rights norms and values.

- **Traditional justice and reconciliation**

Traditional approaches to justice and reconciliation often focus on the psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of violent conflicts. Traditional approaches are also often inclusive, with the aim of reintegrating parties on both sides of the conflict into the community. An important component is public cleansing ceremonies, undertaken is an integral step in healing community relationships.

- **Heritage and cultural preservation**

Initiatives designed to preserve culture in disaster and conflict-affected contexts have included community forums in order to allow for the articulation of local needs, quick responses on the ground, and increased social capital. Communities have also been involved in inventorying their culture, which has contributed to preservation and a sense of national identity.

Types of community-level institutions

At the core of community-based approaches is a representative community institution that can serve as a forum for discussion, decision-making and implementation of decisions. These institutions act as intermediaries between communities and local and national authorities; and between communities and external development agencies and implementing organisations (e.g. national or international non-governmental organisations). The following are prominent examples of community institutions:

- **Association**: a group of people, frequently from differing kin groups, who work together for a common purpose and have a visible identity mainly through sectors (e.g. farmers', youth, widows, parent-teach associations). Associations facilitate self-help, mutual help, solidarity, and cooperation. They usually have clearly delineated structures, roles, and rules within which group members operate. (Colletta and Cullen, 2000)

- **Cooperative:** an autonomous voluntary association of people that work together for mutual economic, social, or cultural benefits through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

- **Civic association:** a type of political organisation whose official goal is to improve neighbourhoods through volunteer work by its members.

- **Community-based organisation (CBO):** an organisation that should ideally be representative of the community i.e. membership-based but consequently tending to vary dramatically in size and focus. CBOs may focus on a specific sector (e.g. Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committees) or multiple sectors (e.g. Community Development Councils). (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005). CBOs can also comprise the local arm of non-governmental organisations.

- **Village leadership:** an official, traditional, and informal leader at the local level. Official leaders include the communal chief and the local government administration. Traditional leaders are usually people who are revered for their religious or spiritual attributes. Informal leaders carry influence due to wealth, special skills, or charisma. Official and traditional leaders play key roles in local political, social, religious, and welfare activities. (Colletta and Cullen, 2000)

2. What are the aims of community-based approaches to peacebuilding – and key issues and challenges in achieving these aims?

Participatory and representative local governance

Community-based approaches may be adopted to foster and institutionalise elements of good governance. In this situation, inclusive participation and representation, transparency and accountability, and capacity for local dispute resolution are seen not as simply *means* to fulfil immediate needs but also as *ends* in themselves. There is some evidence to support links between community-based interventions and progress in governance. (World Bank, 2006) Community-based processes can facilitate governance reform by developing outlets for voice and equipping local communities with the skills and tools to carry on a range of activities beyond a particular project. For example, the Community Development Council in Upper Nawach, established as part of Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme, is not only a development council, but has also become a participatory and authoritative dispute resolving body. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005). In Indonesia, as well, the establishment of participatory community processes to address shared needs provided a useful framework for negotiations and dispute mediation at the local level. (Strand et al., 2003)

There is broad consensus in the literature that participatory processes should be inclusive and should incorporate groups that are often on the margin (e.g. the poor, women, youth, minorities, the aged, the disabled, the landless, and displaced persons). Community members, including marginalised groups, should be involved in community-level discussions and decision-making and should have access to information on the specific programme or project, on decisions and selected priorities, and on the use of funds. This contributes to fairness, transparency and accountability, which is particularly important in conflict-affected and fragile contexts where levels of trust are low.

Key issues and challenges:

- **Participatory processes have the potential to both diffuse and exacerbate conflict**

Inclusive processes have the potential to contribute to community solidarity and social capital; and to rectify exclusionary practices and poor governance that may have been factors in the outbreak of violence. In Nepal, for example, particular attention was paid to addressing the root social causes of conflict in participatory development projects by including not only disadvantaged groups, such as women, lower casts and ethnic groups, but also marginalised geographical areas. (Paffenholz, 2006)

Participatory processes can, however, be considered threatening to dominant groups, traditional and other leaders as they can challenge traditional decision-making structures. These leaders may in turn resist such community projects and broader reforms in order to preserve their authority. (USAID, 2007) Attention may need to be paid to reaching out to these leaders and others who may resist such processes in order to prevent community-based projects from being undermined. Should such authorities perceive benefits from community-led projects, for example access to training and capacity building initiatives, they may be more supportive and refrain from interfering in community decisions. (Cliffe, Guffenheim and Kostner, 2003)

The inclusion of a broad range of actors with differing viewpoints also has the potential to exacerbate conflict, particularly in the absence of non-violent local dispute resolution mechanisms and without participants with conflict resolution skills. In countries emerging from violent conflict, these mechanisms and skills may be underdeveloped. In such contexts,

it may be beneficial to have an impartial, trusted and skilled facilitator in community discussions and/or to include conflict management skills training early on in the project. (USAID, 2007; Pottebaum and Lee, 2007) It is also important to engage in a thorough socio-cultural analysis prior to the start of the project to understand community compositions and power relations. Along with careful monitoring, these tools could help to ensure that inclusive processes and the vocalisation of divergent opinions do not result in renewed violence. In some conflict affected contexts, communities may simply not be ready to work together under a community participatory approach. Community-based approaches may result here not in the development of cooperative ties but in destabilising competition for clout and funds. Other approaches may thus be required in such contexts.

- **Community-level approaches are not inherently inclusive**

Adopting a bottom-up community-level approach does not necessarily translate into greater participation and inclusion. In many contexts, community participatory approaches reflect social dynamics and reinforce pre-existing cultural or social divisions, e.g. the dominance of a particular ethnic group or the privileging of men. Often, women do not attend community forums, or if they do, remain silent – and decisions are made without their input. In addition, studies have found that poor and socially excluded groups may find it difficult to respond to the opportunities created by such projects. In such cases, traditionally dominant groups could dominate community institutions, resulting in continued marginalisation of excluded groups and potentially renewing the underlying causes of conflict. If perceived to be inequitable and to favour one group over another, or to have been 'captured' by special interest groups, community-based programmes may exacerbate divisions.

- **The risk of elite capture**

Elites can provide important leadership in community-based programmes as they often have the skills to negotiate with external actors, read project documents, write proposals and keep accounts and records. Such leadership can be exercised for the benefit of the community. In addition, as noted earlier, involving traditional authorities in community projects may be necessary to prevent opposition to the projects. There is the risk, however, that elite involvement and leadership may not be benevolent and instead result in lack of community participation in decision-making and elite capture of benefits. Elites may manipulate community structures for their own political purposes, to push through particular projects or to misappropriate funds. Further, people in conflict-affected and fragile contexts may be vulnerable to manipulative authorities and fearful to voice their opinions, particularly when they are contrary to elite interests. (Maynard, n.d.) Strong mechanisms for transparency – e.g. public meetings, publication of decisions etc. - can help to counter the risk of elite capture. (World Bank, 2006; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003) In addition, the creation of separate advisory boards, as in Rwanda and Afghanistan, or ad-hoc consultations, as in Kosovo, to involve elites can be effective in drawing on their skills while preventing the risk of elite capture. (McBride and Patel, 2007)

- **Balancing targeting with holistic, community-wide approaches**

Although community-based approaches are meant to be holistic and to focus on the community as a whole, it may be necessary to include mechanisms designed to specifically target marginalised groups in order to ensure their participation. This may be especially the case in conflict-affected and fragile contexts where conflict and instability has affected groups differently, rendering some particularly vulnerable. In addition, specifically targeting groups with grievances that contributed to violent conflict can contribute to stabilisation and conflict prevention. In some cases, external funders and managers determine whether certain groups should be favoured in aid disbursements, while in the case of community-led targeting, the communities themselves decide.

There are certain risks with targeting, however. The perception of partiality and bias can exacerbate tensions in some conflict-affected and fragile contexts, as was the case with some community initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tajikistan. In such situations, it may be

better to avoid extensive and explicit targeting and to focus instead on vulnerability assessments and ongoing monitoring (World Bank, 2006; IRC, 2007 draft; Strand et al., 2003). Should this reveal that socially excluded groups are continually marginalised, then some mechanism for targeting may still need to be developed and implemented. Targeting can also be problematic if there is a failure to recognise the existence of multiple identities. The specific targeting of women for leadership positions in community organisations, for example, may not have the desired impact of greater levels of equality and emancipation if the women are related to traditional authorities and represent more their elite lineage than women more generally. (Richards, Bah and Vincent, 2004) As such, understanding the intersectionality of people's identities is important for effective targeting.

- **The changing nature of the community**

In conflict contexts in particular, population displacement and return impacts on the composition of the community. (Maynard, n.d.) It is challenging yet necessary to ensure that community organisations remain representative of constantly changing communities. It is also important to recognise that societies and communities are often radically transformed from situations of mass violence. As such, the aim cannot be simply to rebuild societies as they were, but to understand how societies, identities, group boundaries and roles have transformed and to incorporate this into participatory community interventions. (Pouligny, 2005)

Empowerment of local communities

The empowerment of communities is a common component and aim in community-based approaches. Through such approaches, donors and implementing organisations seek to instil in community members the belief that they can affect change and can improve their own lives. Community-based projects provide communities with the organisational tools and resources to carry out such changes and improvements. Empowerment is promoted through the provision of information, inclusive participation and decision-making, capacity building and the means to implement decisions. More specifically, community-based approaches seek to empower through the allocation of untied funds to communities that allows them to define and prioritise their needs and to manage their own projects to address these needs. This is also considered to lead to more effective and efficient project outcomes.

The degree of community empowerment is affected by the breadth of choice and the extent to which decisions can be freely made. For example, multi-sectoral projects allow for greater flexibility in defining needs across a wide range of sectors, in contrast to single-sector projects with a predetermined focus (e.g. agriculture, health or education) (Strand et al., 2003). The extent to which communities have access to information, training and other capacity building will also influence the level of empowerment.

The empowerment of local people and the perception and treatment of them as resourceful and capable can also contribute to confidence-building and feelings of worth. In conflict-affected contexts in which many individuals and communities were rendered helpless and unable to exercise any control, empowerment can have a positive psycho-social impact. (Strand et al., 2003) In addition, empowerment can lead to feelings of ownership, necessary for the sustainability of project outcomes.

Key issues and challenges:

- **Genuine versus artificial empowerment: having to 'let go'**

In order for empowerment to be genuine, donors have to relinquish control over the identification and prioritisation of needs and other decision-making. In some cases, however, donors have limited the empowerment of communities to deciding the order in which to implement a list of pre-defined items. This pre-defined list may not match with community priorities, rendering community organisations as simply aid disbursement mechanisms.

(Moxham, 2005) Rather, community-based approaches mean that programmes should reflect community decisions, even if these clash with what the implementing agency or donor would have wanted, as the community is best placed to understand its needs. In one particular post-conflict context, for example, community members identified the need for a fountain in the centre of town, whereas the programme manager thought that road infrastructure, a school or health clinic should be greater priorities. The community's wishes were respected, and the fountain ended up being a much needed meeting point for people to come together as a community. (USAID, 2007) There will also be situations in which communities will make mistakes and this should be considered acceptable and part of community-based processes. (Pottebaum and Lee, 2007)

There may be a danger, however of absolute community autonomy in situations where participation is not inclusive. Under such circumstances, an open project menu, while allowing for greater choice and innovation, could translate into the choices of the dominant, vocal majority or of powerful elites. This could come at the expense of vulnerable groups who may be in need of core social services that are relegated as a lower priority by the dominant group. (McLeod in Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005)

- **Attention to information access, training and capacity building**

Information and training should be far-reaching and not concentrated in the hands of a few leaders and elites. Empowerment in the absence of access to information for informed decision-making, and training and capacity building to develop the skills necessary for effective action can result in disillusionment of beneficiaries. In order to achieve empowerment as an end in itself, participants need to be equipped with the skills not just to implement any one particular community project but to undertake a wide variety of other activities. If done effectively, capacity building and the fostering of new mentalities can contribute to a pattern of self-help behaviour among community members that can be replicated beyond the life of the project and beyond any particular leader. (McBride and Patel, 2007)

It is important to remember, however, that communities often already have the skills and ability to engage in certain activities and only need to be given the responsibility. Thus, it can be beneficial to focus on creating or rehabilitating institutions such that communities can decide on priority activities, following which an assessment can be done to determine for which activities capacity training may be necessary.

