

Applying Conflict Sensitivity at Project Level – Case Study 1
CARE International Kenya's SWEETENING JUSTICE PROJECT

Name of Original Project Sweetening Justice for Vulnerable Women and Children in Kenya

Country and agency involved: Kenya; CARE International in Kenya

Project Aim: Facilitating access to justice for vulnerable women, children and PLWAHS

Project key activities: Capacity building to strengthen formal and informal legal structures (PA, police, paralegals, youth, women leaders); Economic empowerment; strengthening partnerships with government

What changes to the project resulted from conflict sensitivity?

1. One element of the original project design focused upon supporting informal legal structures (paralegals). Conflict sensitivity allowed project staff to become aware that this work to strengthen informal legal structures was unintentionally raising tension between informal and formal legal structures (eg raising tensions between paralegals and the Administration Police), as well as raising tensions between formal legal structures and the NGO. Conflict sensitivity allowed the project staff to reflect upon these unintended consequences, and to adapt the project design to minimise negative consequences on conflict and maximise opportunities for the project having a positive impact. The project was adapted - staff from formal legal structures were invited to join some project activities, and an additional workstrand was initiated to improve the ability of informal and formal structures to complement each others work and support each other. An impact of this change is that there has been an increase in cases where the Police Administration has referred cases to paralegals.

2. One element of the original project design focused on women's economic empowerment (group saving, small business support, loans). However, conflict sensitivity work allowed project staff to become aware of unintended consequences of their women's empowerment work. The way in which the women's empowerment work was being carried out was leaving men feeling excluded and marginalised and was raising tension between women and men. Particularly worrying in this context was a noted increase in incidents of domestic violence. Once project staff were alerted to the potential negative unintended consequences of programming, the project team analysed the situation and developed adaptations to the original project design to try to minimise negative unintended consequences on conflict and maximise and positive consequences. The project team focused upon improving communication to men in targeted communities, raising awareness and understanding of the project's goals, the benefits to their families and wider community from women's economic empowerment as well as work to educate men and women on GBV.

What changes to staff attitudes/behaviour resulted from conflict sensitivity?

Staff and partners are now aware that interventions will always have unintended side-effects, either positive or negative. Conflict sensitivity allows staff and partners to question more deeply the overall impact of their work, and provides them with the tools and the confidence to take action and revise original project design when they discover areas of concern or areas of opportunity.

Why has applying conflict sensitivity to this project been effective/useful?

- ✓ CS raised awareness of a few areas where the project was unintentionally contributing to raised tensions in targeted communities.
- ✓ After analysis, the project team was able to reach out to all affected stakeholders to adapt project activities to overcome these tensions (tensions that the project had created or reinforced) and to improve relations between groups that had previously been in conflict.
- ✓ The project team were able to understand the negative consequences of their programming if conflict sensitivity had not been applied. The pilot was a learning opportunity.
- ✓ CS gave project staff the tools, language and confidence to seek senior manager or donor

approval for changes to original project design as necessary for conflict sensitivity.

- ✓ Senior management have recognised the tangible benefits that applying conflict sensitivity to a project has made and see conflict sensitivity as a key resource for ensuring the quality, sustainability, value for money and effectiveness of projects.

What is the added value of conflict sensitivity to your organisation?

Conflict sensitivity calls for mapping of context, understanding key programmatic options and provides an opportunity to consider what re-design options one can utilize. For example, while targeting vulnerable groups is very important, following targeting criteria blindly, for example completely excluding men from all activities and solely focusing on women, can result in unintended results – in this case potentially contributing to increased gender based violence.

Conflict sensitivity provides an opportunity to review project activities, policies and practices, to look beyond planned project outputs and take a wider view of the impact of our programming.

Do donors ever impede conflict sensitivity at project level?

Yes. When donors pre-define in advance target groups and restrict the project from involving other stakeholders, this makes it harder for the implementing agency to design a fully conflict sensitive project. Donors can assist conflict sensitivity by understanding that, even if their target group is eg women, it may sometimes be equally important to consider and work with other stakeholders (eg men). Donors also restrict conflict sensitivity if they are only focused on achievement of the original project outputs and are resistant to conflict sensitive adaptations to the original project design.

What changes could donors make to support organisation's wishing to apply conflict sensitivity to their projects?

