

AGRICULTURE AND CONFLICT
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis

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Chapter 1: Conflict

Linking Agriculture and Conflict

The link between agriculture and conflict is one that has not received enough thoughtful discussion and analysis. On one level, the impact of conflict on agriculture is fairly straight- forward and intuitive, though there are problems in assigning causality in this relationship. Production in the agricultural sector demonstrably drops on average by 12.3% per year during periods of violent conflict, with the extreme case of Angola having production drop by as much as 44.5% during the war years from 1975- 1993.¹

Disaggregating the influence of the conflict on production from other factors such as weather and commodity prices can be difficult, but it still seems clear that violent conflict has severe and real impacts on production. Leaving the discussion of agriculture and conflict at that level, however, threatens to miss what is potentially a much more meaningful link in the realm of international development practice. Violent conflict is destructive. That much is absolutely beyond debate. It at best disrupts livelihood systems and damages essential infrastructure, and at worst completely destroys people's coping mechanisms for dealing with shocks and can lead to a complete collapse of social and economic systems. Given the destructive nature of violent conflict, and its ability to undo years of positive development in the blink of an eye, development practice aimed at mitigating the risks of outbreaks of violent conflict promises to be one of the most effective means possible for the creation of long-term growth and improvement in people's lives.

¹ Messer, E., Cohen, M., and D'Costa, J., "Food From Peace: Breaking the Link Between Conflict and Hunger," *Food, Agriculture and the Environment Discussion Paper No. 24*, International Food and Population Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington, DC, 1998: 19-21 (accessed 29 January 2006); available from <http://www.ifpri.org/2020/dp/dp24.pdf>.

The relationship between agriculture and violent conflict in the opposite direction is less clear, though there are many examples where issues within the agricultural sector certainly had direct impacts on the outbreak of violent conflict. Crisis in the agricultural sector has been cited as a contributing factor to the conflicts in Rwanda and Cote d'Ivoire,² as well as in over two dozen other conflicts in a direct or indirect fashion.³ On a smaller scale, "a Saferworld study on the impacts of European Union engagement in Ethiopia found that EU-supported large-scale commercial farming enterprises deepened inequality, restricted access to vital resources and increased tensions between competing pastoralist groups and between pastoralist groups and the state. The tensions ultimately led to open conflict which has yet to be resolved."⁴

These examples of agriculture's influence on and involvement in conflict have led some to the conclusion that greater attention needs to be paid to agriculture's role in conflict, peace and development.⁵ For the purpose of this discussion, it is proposed that agriculture can be linked to conflict through three channels: economics, environmental scarcity, and state capacity. To make the connection between agriculture and conflict clear, however, it is first important to engage in a discussion of the theory behind these three channels' respective impacts on violent conflict.

² UNU-IAS Report, "Agriculture for Peace: Promoting Agricultural Development in Support of Peace" United Nations University- Institute of Advanced Studies, 2004: 11 (accessed 19 October 2005); available from http://www.ias.unu.edu/binaries/UNUIAS_AgforPeaceReport.pdf.

³ de Soya, Indra and Gleiditsch, Nils Petter, "To Cultivate Peace: Agriculture in a World of Conflict," Report 1/99, International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo: 67-74 (accessed 19 October 2005); available from <http://www.futureharvest.org/peace/reportfin.pdf>.

⁴ Saferworld Report, *EU Policies and the Risk of Violent Conflict in Ethiopia's Awash Valley* August 2000, as cited in Gaigals, Cynthia with Leonhardt, Manuela, "Conflict- Sensitive Approaches to Development- A Review of Practice," International Alert, Saferworld and IDRC, 2001: 8 (accessed 14 November 2005); available from <http://www.bellanet.org/pcia/documents/docs/conflict-sensitive-develop.pdf>.

⁵ The United Nations University Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU/IAS) in Japan has an on-going project entitled "Agriculture for Peace" (<http://www.ias.unu.edu/research/agforpeace.cfm>) which is involved in a forthcoming book *Agriculture for Peace, an Instrument for Preventing Conflict and Maintaining Peace*, eds. A.H. Zakri and M. Taeb (Tokyo: UNU Press for UNU-IAS).