Rapid, efficient and cost-effective fulfilment of community needs

There is consensus that community-based approaches are more responsive to the specific demands and priorities of beneficiaries. Community-based programmes have contributed to the recovery of much needed local services and physical infrastructure that have deteriorated or been destroyed in conflict or situations of fragility. There is also evidence that community managed projects produce efficient and cost-effective outcomes. This can be attributed to low levels of bureaucracy, low overhead costs, community contributions of labour and volunteerism, the use of local materials, expertise and technology and better knowledge of local costs. (World Bank, 2006; Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003; Maynard, n.d.) There are few studies, however, that compare such community-based approaches with alternate approaches, e.g. centralised mechanisms for service delivery. As such, it is difficult to conclude definitively that community-based approaches produce the best results. (Mansuri and Rao, 2004)

Nonetheless, community-based approaches have the potential to offer some distinct benefits to securing the peace. The comparatively lower levels of bureaucracy can allow for speedier decision-making processes than a more centralised approach, contributing to more rapid delivery of outcomes. This is especially important in conflict contexts, where the demonstration of 'quick wins' and 'peace dividends' can lessen the likelihood of a return to

violent conflict. Further, the involvement of the community in collective action to deliver such outcomes can reaffirm the benefits of peace. (World Bank, 2006)

Key issues and challenges:

▪ **The presumption of a community and civic mentality**

Community-based approaches frequently presuppose a cohesive community with shared interests and the presence of a civic mentality, whereby individuals are motivated to work together to achieve a greater good. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, however, these elements are often missing. Survival strategies, short time-frames, social disruption, trauma and a strong distrust of others are legacies of sustained violent conflict. In countries transitioning from authoritarian, totalitarian or communist rule, there is often a legacy of passivity, powerlessness and dependency – as well as the absence of a sense of belonging or notion of citizenship (Choitonbaeva and Wardle, 2005; Cheryomukhin). It is thus debatable whether beneficiaries would proactively engage in community-based projects and thus whether the potential for speedy collective action exists. (Pottebaum and Lee, 2007; Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; World Bank, 2006)

Changing mentalities takes time. In addition, involvement in community-based programmes can be time-consuming, taking participants away from economic activities. As such, incentives may need to be provided early in the process to get community members involved in projects. In some cases, being part of something 'big', the perception of ownership, and tangible benefits from projects can be sufficient to motivate people to be involved and to promote civic mentalities. In other cases, monetary incentives for community labour, for example, may be necessary for participation in meetings and trainings. This has been considered for members of Community Development Committees in Rwanda and East Timor. There are concerns, however, that compensation could increase the risk of elite capture and corruption. (Strand et al., 2003) The risk of elite capture often exists regardless, however. Moreover, in the absence of compensation, it may be the case that only wealthier community members will have the time and ability to participate in community activities – thus reinforcing power imbalances.

It is also important to pay particular attention to context to ensure that in cases where a civic mentality is pre-existing, the provision of incentives does not have the effect of weakening it. In Afghanistan, for example, there is concern that payments for labour in National Solidarity Projects is undermining local customs in which labour and resources would have normally been given for free as a community obligation. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005)

Social capital, coexistence and social renewal

The processes and impact of violent conflict and fragility weaken and in some cases destroy the social fabric of societies. The (re)building of trust, social capital and interpersonal relationships is cited frequently in the literature as a feature of community-based approaches - either as an explicit aim, or as a by-product of such approaches. The assumption is that participation in common projects, such as service delivery, livelihood and community development projects, and structured interaction among previously divided communities will help to reframe perceptions of the 'other', dispel negative myths and facilitate changes in perceptions and attitudes. It also provides a safe space to engage in dialogue that can potentially extend beyond the task at hand.

There is some evidence that the creation of non-violent alternative forms of community organisation, and inclusive interaction for planning and decision-making at the local level, have contributed to building social capital and bringing together former enemies in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. (World Bank, 2006; Strand et al., 2003; Paffenholz, 2009)   In addition, the development of a collective vision, cooperation to achieve shared goals, and the creation of safe spaces for dialogue has the potential to lessen tensions, to (re)build interpersonal and collective trust and to foster a sense of interdependence. (Maynard, n.d.;

World Bank, 2006; Haider, 2009; Samset and Madore, 2006) Recognition of interdependence and interconnectedness are considered essential for a movement away from hostile relationships to constructive ones and the development of reconciliatory attitudes. (Abu-Nimer in Haider, 2009; Pottebaum and Lee, 2007)

In addition to the focus on shared community needs, an emphasis on different identities than the ones prevalent during conflict can contribute to the willingness of members of 'enemy' groups to re-engage with one another. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example teachers of different ethnic/religious backgrounds were interested in and willing to attend workshops based on belonging to the same professional group. (Burde, 2004)

Key issues and challenges:

- **Social capital and social cohesion as an aim and precondition**

Community-based approaches presume that communities are functional and can participate positively in projects, which is often not the case in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. While a sense of interdependence and social integration can be fostered through community-based programmes, the success of community-based programmes may depend on the pre-existence of these same elements. There is thus a dilemma over whether time and space should be allowed for healing and reconciliatory processes to take hold through other mediums before involving communities in meeting their own needs; or whether community-based approaches, such as community-led development, should be used to jump-start the process and contribute to developing the trust and cohesion required to fulfil such projects.

Much of the literature outlines the benefits of incorporating attention to social cohesion in community projects. In conflict-affected contexts, individuals and communities may be unwilling to participate in projects specifically labelled as peacebuilding or reconciliation projects – as has been the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Divided groups are more likely to participate, however, in projects that address shared needs. These projects have been effective in jump-starting processes of social renewal and promoting social cohesion through behavioural change, although not necessarily attitudinal change. (Paffenholz, 2009)

- **Is social renewal an explicit aim or a by-product?**

Some community-based programmes explicitly identify social renewal as a key aim, whereas others treat it as a possible by-product of processes to achieve other aims. The way that social renewal is treated in a programme may impact on the degree of efforts expended toward fostering it. Where social renewal is treated as a by-product, programmes that bring different groups together in inclusive participatory mechanisms are designed as such with the primary aim of achieving material development outcomes. Improvements in social relations are treated as incidental to this primary aim. Where social renewal is treated as an aim in itself, projects are designed specifically to bring together divided groups and to transform relationships. The tool used to achieve this, however, is often the identification of shared material needs and cooperation to achieve them. As such, whether economic needs or social renewal is the primary aim of community-based approaches, the design and implementation of these projects may ultimately be very similar.

Nonetheless, where social renewal is treated as an aim in itself, implementers are more likely to take further steps and to pro-actively facilitate dialogue, trust and empathy through activities where outcomes are non-material and not easily observable. These include training events that seek to change participant perceptions, relationship building exercises and conflict transformation workshops. (Pottebaum and Lee, 2007; IRC, 2007) In a UNHCR funded community-based project in Bosnia and Herzegovina designed to renew coexistence, for example, discussions between groups went beyond identifying shared needs and designing projects to discussions of the war and role-playing the 'other' in order to foster understanding, empathy and changes in perceptions and attitudes. In addition, a psychologist was on hand during sessions in order to facilitate these difficult processes. (Haider, 2009)

Where treated as a by-product, social renewal may be limited to the particular project and unsustainable. In order to promote sustainable social transformation, repairing relationships and (re)building trust should be made an explicit project aim. (McBride and Patel, 2007) If treated as such, it is important to ensure that programmes bringing together divided groups are well thought out and carefully designed and implemented. If the process does not go well, it can exacerbate tensions and render groups reluctant to work together in the future. (USAID, 2007) There is a risk, however, that communities which are not yet ready to engage in reconciliatory processes may view such programmes negatively. There may also be resentment on the part of beneficiaries should donors restrict funding to multi-ethnic groups for multi-ethnic cooperative projects, as was the case in Kosovo. (McBride and Patel, 2007; Fischer and Fischer, 2004) In such conditions, it may be appropriate for donors and implementers to maintain social renewal as an explicit aim of community-based approaches but to refrain from advertising this to communities or making it a condition for their involvement.

- **A two-staged approach**

In societies that have been divided by violent conflict, bringing groups together across the divide can be risky. In some cases, it can be beneficial to force encounters and break the ice - as groups may be frozen in conflict and unable to cross the line on their own. In other cases, tensions can be exacerbated if groups are brought together before they are prepared. In such circumstances, community-based approaches, in particular community-based approaches to reconciliation, can adopt a two-staged approach whereby work is first done within groups separately, allowing them to build confidence in their own identity and to prepare them for encounters with the other side. (World Bank, 2006; Fischer and Fischer, 2004)

(Re)establishment of the social contract and state-society relations

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, there is often a legacy of distrust in state-citizen relations. Government may have been a party in violent conflict. Further, government institutions are frequently weak or non-existent and unable to provide services necessary to the welfare of communities. Community-based approaches that allow for communities to directly address their needs can relieve the negative effects of government failure.

Where community-based programmes are supported, funded and overseen by government (local or national), or linked in some other way to government, they can help to (re)connect the state with its citizens. Even in situations where government authorities are wary of the participatory and empowerment principles of community-based approaches, they may still support such initiatives due to the pressure to produce tangible recovery benefits and 'peace dividends' (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003. Improvements in service delivery and other development outcomes through community-government partnerships can increase trust in the government and perceptions of state legitimacy. In Afghanistan, for example, the National Solidarity Programme was created and is managed by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. The successful outcome of community development projects funded by the NSP is reported to have improved public faith in government. (World Bank, 2007)

Key issues and challenges:

- **Parallel structures and state legitimacy**

A legacy of distrust in government may result in a strong desire of beneficiaries to exclude all government involvement in community-based processes. In addition, concerns over patronage and corruption on the part of government officials and weak or non-existent government capacity, as well as the involvement of government as conflict parties, can also result in transfers of funds and decision-making from external actors directly to communities.

There are concerns, however, that bypassing government and the establishment of parallel processes will undermine the development and legitimacy of emerging government institutions. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003; Strand et al., 2003) As such, many community-based approaches seek to create some linkages between the community and government. Government officials may also be given credit for successes from community-based approaches in order to enhance perceptions of government legitimacy and to gain support from government for such approaches. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

It is important to ascertain the status of both national and local government levels in order to determine whether it would be more beneficial to involve a particular level of government or both. In some cases for example, local level governance structures may be completely dysfunctional or involved as conflict parties; whereas in other cases, they may be functional and less problematic than national structures.

- **Risks of government involvement**

The involvement of government in community-based approaches carries various risks, however. If community projects build on existing state structures or are incorporated into state structures, there is a risk that they become a part of government bureaucracy rather than an innovative and participatory community approach. There is also a risk of elite capture and government interference in decision-making processes in a way that undermines community empowerment.

Efforts need to be made to ensure that government involvement does not end up compromising ownership at the local level. This could include: a strong information campaign component where a respected government leader sends a message on non-interference (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner) and the development of incentives for government officials to respond to the needs identified by the community (even if these differ from their interests) (USAID, 2007).