- ✓ Supporting/encouraging/funding conflict analysis
- ✓ Making it compulsory that agencies can be given funding only if they demonstrate how CS is applied at both programme and organisational level
- ✓ Flexibility ... understanding the need to adapt project design when the implementing context changes
- ✓ Flexibility ... approving requests for amendments to the original project design when conflict sensitivity during implementation shows examples of unintended consequences on conflict.
- ✓ Open communication with partners, showing interest in the operating context, not just in the agreed project outputs.

Why should donors care about Conflict sensitivity in projects that they fund?

This will reduce cases where donor resources have contributed to increased conflict or tensions in targeted communities. Conflict sensitivity also helps ensure effective use of resources and reduces time wasted in resolving tensions.

Applying Conflict Sensitivity at Project Level – Case Study 2 Diocese of Maralal's Integrated Peace and Livelihoods Project

Name of Original Project Integrated Peace and Livelihoods Project

Country and agency involved: Kenya; Diocese of Maralal (CAFOD partner)

Project Aim: Improved household food security among communities in Maralal diocese and enhanced capacities of communities for peace and conflict transformation and demand for justice

Project key activities: Income generation, access to capital, livestock breeding, access to markets.

What changes to the project resulted from conflict sensitivity?

1. The project targeted three groups that had a history of conflicting relations, and the original project design targeted the three groups in isolation of each other. Conflict sensitivity led to an awareness that this method of programming in isolation was missing opportunities to improve relations between the three groups, and the project considered whether relatively minor changes to original project design (changing how we do activities more than changing what we do) could improve relations (with the understanding that working in isolation would instead reinforce divisions between the three groups). The project brought members of all three groups together to join overall project planning meetings, giving an opportunity for them to gain an improved understanding of shared developmental challenges and shared hopes for the project. The project later also looked for opportunities for project activities to be implemented jointly with the three groups working together rather than in isolation – one example of this was the creation of a common market used by all three groups. The result of these changes has been increased constructive interaction between the three groups and incidental reporting of reduced cases of conflict between the three communities.

Why has applying conflict sensitivity to this project been effective/useful?

- ✓ CS has empowered the project team to conduct analysis of the context to understand various actors before engaging in any intervention
- ✓ The project team were able to understand the potential negative consequences of their programming if conflict sensitive has not been applied
- ✓ CS has provided an opportunity for project staff to redesign some aspects of the intervention

Do donors ever impede conflict sensitivity at project level.

Yes, by pre-defining elements of project design and pushing agencies to follow a donor 'wish list' without consideration of the context and potential impact of these decisions.

What changes could donors make to support organisations wishing to apply conflict sensitivity to their projects?

- ✓ Making compulsory that each agencies develop context analysis before initiating programmes
- ✓ Making it compulsory that agencies can be given funding only if they demonstrate how CS is applied at both programme and organizational level

Why should donors care about conflict sensitivity in projects that they fund?

Effective application of conflict sensitivity will reduce cases where donor resources have increased conflict or tensions in the project area. Also, conflict sensitivity improves programme quality – it enables analysis/reflection as to the appropriateness of the original project design and encourages adaptation for improved overall impact, rather than just narrowly focusing upon project outputs. Conflict sensitivity is useful for improving project effectiveness, sustainability and value for money.

Applying Conflict Sensitivity at Project Level – Case Study 3
Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's Community Animation and Peace Support Project

Name of Original Project: Community Animation and Peace Support Project.

Country and agency involved: Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

Project Aims: Increase in community cohesion and family ties and the ability of communities to resolve conflict. Improve food security in targeted communities. Increase access and use of clean water, and improved general hygiene practices in targeted communities

What changes to the project resulted from conflict sensitivity?

1. The original project design anticipated delivering work in targeted communities under the guidance of traditional leaders (chiefs). Conflict sensitivity led to increased awareness of tensions caused by delivery through this unaccountable system, and raised awareness that the project was unintentionally reinforcing existing power imbalances. Conflict sensitivity encouraged project staff to think through the wider impact of this method of community engagement and to consider adaptations to the original project design. Following community consultations this led to the formation of accountable, transparent and representative community organisations (Community Peace Consolidation Committees) to oversee development activities, with traditional leaders (chiefs) in advisory but not decision making roles. These committees have helped give communities a voice and build their capacity to speak on issues and concerns of communal interest.