Economic Incentives and Conflict

Economic factors play an absolutely central role in the onset of violent conflict. At the aggregate country level, a country with a GDP of US\$250 has a 15% likelihood of experiencing a war in the next five years. This decreases by half when per capita GDP reaches US\$600 and then falls below four percent when per capita income reaches US\$1250.⁶ Economic incentive as the motivation for violent conflict has led Paul Collier to state that “the key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development.”⁷ This statement, while being counter to his previous work in which he hypothesized that the root cause of violent conflict is economic opportunity,⁸ demonstrates the importance of economic development in discussions of violent conflict.

As stated above, increasing economic prospects decreases the risk of violent conflict, but unfortunately economic stagnation and decline have the opposite impact, leading to increased risk of violence. This is demonstrated in a study of civil conflicts from 1981-99, which found that a five- percent (5%) drop in annual economic growth increases the likelihood of civil conflict the next year by twelve percent (12%). Surprisingly, this pattern holds true for both wealthy and poor countries.⁹ So it is not only low per capita income that can help predict violent conflict, but declining prospects for economic growth. This result was supported through household-level research in Northern Uganda that found underdevelopment and economic shocks were significant in

⁶ Humphreys, Macarten, “Economics and Violent Conflict,” The HPCR Conflict Prevention Initiative 2002: 2 (accessed 31 January 2006); available from <http://www.preventconflict.org/portal/economics/>.

⁷ Collier, Paul, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*. (Washington, D.C.: World Bank and Oxford University, 2003), 53.

⁸ Collier, Paul, “Doing Well Out of War,” *The World Bank* April 1999.

⁹ Miguel, Edward, Satyanth, Shanker, and Sergenti, Ernest, “Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach,” *Journal of Political Economy* 12 no. 4 (2004): 725-753.

moving towards a propensity for violent conflict.¹⁰ This is important because it demonstrates that it is not only macro-level shocks to growth and development that are important; localized changes in the economic environment can have major repercussions.

These conclusions provide the foundation for the role of greed in the “greed versus grievance” debate led by Collier and Hoeffler.¹¹ Most civil wars are surrounded by a dialogue of grievance, but the paradigm states that the single most important factors are the economic ones, and that the most obvious variables to measure grievance have very little explanatory power. While accepting that the economic variables they use could in fact proxy instances of grievance, it is concluded that the economic incentives are key since they provide operational capability for war, and discernable potential benefit to taking up arms.

Important to the discussion on economic incentives is the role of poverty. If only economic costs are considered to be important, then poverty lowers the opportunity costs of violent conflict while concurrently increasing a population’s level of grievance. It is not only poverty, though, as if that were the case instances of violent conflict would be much more common. While most violent conflicts are located in poor countries, most poor people are not involved in violent conflicts, so another factor must be brought into the discussion: horizontal inequality. This allows for relative impoverishment to be brought into the discussion as a motivator for the creation of group salience and the motivation to engage in violence.

¹⁰ Deininger, Klaus, “Causes and Consequences of Civil Strife: Micro-level Evidence from Uganda” *Oxford Economic Papers* 55 (2003): 580.

¹¹ Collier, Paul and Hoeffler, Anke, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004): 563-595.

Horizontal inequalities are defined as inequality between groups in political participation, economic assets, employment and income, and social access and situation.¹² For the sake of this discussion, economic assets, employment and income will be most important. It is essential to understand that the concept of horizontal inequality is not stating that economic inequality is the problem, but economic inequality between *distinct groups*. Within any group there can be large disparities of income, which would be defined as vertical inequality, but this has not been found to be systematically correlated with conflict. Vertical inequality is significant for this discussion because the research casting doubt on the linkages between horizontal inequality and conflict tends to be measuring vertical inequalities instead. The problem is a methodological error in the research that removes the group dynamics and social organization, which are essential for organized violent conflict, from the analysis of the linkage between inequality and conflict, which are central tenets of the theory.¹³

Horizontal inequalities are likely to provoke conflict as they relate to economic issues when there are six characteristics.¹⁴ These are when they are durable, the inequalities are expanding over time, group boundaries are relatively impermeable, there are large numbers in the groups, the horizontal inequalities are consistent across groups and aggregate incomes are stagnant or slow growing. These take into account the factors discussed previously about the importance of economic shocks and stagnation in the

¹² Stewart, Frances, "Horizontal Inequalities as a Source of Conflict," in *From Reaction to Conflict Prevention Opportunities for the UN System*, eds. F. Olser Hampson and D.M. Malone, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 111.