- **Benefits of government involvement**

Fostering relations with government can in some cases contribute to the success of community-based approaches. As noted earlier, traditional leaders and government authorities that are excluded from community-based approaches may become obstacles to their successful implementation. Efforts to involve them in various capacities can dampen resistance and lead to support for such approaches. Further, linking community-based projects to government policies and institutions can extend the reach of such projects and their sustainability. (See section 4: vertical linkages.)

Addressing multiple aims and the need for clarity

The impacts of violent conflict and fragility are extensive and far-reaching. The pursuit of multiple aims concurrently through community-based approaches can be an efficient and effective way to contribute to peacebuilding. Many projects seek to incorporate for example the aims of fulfilling socioeconomic needs, (re)building relationships and social renewal, and the development of participatory governance. This view acknowledges the holistic nature of peacebuilding and the ways in which various elements are connected. In contrast, promoting infrastructure or a health care system without addressing inter-community tensions, for example, fails to fully restore communities and promote sustainable peace. (Longley, Christopolos and Slaymaker, 2006; Haider, 2009)

There are concerns, however, that community-based approaches are increasingly being seen as a panacea to resolve all conflict and development issues. While, such programmes and projects can be effective in meeting some aims, they are unlikely to meet all aims with the same level of success. Trying to achieve a plethora of high level goals may end up diluting each specific aim. Objectives are often conflated with the belief that the fulfilment of one aim will automatically result in the other. In addition, there is often confusion about *means* and

ends – for example, whether empowerment is seen as a *means* to deliver specific outcomes, or as an *end* in itself. There should be greater clarity about which aims are being pursued, while ensuring that this does not result in donors dictating terms to communities. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005, USAID, 2007)

The timing of various aims may also differ, such as the provision of 'quick wins' and social renewal. Changing attitudes, perceptions and behaviours takes time. Given that some community needs may be urgent, it is debatable whether they can be delivered rapidly in a programme that seeks as well to bring together divided groups and address long-term, complex healing processes. In Liberia, for example, it took several years of promoting the classroom and school as a 'neutral' environment in order to have ex-combatant and non-combatant students work together in the school. *(*Sullivan-Owomoyela and Branelly, 2009). In addition, attention to 'quick wins' may detract attention from institutional reforms and capacity building necessary for sustainable development outcomes. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005) It is thus important for donors and practitioners to keep a measure of flexibility in their programme frameworks and implementation timeframes – and again to be clear about the particular objectives of the community-based programme.

3. What are key considerations for planning, setting up, funding and monitoring?

Planning and institutional set-up

- ### Is a community-based approach applicable?

A community-based approach may not be desirable in all conflict-affected and fragile contexts. An assessment should be done to determine whether such an approach is appropriate and to ensure that some basic conditions are fulfilled before deciding to adopt it. A basic level of security is a critical requirement such that staff can move within the area, community meetings can be held in safety, and there is minimal risk of funds being channelled to armed groups to fuel the conflict. In addition, some basic level of capacity in local institutions is necessary to draw on. In most conflict-affected and fragile contexts, there are some forms of local institutions that have provided representation and protection to local populations. In situations where all forms of local leadership have been abusive, a community-based approach may not be applicable. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

In conflict contexts, an assessment of the applicability of CBA should consider the causes and dynamics of the conflict. If the conflict is based at the community-level or evolved into community-level problems and divisions, then a community-based approach may be applicable as opposed to if the conflict is focused primarily at the national or regional level. (USAID, 2007) As discussed earlier, it is also important to determine issues of timing and whether community-based approaches should be deferred until communities are more stable, and some degree of trust and civic mentality fostered to ensure effective participation and cooperation.

It is important that careful criteria be adopted in determining which communities should be beneficiaries of community-based programmes and that these decisions are transparent. Perceptions of partiality in the selection (and exclusion) of communities in conflict-affected countries could exacerbate tensions along conflict lines. (World Bank, 2006)

- ### Sensitisation and dissemination of information

In order for a community-based approach to be effective, the population at large needs to understand the purpose of the programme, how participation and decentralised decision-making works, and their role in the process. Information about rights and responsibilities has been shown to lessen the likelihood of elite capture and corruption. (Strand et al., 2003) Existing local structures are often relied upon to disseminate information at the start of a

project even if such structures are not subsequently used to implement the approach. Radio, print and other forms of communications can also be used. Ideally, all community members would be involved in the design process. However, given the nature of conflict-affected and fragile environments, time constraints and the need for 'quick impacts' make this difficult. As such, it is important to hold introductory meetings to get community members on board with a community-based approach and to encourage ownership of the plans before beginning specific activities (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003; IRC, 2007; Sullivan-Owomoyela and Branelly, 2009) With a view to linking with local government and gaining their support for community-based approaches, sensitisation activities should extend to local and national authorities. (Robinson, 2004)

▪ **Existing or new structures? Does it make a difference?**

At the core of community-based approaches is a representative community institution that can serve as a forum for discussion, decision-making and implementation of decisions. In many conflict-affected and fragile contexts, local institutions have proven to be resilient. A key dilemma is whether to work with and strengthen existing community-based institutions or to create new ones or a combination of both. A key determinant is the extent to which such institutions are participatory and representative of the concerns of the marginalised. It is important that an assessment be done of existing structures in order to understand the power relations and gender balance of the various structures. Existing structures are familiar, operational, and in many cases considered legitimate and central to cultural identity – all of which contribute to the ability to implement projects faster during initial stages. During extended periods of conflict and instability, it is common for traditional social institutions to come to the forefront and to provide support, particularly where state institutions have been week. However, existing local institutions can also be discriminatory, exclusionary and unrepresentative of communities – and in some cases, susceptible to elite capture and corruption. Reliance on such structures thus would require adaptation and changes to account for societal changes from conflict including change in community composition, and to enhance transparency and participation. This can be difficult if structures are entrenched and traditional authorities reluctant to change.

The creation of new structures can instead be designed to ensure inclusive participation and to correct for institutional factors that may have contributed to instability. However, it is time-consuming to start institutions from scratch, for staff to learn new systems, and for such institutions to gain legitimacy. (Maynard, n.d.; Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005) In addition, existing norms and the structure of social relations do not necessarily change with the introduction of a new institution. In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, where communities often lack cohesion and are often dominated by certain powerful groups (e.g. traditional leaders, elite groups, warlords etc.), new institutions may still be susceptible to existing societal divisions. In Sierra Leone, for example, relief agencies set up *ad hoc* Village Development Committees to support community-based programmes. They ended up being comprised primarily of village elders and elites to the exclusion of the poor, youth, women and internally displaced persons.   (Archibald and Richards in Longley, Christopolos and Slaymaker, 2006; Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005) The same was found in villages in Afghanistan, where those elected as leaders of Community Development Councils, as part of the National Solidarity Programme, were the relatively well off, powerful or influential. Attempting to transform pre-existing norms that favour lineage and patronage often require a longer amount of time than that allocated to community-based programmes. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005) Thus, in the interim, other efforts are required to promote representation, inclusive participation and effective leadership.

▪ **Promoting inclusive participation and representation**

There is no single model for achieving inclusive participation and representation in a community forum. The most common models adopted are elections, reliance on pre-existing group structures and specific appointments. Elections processes are deemed appropriate where authorities in the country have sought to move to more democratic forms of governance. They can promote a sense of community ownership over the institution and can

in some cases send a message of non-interference to local elites. In other cases, representation may be better achieved by working with existing structures that cater to specific stakeholder groups (e.g. farmers', youth and women's associations) to select representatives. In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, it is especially important that groups that have been particularly affected by conflict and instability, such as widows, orphans, the disabled, ex-combatants, displaced persons and returnees, are not neglected. These models can also be adopted in combination.

The preferred model is best formulated based on context. In Afghanistan, for example, an election process based on secret ballots was used. In Colombia, it was more appropriate to work with farmers' associations and other existing structures to select representatives. In Timor-Leste, voters in council elections selected one man and one woman, in order to achieve 50/50 representation. (World Bank 2006; Maynard, n.d.; Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003) There have also been efforts to ensure inclusive representation of different ethnic groups, particularly in conflict contexts that have involved ethnic violence. This can help to prevent any tensions from uneven representation. However, there is also the risk that it can lead to the politicisation, institutionalisation and hardening of identity divisions.

Operational procedures to achieve formal inclusion must be accompanied by efforts to ensure that subsequent participation and decision-making is genuinely inclusive. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, while women have formally been included in community institutions, their actual participation and involvement in decision-making has been constrained. This can be attributed to cultural norms that favour men; gender bias on the part of facilitators; lack of confidence on the part of women; and insufficient time to devote to meetings. (World Bank, 2006; Dorrance, 2008) Measures that aim to correct for this include: gender training for men and women; the use of local female facilitators; capping block grant percentages for projects chosen by women; requiring that selected projects benefit women; separate women's meetings in conjunction with larger community meetings; and catering to the logistical timing and transport needs of women. (World Bank, 2006; Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005; IRC 2007 draft) Separate meetings with youth have also been conducted to draw out information and perspectives from youth that could be introduced into larger group discussions. (USAID, 2007)

It is also important in conflict contexts to maintain flexibility in the makeup of community organisations. The existence of refugees, internally displaced persons, former combatants and diasporas means that the makeup of the community itself is likely to be in flux. In many cases, returnees will represent a key party in the conflict, and community institutions need to allow for their representation and to be able to adjust to the changes in membership. (Maynard, n.d.)

- **Careful selection of facilitators**

Facilitators of community forums play a crucial role in the success or failure of community-based approaches. They are involved in disseminating information, mobilising and motivating community members, managing meetings and promoting inclusive participation, helping to develop project proposals and contributing to capacity building processes. In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, they are also likely to be involved in conflict management and resolution as well as relationship-building among divided groups. In climates of distrust, community members often find it easier to work with third parties. Facilitators in these contexts require not only technical expertise to manage projects and the skills necessary to promote participation, but also need to be qualified in mediation and have the ability to motivate changes in perceptions and attitudes. In some conflict contexts, facilitators may also become involved in trauma counselling. It is thus very difficult to find facilitators with such a demanding skills-set, particularly in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Instead, facilitators may also require training and capacity building.

In conflict contexts, it is not only professional background that is relevant but also the person's identity background. Reliance on local facilitators with local language skills and a strong understanding of local dynamics and familiarity with the particular communities is usually preferred. It is essential, however, that facilitators are not seen to be attached to a particular

side of the conflict. In Mindanao, for example, it was beneficial for local facilitators to be drawn from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. It can be thus be necessary to engage more than one facilitator as a means of trust building. (Edstrom in Strand et al., 2003; Maynard, n.d.; Pottebaum and Lee, 2007)

- **Managing expectations**

Managing the expectations of community members is important in order to avoid disappointment or disillusionment with community-based approaches. Often such approaches are idealised by donors and represented to beneficiaries as the overarching solution to complex conflict dynamics and patterns of fragility. However, as noted it is extremely challenging to incorporate and achieve multiple complex aims in often short time frames.

Sensitisation and public outreach are essential in gauging local understandings of project goals and ensuring that the limitations are clear. Resource restrictions should also be clarified at the outset in order to ensure that the projects decided upon by community members are feasible. Misunderstandings about the types of projects that would be accepted, and an inadequate sense of ownership, can undermine people's support of community-based approaches. In Parwan Province in Afghanistan, for example, the UNHCR's 'peaceful coexistence' project ran into trouble when the community-based 'peace shuras' proposed a $20 million dam to resolve a water conflict between two communities, which was beyond the reach of the project. The 'peace shuras' were told to develop new, less expensive proposals which created tension between them and the implementing partners. (Dorrance, 2008) In addition, training in the technical aspects of implementing various projects, such as what goes into developing a particular water facility, is important for informed decision-making. It assists in understanding the feasibility of potential projects and thus also helps to manage expectations.