2. The original project design targeted individual landowners for work relating to food security. Conflict sensitivity raised awareness of existing tensions within and between communities relating to ownership and access to productive resources such as land. Conflict sensitivity work highlighted the potential of project activities increasing tensions in targeted communities, as those without access to land would be further marginalised by the project. Alternative interventions were discussed with targeted communities and this resulted in a decision to support community farming initiatives, bringing landowners together with non-landowners. This adaptation has avoided escalating tensions between landowners and non-owners, has improved relations between these groups and has also assisted in meeting the original project goals as community farms with economies of scale have seen bumper harvests.

What changes to staff attitudes/behaviour resulted from conflict sensitivity?

Project staff awareness of conflicts/divisions in targeted communities, and the impact of these conflicts/divisions on development issues has increased. This prompted staff to consider more thoroughly issues relating to participation; inclusiveness, perception; impartiality and transparency – this approach has smoothed project implementation.

Why has applying conflict sensitivity to this project been effective/useful?

We were already working on peace building and food security. CS was a paradigm shift which brought the realisation that even peace building initiatives can cause conflict.

What is the added value of conflict sensitivity to your organisation?

Undertaking a conflict analysis has surfaced important issues that might otherwise have been overlooked.

Why should donors actively support/encourage conflict sensitivity in projects that they fund?

To ensure that interventions are designed and implemented with a good understanding of existing divisions and power relations within/between communities and to ensure that interventions do not unintentionally increase divisions. Effective development results cannot be achieved if interventions increase divisions and tension.

Applying Conflict Sensitivity at Project Level – Case Study 4 CARE International in Sierra Leone's Conservation Agriculture Project

Name of Original Project: Conservation Agriculture Project

Country and agency involved: Sierra Leone, CARE International in Sierra Leone

Project key activities: Improving household food security through farmer adoption of conservation agriculture practices, increasing household income through the participation of women and youth in agricultural production, sustainable engagement of women and youth in value-addition enterprises, securing sustainable access to land for farming for women and other marginalized groups.

What changes to the project resulted from conflict sensitivity?

The initial project design did not fully consider pre-existing tensions between the project's impact group (crop farmers) and cattle farmers, nor did it consider the potential for the project exacerbating existing tensions by supporting crop farmers rather than cattle farmers. It was also not completely informed about relationships between local leaders and both crop farmers and cattle farmers; relationships that would have significant consequences for project success. A thorough conflict analysis, initiated during implementation, was therefore vital in giving project staff a much deeper understanding of existing tensions /divisions in the project area. Further work on conflict sensitivity raised awareness of the likelihood of project activities becoming embroiled in these existing tensions and helped project staff to consider adaptations to the original project design. These adaptations focused upon improving the relations between crop and cattle farmers, improving consultation and transparency to overcome the challenges resulting from some groups feeling that they had been overlooked in the original project design/needs assessment process, and communicating more effectively with local government to explain why crop farmers were being targeted rather than cattle farmers.

Why has applying conflict sensitivity to this project been effective/useful?

It highlighted the need for an adequate context analysis, vital for truly understanding power dynamics and relations within the operational area. It also reinforced the lesson that even when we try to 'do good'; we can unintentionally increase divisions within communities, and helped us think through mitigation strategies to minimize this.

Does your organisation plan to apply conflict sensitivity to future projects?

Yes, since this pilot demonstrated that conflict sensitivity is an approach that can improve the quality of our programming.

What is the added value of conflict sensitivity to your organisation?

It forces us to be more reflective of the way we do things and the associated consequences, rather than just focusing on achieving outputs.

What changes could donors make to support organisations wishing to apply conflict sensitivity to their projects?

Including an adequate budget for a thorough conflict analysis, not to be underestimated in enabling an organization to truly understand its operational area and identifying any actors/dynamics crucial to project success;

Increasing acceptance of conflict sensitivity by promoting it to other donor agencies.

Why should donors care about conflict sensitivity in projects that they fund?

Conflict Sensitivity can be a key tool to ensuring that project objectives are met without creating/increasing conflict; it can also bring more universal benefits such as greater trust and engagement between groups in conflict.