¹³ Østby, Gudron, "Do Horizontal Inequalities Matter for Civil Conflict?" International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo: 3 (accessed 3 February 2006); available from http://www.polarizationandconflict.org/bcn04/7%D8stby_Horiz.pdf.

¹⁴ Stewart, Frances, "Policies Towards Horizontal Inequalities in Post-Conflict Reconstruction," Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, CRISE Working Paper 7, 2005: 8-9 (accessed 14 March 2006); available from <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper7.pdf>.

outbreak of conflict. Significantly, they make explicit the importance of the group dynamic necessary for organized violent conflict. If there is no organization in the conflict, then the violence that is being experienced can better be summarized as random violence or crime.

The conclusion from this discussion is that there are multiple perspectives to be concerned about when addressing the links between economics and conflict. On the one hand there are the issues of low, stagnant, or declining per capita economic growth, and on the other there is the problem of horizontal inequalities. These are not entirely separate issues as most likely they will exist in some fashion simultaneously, and a development practitioner active in an area where conflict is active or potential, it is imperative to be aware of these dynamics and their impacts.

Environmental Scarcity and Conflict

Environmental scarcity is defined by Homer-Dixon as “scarcity of renewable resources, such as cropland, forests, river water and fish stocks.”¹⁵ It can arise in a number of ways, from depletion or degradation, increased demand or unequal distribution. At first glance the unequal distribution aspect may not seem obvious, but it is important because it again involves horizontal inequalities, only with regards to the environment instead of economics. While a resource may be abundant in some areas, its scarcity in others can create a situation where groups are forced to compete over it. If the resource is significant enough and available only along the lines of the horizontal divisions, this can then be a source of increased tensions and potentially violence.

¹⁵ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999): 8.

The link between environmental scarcity and conflict has been supported by many researchers, with many case studies having been published in support of the theory.¹⁶ The foremost proponent of this school of thought is Homer-Dixon, who originally started publishing his theory on the causal links back in 1991.¹⁷ The key finding of his work is that “preliminary research indicates that scarcity of renewable resources—or what [he] calls *environmental scarcity*—can contribute to civil violence, including insurgencies and ethnic clashes”¹⁸ (emphasis in original). Expanding on this, the theory posits that growing scarcity, especially over arable land and other natural resources, can potentially lead to violent conflict, though indirectly. These environmental scarcity problems will interact in a complex fashion with other social, political and economic forces at work within a society, which will result in violent conflict.¹⁹ These social, political, and economic factors will interact with the instances of environmental scarcity to create five potential social effects, which are not mutually exclusive:

- 1) constrained agricultural activity,
- 2) constrained economic activity,
- 3) migration of affected people in search of better lives,
- 4) greater segmentation within society and
- 5) disruption of institutions, especially those pertaining to the state.²⁰

These predicted social effects overlap with other conflict- inducing situations. The constrained economic situation will have impacts that were discussed in the previous section and the disruption of institutions directly relates to state capacity, the subject of the next section. This leads to the conclusion that identifying environmental scarcity as

¹⁶ Hauge, Wenche and Ellingsen, Tanja, “Beyond Environmental Scarcity: Causal Pathways to Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research: Special Issue on the Environment 1998* 35 no. 3 (1998): 300.

¹⁷ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, “Environmental Change and Acute Conflict,” *International Security* 16 no. 2 (1991): 76-116.

¹⁸ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999): 177.

¹⁹ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, 178-79

²⁰ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, 80-103.

the absolute root cause of violent conflict will be extremely challenging since the effects created also increase the risk of conflict in their own right. However, it also leads to the conclusion that it is something that people interested in mitigating instances of violent conflict need to remain mindful of, as it works as an important catalyst to drive the social environment into being conducive for the outbreak of violence.

The environmental scarcity model predicts three types of violent conflict.²¹ The first classification is simple- scarcity conflict. Interstate resource wars would fall into this category, though not all resource conflicts are international. Almost all conflicts over water resources are internal rather than external, as groups are more likely to have to compete for it on a more localized scale.²² Group identity conflicts arise when people are segmented into groups do to environmental scarcity, resulting in a “we-they” cleavage within communities or regions and leading back to the discussion of horizontal inequalities. Finally, insurgencies arise when the state loses its legitimacy to govern and monopoly over the use of force. For this to occur there must be a coalescence of both opportunity and grievance, as it is an attempt to overthrow the rule of the state. Of these three proposed types of conflict, group- identity and insurgencies are thought to be the most likely.²³

The important link to remain mindful of with regards to environmental scarcity and conflict is that it will be rare to find easily identifiable instances of degradation leading to violence. Instead, it is an important piece of the entire context that interacts with other aspects of the situation to drive violence forward. Just because defining a clean

²¹ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, 133-176.

²² Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, 141.

²³ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, 147.

causal link from one thing to another is difficult does not mean the link is not meaningful, only that it is a complex situation.

State Capacity and Conflict

The political system and capacity of the state is also instrumental in the examination of violent conflict. State capacity reflects the state's ability to respond to citizens' needs and concerns, as well as its ability to control the territory within its borders. Governments that are not responsive to peoples' needs and desires can easily create grievance, as well as make the inequalities mentioned above in the economic and natural resource arena much more severe. It is not only the state government that can have an impact here, though. It is important to keep sight of the fact that there are numerous levels of government, all of which can work to exacerbate problems in a given area, as well as ameliorate them.

Authoritarian and strong democracies do not experience violent conflict at anywhere near the rate of countries in transition, with the transition time being by far the most dangerous for the outbreak of violence.²⁴ The reasons for this are potentially six-fold. The first is that the losers from the status quo resist the changes, fearing a loss of power and influence. Secondly, nationalist radical leaders emerge into a free-for-all. Third is the feeling of uncertainty and the loss of security that comes from any time of great change, which interacts with the fourth aspect. This is the rising expectations people have for improvement in the political, social and economic environment, and anything that threatens this rising expectation will be fought and resisted. Fifth, partial democracies can emerge, and within this system some dissent will be allowed, but

²⁴ Hegre, Ellingston, Gates and Gleditsch, "Toward a Democratic Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992," *American Political Science Review* 95 no. 1 (2001): 33-48.

without any meaningful influence over real results and power. This can increase disenchantment with the system while at the same time allowing space that was not present in the past for mobilization. Finally, democracy and changes in political systems always hold the possibility that the new political system may estrange and marginalize groups. These aspects were summarized with the comment that “[w]hen authoritarianism collapses and is followed by ineffectual efforts to establish democracy, the interim period of relative anarchy is ripe for ethnonationalism or ideological leaders who want to organize rebellion.”²⁵

These six aspects combine to describe state weakness. In times of transition, state capacity, in both economic and policy senses, is at a low ebb, and the government is not able to arbitrate and solve conflicts effectively.²⁶ This state weakness then leads to social, political and economic opportunity for rebellion and violent conflict. When discussing ethnopolitical conflict, Gurr differentiates four different types of opportunity relative to state weakness. These opportunities are first political, which relate to the external factors to the group, which determine their decisions on how to pursue objectives. Secondly, durable opportunity is the political characteristics of the state and the resources that it has at its disposal. Transient opportunity relates to the changes in the structure of the group’s political environment, and finally the international opportunity is the ethnopolitical group’s international allies and opponents. All of these opportunity structures are in flux

²⁵ Hegre, Ellingston, Gates and Gleditsch, 34.

²⁶ Homer-Dixon, Thomas, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*.

during a time of political change or instability, and can work together to increase group salience of identity, capacity to act and incentives and rewards for acting.²⁷

The outbreak of violent conflict due to a lack of state capacity relates to weakness of the state and opportunities for action. A weak state is then found to have three dimensions that are germane to the discussion. Descriptively, the weak state possesses external sovereignty as defined by the international community, but it lacks the internal capacity to control its borders. This in turn leads to the devolution of military power from the central government to local gangs and militia leaders, which supports increasing rent-seeking activities to satisfy private interests.²⁸

Gurr then ties the weakness of the state with the process of modernization, positing that it is the combination of the growth of the modern state system, the development of the global economic system and the communication revolution are key. These things all combine to greatly increase competition and interaction between cultural groups, and then between cultural groups and the state.²⁹ This is important since this increased interaction is at a time when creating salience of group identity is easier due to the ease with which communication is possible, especially in areas where it was once extremely difficult. The weak state is then unable to dissuade violence, and the ending of the state's monopoly on the use of force opens the doors for a downward spiral.

This then all ties back into the hypothesis of horizontal inequality. As state capacity is concerned, Frances Stewart proposes that horizontal inequalities increase the

²⁷ Gurr, Ted Robert, "Minorities and Nationalists: Managing Ethnopolitical Conflict in the New Century," in *Turbulent Peace*, eds. Crocker, Chester, Hampson, Fen Olser, and Aall, Pamela (Washington, D.C.: USIP Press, 2001).