This is some debate, however, about whether it is more beneficial to disclose the financial amount allocated to the community programme upfront or to wait until the community has decided on its priority needs. If articulated upfront, this can contribute to management of expectations and transparency – and allow communities to determine the best use of available funds. If articulated subsequent to the identification of needs however, some communities may then seek to find other funds to carry on with the preferred project should the funds allocated be insufficient. (McBride and Patel, 2007)

Community-based approaches generally raise expectations in communities of continued support. In order to address this, it is important to assess how such programmes and projects can be embedded in more sustainable structures. (See section 4 on sustainability.)

Funding

- **Disbursement mechanisms**

Community-based approaches require mechanisms through which to regularly distribute funds to communities for their activities and projects. Before projects begin, it is important to establish protocols for the disbursement of funds, procurement, financial management and transparency. Often, financial management training is required alongside, although efforts should be made to simplify bookkeeping. A common method of disbursement is the transfer of block grant instalments to a bank account established by community institutions, as is the case with the National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan. Disbursing block grant instalments against the community recovery plan rather than on a sub-project basis gives the community more ownership of decisions and flexibility with allocating funds to community needs. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

In many conflict-affected contexts, however, the banking system may have been completely destroyed. Re-establishing banking systems takes a great deal of time, which would delay the start of projects and undermine the ability to provide for 'quick impacts'. In these

circumstances, innovative alternatives to the banking system are required to speed up disbursement. In Timor-Leste, the Community Empowerment Project purchased safes to physically transport funds to villages. In larger countries, where this would not be possible, or in situations where crime and theft would be a concern, the use of a UN agency or international NGO with a field presence may be necessary to distribute funds. (Cliffe, Guggenhaim and Kostner, 2005). Traditional systems of money transfer that are trusted by the population may also be relied upon, as occurred in Afghanistan and Somalia (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; Strand et al., 2003); or modern systems, for example the transfer of money via mobile phones, which exists in Kenya. The distribution of in kind contributions, in lieu of cash, has also been suggested. (Maynard, n.d.) This, however, could undermine local recovery from cash injections into the economy, the rehabilitation of local markets and the procurement of local goods. (Cliffe, Guggenhaim and Kostner, 2005; Strand et al., 2003)

- ▪ **The role of the government in disbursement**

If community-based approaches seek to contribute to the renewal of state-society relations, the role of government in the disbursement of funds to communities can be an important consideration. Linkages to government can also contribute to sustainability of the programme. While transferring funds directly to communities can minimise layers of bureaucracy and lessen opportunities for corruption, bypassing central government can undermine fragile emerging state structures. As such, it may be beneficial for donors to fund communities via the state. There are various routes through which the central government could fund communities. They could fund them directly through a central fund and create a direct partnership with communities; through local government as an intermediary, establishing a partnership between communities and local government; or through NGOs and private firms as intermediaries. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005)

- ▪ **Emergency funds**

Setting up the procedures and going through all the necessary processes (e.g. sensitisation, capacity building, elections, transparency etc.) for community-based approaches can take time and result in a large gap before tangible benefits are visible. This can result in frustration among programme participants and a loss of faith in the approach and motivation to participate in it. In order to prevent this, many programmes allow for the disbursement of 'emergency funds'. These involve a small, discrete amount of money from the total block grant that is immediately allocated outside of normal procedural requirements in order to allow for the speedier realisation of some initiatives. The funds are usually transferred to communities after community institutions have been set up. In other cases, pre-existing NGOs are relied upon to deliver such 'quick impact' projects. (McBride and Patel, 2007)

- ▪ **Transparency and accountability**

Misuse of funds is a risk when financial management responsibilities are transferred to local communities that suffer from weak capacity. Although, in many conflict-affected and fragile contexts, capacity may also be weak at national and local government levels. Training and capacity building in financial management is essential, along with procedures to ensure transparency. Such procedures include the use of multiple local signatories for receipt of funds and procurement, the maintenance of financial records as well as public access to and regular inspections of these records. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003) Procedures to ensure transparency and accountability with regards to finances should be established and running in advance of payments, with the possible exception of 'emergency funds'. Staged financing in the form of small grants first with gradual increases in funding can provide time for systems of transparency and accountability to be developed. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

An effective way of ensuring transparency and accountability is to establish systems of public auditing. This also contributes to the aims of participation and ownership. In Nepal, for example, public auditing of community-based development projects has successfully

contributed to transparency and perceptions of the absence of corruption. In a community-based project to build bridges, for example, audits took place in public spaces, with all villagers invited. Project managers and the community user committee would inform the public of funds received from government and donors and the amounts spent, including wage expenditures. Labourers could then cross-check their wages to verify the amounts. (SDC, 2006; Paffenholz, 2006)

- **Recurrent costs and cost recovery**

Infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance and social services also consist primarily of recurrent costs, such as salaries, medications, textbooks etc. Determining how recurrent costs will be funded should be done in advance of project implementation. Some projects call for certain levels of community contributions. There is evidence that this can in some cases improve community management of assets, particularly when combined with training on maintenance. (World Bank, 2006) It can be difficult for communities in conflict-affected and fragile contexts to raise funds locally to maintain and operate infrastructure and social services set up or rehabilitated through community-based development schemes. In order to alleviate the financial burden, it is often necessary to involve local government and line ministries in sharing recurrent costs. Under such circumstances, it is useful to draw up an operations and maintenance plan that is agreed upon by the community institution specifying contributions. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003) Even where government is involved, it may be difficult to raise funds to finance recurrent costs if the medium is taxation. Taxation or in the alternate user fees for services place can place an especially hard burden on poor households and in the case of user fees, can deter usage. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005)

- **Delays in funding or insufficient funding**

Most community-based approaches are financed through instalments, as opposed to one-off large grants. Delays in instalment payments create problems for programme management and can result in frustration, disillusionment and loss of support on the part of beneficiaries. Further, insufficient funding entirely will have greater negative effects. The National Solidarity Programme in Afghanistan, for example, is vulnerable as funds are allotted yearly by donors instead of being put into a secured pot of money. The Programme has been publicised nationally and has achieved successes in many villages, however it is very short of the funding needed to keep existing projects going in villages and to expand the programme to other villages. Should insufficient funding materialise, local populations could lose trust in the community-based approach. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005; Higashi, 2008) In addition, termination of funding before programmes are sustainable can also have the effect of tainting the specific aims of the community-based approaches. If the project was aiming to promote coexistence, for example, beneficiaries may lose support for the 'coexistence' message. (Haider, 2009)

Monitoring and evaluation

There are various levels of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in community-based approaches in conflict-affected and fragile contexts: outcomes of specific projects, such as infrastructure and services; impact on higher level aims, such as conflict mitigation, reduction in intercommunity tensions and positive perceptions of the state; and conduct of the community-based process itself.

- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluating community-based approaches in conflict and fragile environments is especially challenging. The need for 'quick impacts' constrains the ability to wait until social assessments are conducted in order to produce such a baseline for comprehensive M&E. It also takes time to set up M&E systems and train and build capacity of staff to conduct them. Attempts should thus be made to simplify M&E processes as much as possible.

Keeping in line with the principles and aims of participation in community-based approaches, M&E approaches have started to incorporate greater levels of community participation. This also helps to alleviate the administrative burden on project staff in determining indicators and collecting data. M&E programmes can be designed directly with the community to determine viability, efficiency and effectiveness of the system and procedures. Under more participatory approaches, the communities themselves are in charge of selecting their own indicators, data collection and evaluation and reporting. Findings from monitoring are then communicated at community meetings and/or displayed openly. The formulation of local benchmarks allows for projects to be aligned closely with local interests and expectations, reinforcing the empowerment aims of community-based approaches and promoting ownership. (IRC, 2007; World Bank, 2006; Muggah, 2005) The development of local benchmarks and indicators makes it difficult, however, to compare projects or to apply lessons learned in other communities. It can still be instructive though to compare such indicators to see if there are similarities in measuring community-based approaches across conflict-affected and fragile environments. (Maynard, n.d.)

- **Transparency and accountability**

As part of community-based approaches, community members are encouraged to monitor and publicly disseminate information on project activities, amounts received and spent, procurement, decisions made at community meetings, and verification that decisions have been acted on. Community means to lodge and investigate complaints should also be established as part of the system. Information can be disseminated through the use of public display boards. In Serbia, an innovative system was set up whereby community members voted for projects with stickers on a public board in a town hall meeting such that everyone could see which projects received the most votes. (USAID, 2007)

Systems that address transparency and accountability manages the expectations of community members on what projects can deliver. They also help to prevent elite capture, charges of corruption and perceptions of partiality (see 'transparency and accountability' section under 'Funding'). In conflict contexts, however, having to discuss sensitive issues of corruption could exacerbate prior tensions. Further, in situations where corruption is discovered, the safety of those reporting on it can be at risk. In Serbia, for example, community members that exposed misuse of funds by a contractor received death threats. Their persistence however, and the support of programme implementers resulted in the prosecution of the contractor. USAID, 2007)

- **Ongoing monitoring and evaluation and iterative adaptation**

It is essential that monitoring and evaluation occur on an ongoing basis and not solely at the end of the project to judge overall effectiveness. Ongoing monitoring allows for greater beneficiary voice, for improvements to continually be incorporated into projects, and for lessons learned to be transferred to other projects in the same or other community sites. (Dorrance, 2008) Such iterative adaptation can be complemented by a phased-in scaling up of funds. (Mansuri and Rao, 2004)

Ongoing M&E allows for identifying and addressing problems with the way that community forums are functioning (e.g. if they are not sufficiently inclusive and elites are dominating) and problems with particular community decisions. In Afghanistan, for example, some village National Solidarity Programme projects were problematic in terms of financial and resource sustainability. The failure of such projects had the potential not only to undermine the community-development approach but also to exacerbate tensions and mistrust between the villages and other communities. An M&E system and early intervention could prevent such negative outcomes (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005). Such interference with community decision could however weaken community empowerment. It is thus important to engage in sensitisation and training of communities to manage their expectations to enable them to make informed and viable decisions.

Ongoing M&E can also identify and celebrate achievements and successes. Achievements can be evaluated with a range of measures, including the number of community projects completed, surveys on reduced tensions, and number of cases of reported corruption. (USAID, 2007) Celebrating successes can reinforce the good practices of community members and sustain the energy commitment of participants as well as attract new participants. (Maher and Basanth, 2006)

It is important, however, to ensure that requirements for ongoing monitoring and evaluation are not excessively burdensome on communities, detracting them from actually implementing community projects and delivering tangible benefits.

▪ **Measuring long-term and intangible impacts**

Many of the aims of community-based approaches involve intangible non-material elements such as social capital, coexistence, changes in relationships, and empowerment. These are challenging to measure and not easily quantifiable. Qualitative measures, such as opinion surveys, are thus necessary. These elements also require a change in attitudes, mentalities and behaviours, which take time to materialise. Initial evaluations may be unfavourable resulting in premature negative judgements made of community-based approaches. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be extended some years after the completion of a project in order to fully determine effectiveness. (Pottebaum and Lee, 2007; good practice community book; Mansuri and Rao, 2004) For example, evidence from a community-driven development project in Indonesia indicates that cohesion developed through community cooperation was for a long time contained to the relationships formed in the project. Cohesion did not begin to spill over into wider social relationships until after people had worked together for four or five years. (World Bank, 2006) In other cases, this spill over may not occur, and relationships developed during the project could terminate with the completion of the project.

Long term assessment is additionally essential in conflict-affected and fragile contexts as environments and populations are continually changing – i.e. with the return of displaced persons and refugees. As such, the changes in relationships need to be continually evaluated. (Maynard, n.d.)

More generally, donors and implementers need to be better at following up whether skills and systems developed under community-based approaches persist in the long-run. There is also increasing recognition that in order to achieve a long-term impact, community-based approaches must be incorporated into the institutional structure of the country. (USAID, 2007)

4. What are key considerations for sustainability?

Comprehensive training and capacity building

In order for community-based approaches to be successful, much training and capacity building of community members and in many cases, local and national government officials, is required. This is especially the case in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, where the capacity of local populations and the state have often been depleted through neglect, lack of investment, physical destruction, displacement and migration.

In addition, in conflict environments, it is important that community members that serve in community institutions are trustworthy and can represent the whole community or group. These criteria may dominate over professional credentials and technical skills. As such, greater training may be required for community representatives. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

- **Developing 'soft' skills alongside 'hard' technical skills**

Training on technical skills required for community-based approaches, such as financial management, project cycles and M&E data collection, are essential to the functioning of such approaches. In addition, technical training relevant to specific project outputs, for example, water management or agricultural technologies, are also essential to successful implementation

Equally important is training in and strengthening of 'soft' skills – such as participation and empowerment strategies, relationship-building, civic education, conflict management, social and resource mobilisation and advocacy. These skills are critical to the aims of community-based approaches and their sustainability. Much of the literature highlights though that they have received much less attention than technical skills. (World Bank, 2006; Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005; Moxham, 2005) In East Timor, for example, the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project has been critiqued for prioritising the speedy delivery of material assistance that would show quick tangible results over developing participatory training aimed to strengthen governance. (Moxham, 2005) In Afghanistan, the National Solidarity Programme has also been critiqued for fast-tracking programme implementation without proper preparation and training in participatory approaches, group management and resource mobilisation. It is thus unclear how communities will develop its own financial resources once the block grant from the programme is depleted. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005)

In conflict-contexts, skills in dispute resolution, cross-cultural communication, consensus-building, inclusiveness and the ability to manage power dynamics are especially valuable. Community facilitators must be well trained in such skills. It is also highly valuable to train community members in these skills and to engage continually with communities in learning how to develop social trust and cohesion through peaceful resolution of problems and disputes that arise during the duration of the project. Without attention to these aspects, community projects are unlikely to contribute to sustainable conflict transformation. (Richards, Bah and Vincent, 2004) Separate workshops designed to contribute to reconciliatory processes can also be included within overall training programmes, such as diversity awareness workshops. (Maher and Basanth, 2006)

Training to build leadership capacity is also essential to the success of community-based projects and should be incorporated into project cycles at all levels of society. In order to encourage relationship-building, training events can be designed to bring together leaders from all sides of the conflict in order to develop a common framework for peace and development. (Pottebaum and Lee, 2007)

- **Government capacity building**

Partnerships between government institutions and local communities are often important to the success and sustainability of community-based approaches. In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, however, institutional capacity is commonly low. As such, capacity building in these contexts should go beyond communities and incorporate local and national government authorities. The literature focuses primarily on the capacity building of local government and highlights several key areas of training: organisational and communication skills; project cycles and the mechanisms behind community-based approaches; determining and responding effectively to the needs of communities; transparency, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. (Maynard, n.d.; USAID, 2007)

Training for government officials can also contribute to getting 'buy in' and support for community-based approaches. In Azerbaijan and Rwanda, for example, training for local officials in a range of areas resulted in their collaboration with communities and support to community initiatives. (McBride and Patel, 2007)

Horizontal linkages and externalities

▪ Linking and learning from other communities

Addressing social capital within particularly defined communities is often not sufficient for far-reaching social renewal. Community-based approaches can be extended to build horizontal social capital across communities. This can be done through sharing of experiences, peer to peer learning and knowledge transfer that also help to promote capacity building. Study tours, for example, bring together community members in rotating host communities for ongoing discussions, sharing of issues and celebration of achievements. They have been shown to be effective in improving programming through shared learning and fostering relationships between diverse societal groups. Mentoring as well, whereby weaker communities and community institutions are matched with those who have achieved stronger results, has been shown to be effective in transferring skills, replicating good practice and building horizontal linkages between previously isolated communities. (IRC, 2007; Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003; Choitonbaeva and Wardle, 2005)

▪ Externalities

There are limitations to the needs that can be met through an isolated community-based approach. Infrastructure, such as roads for example, can spill over defined community areas and require the cooperation of other communities. In Afghanistan for example, a village road project in Upper Nawach ran into trouble after construction reached Lower Nawach and villagers there would not allow the road to be continued through their land. (Zakhilwal and Thomas, 2005) In addition, there are important needs in conflict-affected and fragile contexts that communities may not prioritise as their decisions may not incorporate the prospect of external benefits, e.g. environmental and health issues. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

Mechanisms may thus be required that link communities together to determine, design and implement common good projects. These would have the benefit as well of allowing for relationship-building and social renewal that spans more distant and diverse communities. Rwanda, for example, has created a structure that brings together communities at multiple levels in order to support micro-to-macro needs. (McBride and Patel, 2007; IRC 2007)

Vertical linkages – local and national government

▪ Government buy-in

Securing 'buy-in' for or at least an absence of resistance to community-based approaches from emerging government institutions can impart greater legitimacy to such approaches. This is the case even where government institutions are weak and do not have the capacity or financial resources to provide tangible support. (Alkire et al., in Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; Maynard, n.d.) Political 'buy in' can expand the reach of projects, particularly where authorities speak out in support in such projects.

Developing strategies and efforts for getting government authorities and political leaders on side can thus be a critical component of designing community-based approaches. In some cases, local and national authorities may feel threatened by participatory structures, community empowerment, and the prospect of well-financed parallel structures. In the absence of efforts to include local and national authorities, they may resist and seek to block the implementation of community-based projects. Inclusion may involve their representation in community institutions, technical assistance and training programmes for local and national authorities, or their involvement in separate advisory groups. Where government feels threatened by the prospect of alternate service provision and recovery efforts, community programmes can involve government in information campaigns and ensure that it receives some acknowledgment for project successes. (USAID, 2007; Cliffe, Guggenheim and

Kostner, 2003) Plans to look into the long-term integration of a community-based approach into government structures, planning and budgeting cycles can also help to gain government support. In addition, seeking a strong sponsor within the national leadership for community based approaches can make a big difference in strengthening the approach by articulating its importance to national recovery. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

- **Sectoral linkages**

Community-based projects cross over a number of sectors. This may create tensions if line ministries see community-based approaches as competing with their responsibilities and sector budgets shares. Linking community-based activities to line ministries in government, for example through an inter-ministerial council that oversees the project, may help to mitigate such tensions and contribute to 'buy-in'. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

The involvement of relevant line ministries is also important for the sustainability of community projects, particular ones that require upkeep and entail recurrent costs. As noted, recurrent costs can impose an immense burden on communities, particularly in conflict contexts. Proper coordination with line ministry's recurrent budget can alleviate this burden by sharing the costs and specifying expected contributions. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner) In addition, the full range of sectoral services, for example health services, usually cannot be provided by community members alone. Without continuing support for inputs, personnel and training, the sustainability of projects may be limited. (Slaymaker, Christiansen and Hemming, 2005; Strand et al., 2003)

Engaging with line ministries also allows for the replication of best practice in community-based approaches. If line ministry staff are familiar with community processes and procedures and have concrete roles to play, a community approach can be adopted on a wider-scale as an effective way of delivering development. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

- **Scaling up and consolidation**

In most cases, community based initiatives are small-scale and limited to individual communities. An important question in conflict-affected and fragile environments is how to scale up successful pilot community-based projects into national policy or strategy in order to achieve broader impact. This could involve extending the approach to a critical mass of other communities and ultimately to a national scale. Scaling up would allow as well for the mitigation of possible tensions from the selection of particular communities as beneficiaries and not others. (USAID, 2007) In Nepal, for example, a community driven bridge project pilot tested an approach that was later taken over by the national bridge building strategy.

Extending community-based initiatives across the country requires the support of local and government officials and established linkages and partnerships between communities and government. A gradual process of scaling up provides time and space for government officials to become more familiar with, involved in and supportive of community-based approaches. As noted, local and national authorities may initially feel threatened by such approaches, which is why efforts to achieve their 'buy in' is essential. Scaling up also allows time for government institutions to build up the capacity to manage a nation-wide community-based approach. This is a complex process and time-consuming process. In Afghanistan, for example, extending the National Solidarity Programming from localised projects to a national scope embedded within the national ministry required more sophisticated and comprehensive political and governance assessments; extensive sensitisation with a wide variety of traditional leaders, government officials and citizens; and collaboration with a vast range of institutions and organisations. 'Buy in' had to be sought in regions with very different views of the peace process and the state. (Lister in World Bank, 2006) In the interim, while governments are strengthening their capacity, international NGOs and other external actors can provide additional capacity to contribute to the extension of the model to other communities (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003; Sullivan-Owomoyela and Branelly, 2009)

A gradual process of scaling up also gives time for communities to be willing to work in partnership with local and national governments. In some conflict-affected environments where national or local administrations were actively involved in the war effort, for example local administration in the case of Rwanda, communities are likely to be reluctant to partner with government. Linkages between communities and local or national government cannot be forced. Community-based programmes may thus have to operate for some time outside government structures. These isolated projects can subsequently serve as a model to implement on a wider-scale when governance improves and communities are willing to engage. (Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner, 2003)

▪ **Sustainable resources**

Community-based approaches build up expectations of continued resources and ongoing opportunities for investment in communities. In the absence of local and national government resources, the end of donor funding can signal the end of community projects. This can result in disillusionment with community-based approaches on the part of beneficiaries, dissatisfaction with local and national authorities, and exacerbation of tensions in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. It is thus important that community initiatives are linked to government structures and that some system of handoff is established in advance, where governments take over for donor funding. (USAID, 2007) As discussed in the section on funding, disbursement mechanisms can involve the payment of donor block grants by central or local government directly to communities. This could evolve into block grants from the government's own budget. These funds could then be combined with independent community efforts to mobilise resources for sustainability.

5. Lessons learned and policy recommendations: Annotated bibliography of evaluations

This section provides summaries of evaluations of community-based approaches, highlighting lessons learned and policy recommendations. Most of the documents focus on conflict-affected and fragile contexts, including specific country case studies.

World Bank, 2006, 'Community-Driven Development (CDD) in the Context of Conflict-Affected Countries: Challenges and Opportunities', Social Development Department, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, World Bank, Washington, DC
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/3182370-1164201144397/CDDandConflict-web.pdf

This paper reviews community-driven development (CDD) initiatives in thirteen conflict-affected countries. It finds that CDD has been effective in addressing key concerns in such contexts, in particular:
▪ The demand for rapid and cost-effective delivery of goods and services at the community level;
▪ The need to promote participatory models of local governance and service delivery;
▪ The need to rebuild or strengthen social capital and foster peaceful, representative, and inclusive forms of planning and decision making at the local level.

It outlines the following lessons learned on CDD in conflict-affected contexts:

The Conflict Context
▪ Political and conflict analyses and assessments are necessary for project design and implementation.

- Knowledge of local power relations, particularly among conflict actors is necessary to design systems that safeguard against elite capture.

The Policy Environment
- Capacity building is especially needed in conflict-affected settings to link communities and local government institutions.
- Realistic, adaptive and achievable objectives increase the likelihood of success of CDD in conflict-affected contexts. Objectives should be set in the context of other strategies for poverty alleviation, reform, and mitigation of the root causes of conflict (such as inequality, poor governance, and ethnic divisions).