²⁸ Holsti, Kalevi, "Political Causes of Humanitarian Emergencies," in *War, Hunger and Displacement: The Origins of Humanitarian Emergencies*, eds. Nafziger, E.W., Stewart, Frances and Varynen, Raimo. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁹ Gurr, Ted Robert.

risk of violence where the government is irresponsible or proactively repressive, as well as when leaders who are capable of rebelling are not co-opted into the political system.³⁰

The greater the collective disadvantages are vis-à-vis other groups, the greater the incentive for action.³¹ These inequalities are then potentially easily exacerbated in times of political change and state weakness, leading to opportunity for groups to take action to claim some economic, social or political gain.

Conclusion

Defining links to what causes violent conflict is something that is difficult to do. Each conflict is unique and requires careful thought and analysis to come to a conclusion on what the root causes actually are. However, an understanding of the basic dynamics that have been found to be conducive to the outbreak of violent conflict is an important and useful analytical tool from which to start any examination of a conflict area. While the dynamics leading to conflict outlined in this chapter are by no means all-encompassing, they are an important group when considering development, as development activities have an impact on all three areas discussed. It is also important to realize that all three areas will interact, so when investigating any situation, the more holistic is the understanding, the better.

³⁰ Stewart, Frances, "Policies Towards Horizontal Inequalities in Post-Conflict Reconstruction," 5.

³¹ Gurr, Ted Robert, 169.

Chapter 2: Agriculture and Conflict

Creating a framework that links economics, environmental scarcity, state capacity and conflict to agriculture begins with an understanding of conflict from the development perspective. It is first important to appreciate what is meant by the concept of *conflict sensitivity* in development, moving on to why it is important when implementing development projects in areas that have the potential to experience violent conflict, are just coming out of violent conflict, or are currently experiencing it. Finally, it is essential to the discussion to begin linking agricultural development to conflict sensitive programming, while at the same time linking it back to the factors in the last chapter that impact violent conflict.

Conflict Sensitivity Defined

There is not universal acceptance of a common definition for conflict sensitivity, but the concept has been around since at least 1999.³² Despite the lack of academic consensus on exactly what it means, the Conflict Sensitivity Resource Pack, which gives the most thorough guidelines for working in a conflict sensitive manner available, defines it as “the notion of systematically taking into account both the positive and negative impacts of interventions, in terms of conflict or peace dynamics, on the contexts in which they are undertaken, and conversely, the impact of these contexts on the interventions.”³³ Functionally, this definition has three components that are key to implementing a conflict sensitive framework:

³² Barbolet, Adam, Goldwyn, Rachel, Groenwald, Hesta, and Sheriff, Andrew, “The Utility and Dilemmas of Conflict Sensitivity,” Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005: 3 (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

³³ Introduction, *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*, 1 (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.conflictsensitivity.am>.

- 1) understanding the context,
- 2) understanding interactions, and
- 3) acting upon the understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize the positive.³⁴

Understanding the context means the entire situation surrounding the environment in which the program is being implemented, including the social environment, local, regional and national politics, the economic environment (from the national and international levels down to the household level) and any other important factors that could have an impact on the project. When this understanding is gained, it must then be broadened to include how the project will interact with the environment in which it is being implemented. The interactions with the environment are not merely the interactions with the intervention being implemented, but the context in a holistic sense that includes all of the secondary ramifications and impacts. Finally, and potentially most difficultly, action must be taken to address the issues discovered during the first two steps.

Understanding is useless without action, so there must be mechanisms in place at all steps within the project cycle to address potential problems or to take advantage of opportunities.

Central to conflict-sensitive programming is carrying out a conflict analysis and updating it regularly. This conflict analysis must then be linked to the programming cycle of the intervention and used to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the intervention (including redesigning the intervention when necessary).³⁵ This process must be

³⁴ Chapter 1, “An Introduction to Conflict- Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding,” *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*, 1 (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.conflictsensitivity.am>.