The Institutional Environment
- State-society relations can be forged and improved through the creation of institutions that engage community members in decision-making. Opening new channels for citizen voice can create an opening for incremental reform of governance. Even minor responses on the part of government can affect the way citizens view their government.
- Local level relationships between state and communities may be more feasible than at the national level. Such relationships with local government can have a powerful psychological impact, especially when the government and the community were once at odds during the conflict. These relationships need to be sustained, however, in order to establish the legitimacy of government.
- Alternative peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms can be modelled upon CDD approaches. Governments may be threatened by such development approaches that empower local communities, however, as they are trying to build the authority of new government structures at the central level. In such instances, CDD should be introduced gradually and with sensitivity so that both local communities and governments see its practical benefits.
- CDD initiatives need clear strategies for engaging (or not engaging) with non-state military actors. These positions should be adhered to at all project levels. Clear exit strategies are also needed.

Operational Issues
- Donor harmonisation can be promoted by pooling donor resources through a community-driven instrument.
- Long term funding strategies should be developed as early as possible in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Governmental budget planning should take account of all budgetary implications of CDD programs, including recurrent costs for asset maintenance and crucial personnel, including nurses for clinics and teachers for schools. External funding rarely outlasts the expectations it raises.
- Setting up simple and reliable cash disbursement systems will enhance project efficiency and credibility. When community groups come to believe that they will have direct control over grant funds, they are more likely to invest in making plans and decisions and less likely to revert to illegal activities to pay for their labour. Operational procedures should be transparent and understandable, thereby contributing to the empowerment of communities. Varied communication strategies—including radio and public postings of announcements—are essential.
- Establishing transparent criteria for selection of beneficiary communities and communicating these criteria widely may help to mitigate disputes over targeting.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems are necessary for assessing both physical outputs and impact, in particular social impacts and the effect of CDD operations on conflict mitigation and poverty reduction.

USAID, 2007, 'Community-Based Development in Conflict-Affected Areas: An Introductory Guide for Programming', USAID, Washington, DC
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADJ132.pdf

This toolkit on community-based development in conflict-affected areas provides an overview of key issues, lessons learned, and relevant resources. The section on lessons learned covers issues and provides recommendations for the different stages of programme

implementation, including: project design, project start-up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and close-out or handoff.

Project Design

- <u>Conduct conflict assessments</u>: a rigorous, participatory and grounded assessment should accompany any support to community-based initiatives. If a quick start up is required, a well-designed rapid appraisal can be used to gather information about an area in a succinct manner.
- <u>Define project goals</u>: goals should be well-defined, consistent with the conflict assessment and larger programme strategy, and have concrete linkages to other projects in the portfolio.
- <u>Establish programme linkages</u>: such linkages are necessary to coordinate the vast array of donors and implementers that often operate simultaneously in conflict-affected areas; to coordinate programmes such that some communities are not flooded with assistance while others are excluded; and to link to local and national government and civil society activities in order to promote state-society relations.
- <u>Decide breadth versus depth</u>: investing in only one or two projects per community is unlikely to have as deep an impact on that community's decision-making structure as a programme that takes the community through multiple iterations. Decisions on breadth versus depth will have to be made carefully, taking into consideration the particular goals of the programme. If the programme goal is to mitigate local level conflict, for example, it is unlikely that all communities in a country will be equally vulnerable. As such, it would be beneficial to restrict the programme to a more narrow set of communities, allowing the implementer to invest deeply in both training and resources. If needs are more evenly spread across the country, as in a country recovering from a widespread conflict, it may be better to include as many communities as possible, both to address needs and to avert the perception that some communities are benefiting more than others, which could increase the risk of renewed violence.

Project start-up

- <u>Involve the community</u>: all key community stakeholders, including potential spoilers, should be represented in the process so that the programme is not perceived to favour one group over another. It can be difficult, however, to empower marginalised people to participate. In these cases, project staff should be prepared to find creative ways to incorporate them into the process.
- <u>Keep promises</u>: implementers should ensure that promises made are kept, which will help to quickly establish credibility and build trust within communities. At the same time, implementers and donors must bear in mind that real change will only be achieved over time with a sustained presence and trust in the community.
- <u>Quick impact projects</u>: there is a commonly cited tension between delivering on quick-impact and establishing a participatory, inclusive process that is supposed to build longer-term conflict management and governance benefits. Even with the quick-impact projects, it is important to still establish some form of simplified transparent, participatory process to choose priorities – e.g. town hall meetings or canvassing of communities.

Project implementation

- <u>Hire and train local staff and communities</u>: local staff will have the most direct contact with communities in highly divided conflict-affected environments. They should be included in all phases of programme management in order to build capacity and develop commitment to the programme model. Once the project ends, trained local staff will be more able to take on leadership roles in their communities.
- <u>Model transparency and accountability</u>: community-based programmes can appear to favour one part of a community over others. It is thus essential to have transparent decision-making processes and good information dissemination in order to mitigate against such perceptions.
- <u>Scale up for broader impact</u>: it is important to consider how local level processes can be expanded to at least a critical mass of other communities.

Handoff
▪ Handoff is smoothest when it has been built into programme design from the beginning. Integration of programme activities and structures into existing or emerging country institutions, and early and on-going coordination with range of relevant stakeholders (including other donors) who will continue to be active beyond the life of the programme, can ease the transition as programmes terminate.

Strand et al., 2003, 'Community Driven Development in Contexts of Conflict', Concept Paper commissioned by ESSD, World Bank, Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?1727=community-driven-development-in-contexts-of

This paper, commissioned by the Community Driven Development (CDD) unit of the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) Network of the World Bank, is based on a desk review of available reports mainly from World Bank sources and surveys of World Bank staff. It provides a comprehensive list and summary of key lessons learned from the material reviewed. They include:

▪ Conflicts complicate CDD success: conflict contexts, marked by high inequality, individualised power in warlords, landlords or strongmen, or by dangers of elite capture can render design and implementation of CDD particularly challenging. Thorough conflict assessments are a basic requirement before getting started in order to determine whether a community-based approach should be adopted, and if so, in order to adapt it to the specific conditions.
▪ Conflicts complicate CDD efforts to reach the poorest: poor and socially excluded groups may face difficulties in responding to the opportunities created by CDD projects, particularly in conflict contexts. As such, it is often necessary to develop and implement more targeted approaches.
▪ CDD does not always foster trust and reconcile previous enemies: while the establishment of participatory community processes may constitute a useful framework for negotiations and dispute mediation, and even contribute to building trust locally, community-level reconciliation needs to be linked to comparable processes on a national level for greater impact.
▪ Prioritise the process, despite urgent post-conflict needs: participatory, transparent and accountable decision-making processes are also important to the success of shorter-term, quick impact projects, and should not be compromised for rapid delivery.
▪ Select the appropriate government agency, even when weak: while it may be challenging to work with government agencies in conflict-affected contexts – particularly when their role may be controversial or their capacities low, bypassing governmental institutions will not produce sustainable results. Government ownership of and responsibility for the CDD process needs to be fostered.
▪ Discuss social capital: the type of social capital to be advanced should be discussed and defined by communities, CBOs and facilitators in order to ensure that pre-existing unjust social relations and structures are not perpetuated.
▪ Old or new CBOs? building on existing institutions can enhance the legitimacy of community councils and the returns of project investments, although where such institutions are exclusive, this could come at the expense of active participation of marginalised groups. On the other hand, if traditional power holders are bypassed in an effort to avoid elite capture, this may also cause societal tension.
▪ Gender: changing deep-rooted traditions and gender roles can take time. Such processes need to be carefully devised and not be seen as imposed on the communities or exposing the women to an unacceptable degree. Encouraging establishment of separate women groups for training and disseminating of views might ensure a more rapid progress on such issues.
▪ Understand the CBOs: it is important to analyse which incentive systems are most effective in fostering CBO performance and accountability.
▪ Take time: time frames for implementation of CDD projects in conflict-affected contexts have often been too ambitious. More realistic time frames are needed.

McBride, L. and Patel, N., 2007, 'Lessons Learned on Community Driven Reconstruction', Version 1, Post-Conflict Development Initiative, International Rescue Committee, New York

http://www.theirc.org/resource-file/lessons-learned-community-driven-reconstruction

This paper provides an analysis of lessons learned from IRC's Community Driven Reconstruction (CDR), based on four key programmes: Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme; Azerbaijan's Integrated Community Development Programmes; Kosovo's Community Action Social Services Initiative – from 2000 to 2002, IRC implemented a CDR model that sought to increase community ; and Rwanda's Community Development, Good Governance and Decentralization Programmes.

Aims
In the IRC contexts of fragile and rebuilding states, the two general aims of the CDR programmes aimed to respond to:

- the need for a broader community governance system that fostered socioeconomic recovery and social cohesion, and;
- the need for piloting such systems to inform the anticipated full-scale reconstruction and decentralisation effort.

The paper finds that in all four programmes, effective community structures and processes were established, adopting good governance principles (i.e. inclusiveness, accountability, transparency). In addition, social cohesion (trust, confidence and willingness to work in unity between people and between people and their institutions) seems to have increased. A rise in community contributions over time demonstrated a growing willingness to set aside differences and invest personal resources and energy in the pursuit of a common goal in most, but not all communities. In terms of cohesion between communities and their community institutions, evidence such as the replacement of corrupt or underperforming members witnessed in every country program suggested that the democratically elected processes yielded a level of confidence in the institutions. There was also, where applicable, responsible engagement with local government. Despite this progress, it was unclear whether the positive outcomes would be sustainable in the absence of either a follow-on programme that would ground learning, or a national programme for decentralisation and reconstruction.

Conflict phases
The paper asserts that CDR processes are not only for stable contexts, where conflict has ceased. Instead, an abbreviated CDR process can be designed and implemented, which can contribute to preparing communities for peace processes. Such forms of adaptation include: limitations on funds to communities, holding of funds instead of direct transfers to communities, and abbreviated processes for more rapid implementation.

The paper also highlights that while communities may need to be directly supported in emerging post-conflict contexts, adaptations need to be made in definitive post-conflict contexts such that national governance structures and programmes can be bolstered – and that field programmers do not undercut or undermine what is in the pipeline.

CDR as part of a broader governance strategy
While humanitarian actors have often sought to operate outside the national framework due to issues of neutrality, this has undermined the potential for wider impact. Similarly, government officials were seen to resist or subvert CDR programs when they perceived the money or power given to community programmes would diminish their department's importance. The paper thus provides the following recommendations:

- more clarity is needed regarding the orientation of the programme among staff and a broad-based area of stakeholders;
- implementing partners should be selected from those that have demonstrated understanding of the governance function of CDR;
- government and donors should from the outset build a structural mechanism that not only allows, but demands the sharing of best practice to bolster the national agenda;

- exchange visits between implementing and non-implementing areas, and/or visits out of country to other post conflict nations for lesser experienced ministry staff, government skeptics or potential spoilers can facilitate a more productive and supportive environment.

Structures and institutions

The paper asserts that new councils created through democratic processes appeared to be more effective organisations. However, adequate time must be spent on sensitisation, facilitation and elections to ensure representative community-development councils (CDCs) in order to prevent elite capture of new organisations. If this is not possible, it may be better to work with existing organisations. This is especially the case if they are representative, have a proven track record of contributing to communities, and are likely to be sustainable. In order to determine this, a thorough contextual analysis that examines what structures exist, their role and composition and how they are perceived by communities is necessary.

In addition, a key consideration in creating new structures or working with existing structures is that these may need to be disbanded by new governments in the wake of a national system if perceived as undermining the authority of new national structures. In some cases, this can result in positive outcomes, whereby those elected to local councils may be re-elected to new nationally authorised structures – as occurred in Rwanda.

Regardless of whether new or existing institutions are relied upon, work in all four countries suggested that success was more likely by involving elites in some capacity in programme design and/or process.

Process and delivery

There was a trade-off between depth of process and the timeframe for the delivery of micro-project outputs. While, sensitisation, facilitation and capacity building are essential and require much time and effort, communities also required tangible benefits more immediately. A method used to resolve this was the introduction of quick impact projects into the project cycle, for example in Rwanda. These involved allowing a community's traditional leadership a small amount of money for top priorities prior to a full scale process, with international NGOs directly implementing in a more traditional manner.

Block grant allocation

It was unclear whether communities should be told in advance of defining priorities the amount of funding that would be allocated. In some cases, it was seen to be beneficial in terms of transparency and treating the community as an equal. In addition, it allowed for more informed decision-making and realistic expectations. In contrast, however, it is possible that communities that identified priorities prior to awareness of funding would be driven to find necessary matching funds to continue with their selected projects.

Conflict Resolution and Local Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

There is some evidence that community development councils trained in conflict resolution often assumed the role of arbiter for local disputes on issues from family matters to resource sharing and beyond. It is important to examine whether these expanded roles are beneficial, or whether they undermine or support traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution.

World Bank, 2005, 'The Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community-Based and –Driven Development', an OED Evaluation, World Bank, Washington, DC
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEFFWBSUPCOMDRIDEV/Resources/cbdcdd_complete_report.pdf

This evaluation looks at the World Bank's lending support to community-based and –driven development (CBD/CDD) in a range of contexts. It does not focus on conflict-affected or fragile environments; nonetheless, the lessons and recommendations can still be useful in such environments.

The evaluation highlights various observations and lessons learned in CBD/CDD projects. They include:

- Much more success has been achieved on quantitative goals, such as the construction of infrastructure, than on qualitative goals, such as capacity enhancement or quality of training.
- It should not be assumed that meeting quantitative goals will automatically fulfil qualitative goals —e.g. that holding a certain number of training courses will necessarily enhance capacity.
- Capacity-enhancement and participation has been more successful when support is provided either to indigenously matured efforts or sustained in the long-term beyond a subproject cycle. However, Bank-supported projects have often failed to diagnose community capacity or tailor capacity building to existing community capacity.
- Projects have also been successful when they have built on past experience with a similar capacity-building-approach (i.e. where the same communities have been the focus of the capacity-building effort for several years) and with a focus on the process of bringing communities together to organize for collective action.
- The individual subproject cycle is too short to sustainably enhance collective action and community capacity where it is weak or does not exist. In such cases, strategies of community participation may have little influence on community social capital and empowerment.
- Infrastructure and services have been difficult to sustain beyond the project cycle due to insufficient government and community resources to ensure their operation and maintenance. In addition, communities often may not have the information and technical expertise they need to allow for maintenance.
- The capacity-building benefits of interventions to build social capital and empower communities may be siphoned off by elite community members. Elites can mobilise more quickly and can more effectively complete grant applications. As such, short-term, rushed efforts to create social capital may benefit only the well-off.
- The opportunity cost of community contributions to the cost of service delivery infrastructure in CBD/CDD projects (e.g. in cash, kind or labour) can be substantial and burdensome, particularly under the more intensive participatory approaches.
- CBD/CDD have been limited by weak coordination across government departments and government levels
- Collective activities at the community level are influenced not only by formal organisational systems, but also informal systems – based not on explicit rules or regulations, but on customs and conventions. Projects, however, have focused primarily on formal organisations.
- Inadequate donor coordination in co-financed projects and lack of agreement on implementation procedures has created much confusion at the community level and hindered positive outcomes.

The evaluation highlights four key issues in considering future CBD/CDD projects:
- Clear articulation of expected achievements of CBD/CDD interventions. Despite the emphasis on both material project outcomes and capacity building activities during project design, greater importance is given during implementation to material outcomes. There is thus the issue of whether the Bank is using CBD/CDD primarily as a conduit to deliver infrastructure and services rather than for sustainably improving community decision processes.
- Determining the utility of the CBD/CDD approach in comparison with alternatives requires a calculation of costs and benefits of CBD/CDD, including the long-term poverty impact.
- Focus on long-term development is essential to promote the sustainability of projects. In some cases, however, Bank projects have resulted in *ad hoc* parallel arrangements that have hindered the long-run enhancement of local government capacity.
- Short subproject cycles are not conducive to supporting long-term processes of empowerment and social capital enhancement.

The evaluation offers several recommendations:
- Monitoring and evaluation: Given the mixed and limited evidence on the impacts of CBD/CDD projects—particularly in terms of poverty reduction and empowerment—and questions about sustainability, the Bank needs to engage in more comprehensive assessment of projects and fiduciary oversight of projects. This should be done in particular before deciding to scale up a project.

- Linking to country assistance strategies: CBD/CDD projects should be integrated with a country's overall assistance strategy. There should be periodic assessment of ongoing CBD/CDD projects to ensure relevance and effectiveness of the program to the country context. In addition, Country Assistance Strategies should show how they have analysed and addressed linkages between CBD/CDD projects, as well as between CBD/CDD and relevant non- CBD/CDD projects. Such analysis should also address whether arrangements for CBD/CDD project implementation are made at the expense of local government capacity development.
- Relying on existing indigenous initiatives: the Bank should where possible build on existing local initiatives instead of starting new programmes. Where new programmes are necessary, interventions should be tailored to local capacity.

Mansuri, G. and Rao, V., 2003, 'Evaluating Community-Based and Community-Driven Development: A Critical Review of the Evidence', Development Research Group, World Bank, Washington, DC
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECAREGTOPCOMDRIDEV/Resources/DECstudy.pdf

The literature review examines both impact evaluations and qualitative ethnographic/case studies on community-based and community-driven development. Key findings include:

- Weak targeting of the poor: The evidence does not indicate that CBD/CDD projects have been well targeted to the poor within communities.
- Uncertain infrastructure and welfare outcomes: while there is some evidence that CBD/CDD projects create effective community infrastructure and improve welfare outcomes, such evidence is missing for most projects. It is also unclear whether the participatory elements in CBD/CDD projects contributed to successful outcomes. In addition, it is unknown whether alternative project designs may have produced better outcomes, given the absence of comparative studies.
- Uncertain causality between social capital and project effectiveness: while there is some quantitative evidence showing an associative relationship between social capital and project effectiveness, the direction of causality is unclear.
- Variable management of heterogeneity: the success of community driven development is likely to be affected by what resources and strategies are adopted to bring communities together; how effectively differences are debated and discussed and solutions arrived; and how well the project aligns with different interests and incentives in the community.
- Elite domination: even in egalitarian societies, elites will often dominate the process of constructing and managing a public good as they tend to be better educated and have fewer opportunity costs on their time. This does not, however, necessarily translate in 'elite capture' (where elites tightly control decision-making and appropriate all the benefits from the public good), but may entail more benevolent elite involvement.
- Problematising key concepts: 'participation', 'community', 'social capital' and 'empowerment', which are core components of CBD/CDD should be treated critically and not understood and applied simplistically.
- Enabling institutional environment: the sustainability of CBD/CDD seems to depend in large part on the existence of upward commitment and responsive government – i.e. line ministries need to be responsive to community needs and contribute to covering recurring costs of community projects; and national governments should be committed to the idea of transparent, accountable, and democratic governance.
- Downward accountability: systems of accountability to beneficiaries are necessary to counter against 'supply driven demand driven development'.
- Key role of external facilitators: effective project facilitators are integral to the success of CBD/CDD within communities.
- Learning-by-doing: local cultural and social systems greatly affect the success of success of CBD/CDD. As such, there should not be a wholesale application of 'best practices' applied from projects that were successful in other contexts. Rather attention should be paid to careful learning-by-doing, which requires a long term horizon. Such careful evaluation of CBD/CDD projects with good treatment and control groups, baseline and follow-up data is essential, but has thus far been lacking.

Country Studies

Fearon, J., Humphreys, M. and Weinstein, J., 2009, 'Evaluating Community-Driven Reconstruction: Lessons from Post-Conflict Liberia', Development Outreach, October, World Bank Institute
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/213798-1253552326261/do-oct09-fearon.pdf

This brief review evaluates the community-driven reconstruction (CDR) project in Liberia, financed by DFID and implemented by the International Rescue Committee. The aims of the project are to improve material well-being, reinforce democratic political attitudes, and increase social cohesion. This is to be achieved through rapid disbursement of development funds, strengthening of local communities, and greater transparency and accountability in decision-making.

Through surveys and an analysis of behaviour through a 'public goods game', the authors found that:
- The CDR programmes had a measurable, positive impact on the level of community cohesion: beneficiary communities seemed subsequently to be better able to raise funds and act collectively to implement community projects to improve their own welfare.
- Exposure to CDR seems to have increased social inclusion in beneficiary communities: traditionally marginalised groups made significant contributions to community projects in CDR communities. In addition, individuals in CDR communities reported less social tension and exhibited greater acceptance of marginalised groups.
- The CDR program reinforced democratic values and practices: there is some evidence for greater support for elections and participatory processes in CDR communities.
- There is little evidence of positive improvements in material well-being related to the CDR programme: improvement in local public goods was not accompanied by improvements in household-level welfare (e.g. livelihoods and asset holdings).

The brief makes a few recommendations concerning effective evaluation processes:
- There needs to be a focus on substantive outcomes, not just process: currently, most evaluation focus on how well programs are implemented rather than whether they have an effect.
- There needs to be early coordination between practitioners and researchers: this should begin before the start of the CDR programme. However, evaluation often is treated as an afterthought and implemented when it is often already too late.
- There needs to be further innovation in the measurement of outcomes such as social conflict, social cohesion, and political values and beliefs – on the part of researchers and practitioners: although attitudinal surveys remain standard, they may fail to pick up underlying behavioural change.

Samset, I. and Madore, Y., 2006, 'Evaluation of the UNDP/UNOPS Peacebuilding and Community Development Project in Ituri, the Democratic Republic of Congo', Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?2534=evaluation-of-undp-unops-peacebuilding-project-drc

This is an evaluation of the project 'Support to peacebuilding and community development in Ituri', implemented by the UNDP and the UN Office for Project Services in the Ituri district of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The premise is that community development can be a means to reduce violence and build peace.

The evaluation found that the project has made much **progress toward achieving its four key aims:**
- Promoting inter-community reconciliation: efforts were made to ensure that people from the different sides of the conflict (regardless of ethnicity) participated in each micro project. Some projects also contributed more directly by engaging in efforts to raise

awareness of the need for peaceful coexistence. Although the general objective was to promote reconciliation between different (ethnic) communities, this was extended to groups that were on opposite sides, regardless of ethnicity. Progress in reconciliation materialised largely due to the method of enabling people from different sides to come together to realise very concrete tasks of common interest, resulting in improvements in their living conditions. The inclusion of ex-combatants as a target group and of projects aiming to reintegrate them into local communities was also important in promoting reconciliation. While successfully implemented at the operational level, this method received little attention at the strategic UNDP level.

- Improving access to and quality of basic infrastructure and social services rehabilitation: the construction of schools, health centres, a blood bank, bridges, roads, and sources of drinking water improved people's access to basic social services have a value in itself, independent of the reconciliation outcome. In addition, over 14,000 temporary jobs were created as a result of the project. The rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure was also accompanied with the establishment of maintenance mechanisms in order to ensure more efficient and broader provision of services.
- Revitalising community development mechanisms and reinforcing the capacity of community-based organisations: local organisations received funding to implement projects and staff members received training in project management and other capacities training. In addition, income-generating micro projects helped to reinforce the organisations that implemented the projects. It is uncertain, however, how sustainable these incomes will be. Project partners were not always 'community-based'; however, they still had a high level of awareness of how the project could help rebuild the local collective, beyond the target groups (e.g. women, youth, or ex-combatants). In order for the supported organisations to achieve an even stronger community orientation, however, they need to be trained at 'scaling up' micro-project gains to the community level, and of generating more holistic perspectives for reconstruction and development; and
- Raising awareness of HIV/AIDS: there is little evidence to suggest that the Ituri project has contributed towards achieving this aim.

The evaluation did, however, identify several **problems with project implementation**:
- Planning at the outset was not well enough adapted to the challenges in Ituri, but improved over time.
- There was a lack of clarity over the definition of 'community' and whether it corresponded to an ethnic group or a physical gathering of residents, in one rural village or the quarter of a town (which would usually comprise various ethnic groups). Ultimately, given the inter- and intra-ethnic nature of the conflict, the projects were directed at groups that had fought on opposite sides, regardless of ethnicity.
- Project implementation was delayed in large part due to the slowness of disbursement of funding instalments
- There was weak coordination between the project and other relevant programmes and poor strategic management. This has resulted in the isolation of micro projects carried out within the project, constraining the prospects of scaling up or transfer of lessons learned.
- The positive impact at the community level has not advanced to the level of the district as a whole. The conflict situation seems to evolve independently of the project and violence has continued. An extension of the project method used to more initiatives and areas of the district may result in a weakening of the forces that seek to perpetuate and recruit for conflict.

Conclusions and recommendations:
- The UNDP made the right decision to work directly with local communities in Ituri. They were strong and in need of material and moral support, whereas government agencies were not functional and too weak to act as implementing partners. However, as local government agencies are strengthened, they should be increasingly involved. The UNDP should consult with local government officials to a greater extent regarding planning and implementation of the project. Mechanisms for regular information exchange between the UNDP and the government should be established, and the UNDP should gradually move toward transfers to local communities via local government. Attention to local state-building should continue alongside continued strengthening of community-based organisations.

- The project has been effective in providing <u>alternative sources of livelihoods outside of combat</u>. This has allowed for village chiefs to resist the call of militia members to recruit people. It is essential that such alternative sources be sustained as the situation is still fragile and populations are still vulnerable.
- Mechanisms for a <u>regular exchange of information about activities and plans</u> should be put in place between the different UNDP projects in Ituri.
- In order to strengthen the capacities of local actors for community development, they should <u>participate in the monitoring of micro projects</u>. This would also reinforce a sense of ownership, and allow for verification of the UNDP's and partners' own monitoring.

Jul-Larsen, E., Munachonga, M. and Chileche, P., 2009, 'Review of Matantala Rural Integrated Enterprise and the Community Development with Traditional Leaders Programme', Norad Report 24/2009 Discussion, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Oslo
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?3460=review-of-matantala-rural-integrated-enterprise

This paper reviews the community development project with traditional leaders, funded by the Norwegian Embassy and implemented by Matantala Rural Integrated Development Enterprise ('Matantala'). Its main development objectives are to contribute to reduction of poverty and improvement of living conditions in three chiefdoms in Zambia's Southern Province, through support to: social services provision; diversified economic activities and increased market production; and changes, attitudes, norms and behaviour among the population, related to empowerment, health, youth and domestic issues and gender balance. More generally, the project aims to explore the extent to which chiefs and headmen can function as drivers for the type of change expressed in the project objectives. Development committees are established at Chiefs and zone level, and each committee disposes of its own budget allocations. Committees comprise traditional leaders and ordinary members of the communities (including a minimum 30 per cent participation by women).

<u>Outputs</u>: With the limited staff of Matantala the project has achieved an impressive list of outputs according to project documents, in terms of education and health infrastructure, income-generation and micro-credit support, establishment of clubs, and workshops and sensitisation meetings. Local participation was high due in large part to Matantala's close relations to the target population and good mobilisation strategies.

<u>Effects</u>: Unlike the production of outputs, it was found that effects in the sense of how the outputs are used or put in practice vary a lot. Concerning the use of community service outputs the picture remains relatively positive. Problems were identified, however, with maintenance of facilities in some communities. Economic and production activities also suffered from poor maintenance of equipment. In addition, there was often confusion as to what overall objectives the support to alternative income generating activities were supposed to address.

The effects of activities aiming at cultural and normative change are the most difficult to assess, as this is a time-consuming long-term process. Still, the work on sensitisation of the population on health and gender issues has demonstrated some promising results. There is still limited progress in the development of views among the target population of empowerment and belief in their own abilities to combat poverty and hunger. Instead, Matantala and the project were still seen as the main factors that could solve their problems. In addition, committees are still absorbed in their separate mandates and none seem wiling to take on an overall function with regards to monitoring and assistance.

The paper provides the following recommendations:
- <u>Institutionalisation</u>: instead of considering the development committees as temporary, they should be developed into more permanent structures and integrated into the existing traditional leadership structure. As part of this effort, the project should contact the appropriate authority in central government to have their views and recommendations about the development of permanent development structures related to the traditional leadership.

- Greater sensitisation for general civic responsibility: more emphasis needs to be put in the sensitisation of the development committees on their overall and long term responsibilities in development.
- Clarity on objectives: support to economic activities aiming at diversification of production and increase of the general social resilience in the communities should be more clearly distinguished from support aiming at increased and improved production for the market. Separate training and sensitisation courses must be developed.
- Empowerment of women: a study should be undertaken to see how project activities related to the empowerment of women better can be adapted to the needs of an increasing number of women-headed households.
- Inclusion of women: affirmative action (or targeted service delivery activities) should be adopted to address gender differences/inequalities where these are pronounced – e.g. in relation to extreme poverty levels and access to resources (land, agricultural labour, education, decision making power).
- Coordination and shared lessons on gender: efforts should be made to identify and learn from government institutions and civil society organisations implementing gender related activities.

World Bank, 2007, 'Implementation Completion and Results Report on a Grant to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for an Emergency National Solidarity Project', Sustainable Development Sector Unit, Afghanistan, South Asia Region
http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/07/08/000333038_20080708021028/Rendered/PDF/ICR5240REVISED1isclosed0July0202008.pdf

This document evaluates a grant to the National Solidarity Project, aimed at laying the foundation for strengthening community level governance; and supporting community-managed reconstruction and development sub-projects that are designed to improve access of rural communities to social and productive infrastructure and services. Key lessons learned include:

- The project's choice of institutional arrangements featuring performance based contracting of service providers for management assistance and field implementation has allowed for rapid scaling up of project outreach in a difficult post-conflict situation characterized by limited government capacity.
- The goals of delivering a 'peace dividend' and building capacity in the implementing government agency need to be carefully balanced such that the incentive to provide rapid results does not override the need for capacity building and long term institutional and attitudinal change.
- The recurrent problem of funding shortfalls must be addressed. The Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development should engage donors to establish annually and ahead of the Government's budget formulation an accurate schedule detailing donor assistance levels, pledged and recurrent, together with a timetable for when these funds would be submitted. To the extent possible, multi-year commitments should be sought (as provided by DFID) or at least multi-year indications of expected assistance levels. This would improve the predictability of funding availability and contribute to eliminate the large time gaps of the past when funds were not available.
- Engineering quality of sub-projects needs to be improved. This can not be effectively addressed at the level of a project implementing agency, but requires a broader effort that aims at building capacity for small and medium contractors coupled with a certification process to establish a list of pre-qualified contractors.
- The institutional sustainability of elected CDCs beyond the project duration requires linkages with government apparatus. The CDC By-Law of using the CDCs as entry-point for village level development activities needs to be operationalised through coordination among different line ministries and donor funded programs, as well as through linkages with the existing local government apparatus (e.g. joint District level planning exercises on resource allocation with CDC involvement, and accountability measures such as CDC monitoring of government service provision).

- A coordination forum is required to define and oversee the practical coordination of rural development activities on an ongoing basis. Membership in this forum could initially consist of the directors of the different relevant World Bank financed projects and once operational could extend to other relevant line ministry departments and bilaterally funded programs.
- Monitoring and evaluation needs to be strengthened in several areas including entry of baseline data; periodic assessments of the engineering quality of civil works sub-projects; periodic audits of CDC financial management and procurement; assessments of livelihoods activities in terms of sustainable income increases; assessment of the governance outputs of NSP in terms of inclusiveness versus elite capture, assessment of the factors that critically influence the functioning and roles of CDCs; and assessment of the poverty reduction impacts of NSP.
- A strategy needs to be developed that maintains the core principles of the programme in areas with high security risks. Since different Facilitating Partners have developed apparently successful individual approaches to manage operations in high security risk areas, a series of consultative workshops (similar to those conducted when the NSP approach was initially developed) should be held to explore whether an effective strategy for high risk areas is feasible.

Barakat, S. et al., 2006, 'Mid-term Evaluation Report of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), Afghanistan', Post-war Reconstruction & Development Unit (PRDU), University of York; and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/?2446=mid-term-evaluation-report-of-the-national

The implementation strategy of the NSP consists of four core elements: (1) the establishment of inclusive community institutions (community development councils - CDCs) through elections, reaching consensus on priorities and corresponding sub-project activities, developing eligible sub-proposals that comply with NSP appraisal criteria, and implementing approved sub-projects; (2) a system of direct Block Grant transfers to support rehabilitation and development activities (sub-projects) planned and implemented by the elected CDCs; (3) a series of capacity-building activities to enhance the competence of CDC members; and (4) activities linking local institutions to government administration and aid agencies with available services and resources.

This comprehensive report presents findings and recommendations related to the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the NSP as well as its potential impact, rationale and longer-term contribution to governance and development in Afghanistan. It covers: programme design and rationale; national level programme management and delivery; sub-national coordination and operational delivery of the NSP; the role of community development councils in programme management and operational delivery; the enhancement of NSP engineering projects; NSP financial operations; and community development councils and future governance in Afghanistan.

Ranz, T., 2007, 'Evaluation of the Community Development in Eastern Afghanistan, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan', Final Report, Carried out on behalf of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action, GAA), Bonn
http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/media/pdf/Evaluationen/Afghanistan_1073.pdf

This report provides an evaluation of a community development project in Nangarhar, Eastern Afghanistan that centres around a self help group (SHG) based mobilisation strategy. The project aimed to promote long-term behavioural changes through training, education, and advice, while also paying attention to material and economic aspects. It also incorporated existing potentials of individual entrepreneurship, rather than strict reliance on a group approach. The report notes that the impact of the project is challenging to assess due to regular interruptions in implementation, stemming from the poor security situation. Still, the report provides some conclusions and recommendations. They include:

Project design

- The project's support to not only self help groups but also to innovative individuals has allowed for positive highlighting of individual best practice activities.
- The project includes certain pre-conditioning and controlling components of a "re-education programme". They should be replaced, wherever possible, in favour of more services upon request.
- The strong, controlling procedures specified in loans to SHGs should be reduced to some extent. This should be combined with an increase in technical advice.
- The project's community selection process should be based not only on the criteria of remoteness and neediness, but also on the preparedness and willingness of the villagers to cooperate.
- Approaches that are copied from other contexts need to be adapted to local contexts.

Financing

- The exclusive reservation of the last funding phase for the consolidation of former project executions contributes to sustainability and should be continued.
- The disconnect between the aim of behavioural change among beneficiaries, which is a long term goal, and the adoption of a short-term emergency funding facility limited to three years must be addressed – either through a change in funding or a redefinition of project objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The achievement of a high ratio of female SHGs should be monitored to ensure that groups of not dominated or exploited by the husbands of certain members.
- Additional training should be provided to the internal monitoring and evaluation unit in order to guarantee a more impact-oriented and systematic follow-up of its activities.
- The quality of training in the informal sector – e.g. vocational training and literacy courses – should be evaluated systematically.
- Flexibility in redefining qualitative indicators should be allowed in planning processes if they prove to be unrealistic.

Coordination

- Attempts should be made to establish direct contacts with NGO activists in order to form a 'coalition of opinion leaders' and to try to coordinate activities and standards.

Resources

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