³⁵ Chapter 1, “An Introduction to Conflict- Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding,” 3.

engrained into the culture of the organization as part of “an entire ethos as to how organizations could strategize, plan, implement and evaluate their work.”³⁶

The Importance of Conflict Sensitivity

Violent conflict is not something that appears out of thin air and understanding the underlying dynamics in a given environment and situation can greatly enhance an organization’s ability to work in that environment. As was mentioned previously, the concept of conflict sensitivity has been around for a number of years, and during this time a number of organizations have developed tools for implementing conflict sensitive frameworks. Unfortunately, these tools are not implemented in most conflict settings,³⁷ which would seem to imply that conflict sensitivity is not taking root in a more fundamental manner within organizations. There is in all likelihood some organizations and individuals that are implementing conflict sensitivity through flexibility and being able to adapt quickly to dynamic and changing situations, but even if this is the case there is still substantial room for more widespread implementation. This situation is problematic, as it has become known that even well-intentioned projects can do harm.³⁸ This knowledge about the potential harm through development projects has led to a growing understanding of the ways in which peace, development and conflict are linked, and in understanding these links there can hopefully be positive action taken on the root causes of violent conflicts.³⁹ Most concerning about a lack of knowledge, though, is the

³⁶ Barbolet, Adam, Goldwyn, Rachel, Groenwald, Hesta, and Sheriff, Andrew, 5.

³⁷ Barbolet, Adam, Goldwyn, Rachel, Groenwald, Hesta, and Sheriff, Andrew, 4.

³⁸ Paffenholz, Thania, “Peace and Conflict Sensitivity in Development Policy and Cooperation: An Introductory Overview,” *International Politics and Society* 4 (2005): 2 (accessed 1 March 2006); available from http://fesportal.fes.de/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/IPG/IPG4_2005/06_PAFFENHOLZ.PDF.

³⁹ Gaigals, Cynthia with Leonhardt, Manuela, “Conflict- Sensitive Approaches to Development- A Review of Practice,” *International Alert, Saferworld and IDRC*, 2001: 7 (accessed 14 November 2005); available from <http://www.bellanet.org/pcia/documents/docs/conflict-sensitive-develop.pdf>.

fact that having negative repercussions on the root causes of conflict is very easy without ever realizing it is being done.

This is not to imply that conflict sensitivity means that peacebuilding is the primary objective of a development project. First and foremost a development project is a development project, but these projects have the potential to have positive impacts on peacebuilding as a secondary effect. Necessarily, by working in a conflict sensitive fashion, a holistic approach to development work will be utilized. By coming at projects in this fashion, people's livelihoods can be impacted in a more beneficial manner and in the end not only can levels of violence be decreased, but the effectiveness of the aid can be increased.⁴⁰

Conflict Sensitivity and Agriculture

When addressing issues of conflict, agriculture is not a sector that is generally immediately identified, but in development as a whole, its importance is well-recognized. It is the backbone of most low-income countries, employing the most individuals of any sector and it plays a significant role in driving economic growth as well as contributing greatly to foreign-exchange earnings. Combining all these aspects of the sector led Tony Addison to state that "overall development success or failure is often an outcome of what happens in agriculture."⁴¹

Conflict sensitivity within agriculture is of interest as it is well-placed to have a potentially large impact on the risk factors associated with conflict and in supporting

⁴⁰ Trocaire Discussion Paper, "Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding in Development: An Analysis of Concepts, Theory and Practice," *Trocaire Discussion Paper*: 8 (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.trocaire.org/international/peacebuildingdiscussionpaper.pdf>.

⁴¹ Addison, Tony, "Agricultural Development for Peace," 1.

long-term peace.⁴² Most armed conflict is centered within regions of the world extremely dependent upon agriculture,⁴³ and while this is not by any means evidence of a causal link between reliance on agriculture and the risk of violent conflict, it underscores the importance of this sector upon the societies in which violent conflict is most prevalent. The take-away point here is that while poverty is in and of itself not a predictor of conflict, poor conditions within agriculture, and by extension poor economic prospects for a great portion of a population, can hold grave implications for the development of sustainable peace and economic development.⁴⁴

The central role that agriculture plays within conflict- prone regions opens up the potentially powerful connections that are possible in working towards peace and having positive impacts on conflict dynamics through work in this sector. The previous chapter demonstrated the link between economics, environmental scarcity, state capacity and conflict. These three areas are greatly impacted by conditions within the agricultural sector, and this impact creates the bridge conceptually for linking agriculture and conflict.

Economics and Agriculture

The economic environment is the most obvious place to start, as agriculture has the potential to have massive impacts on the economic environment of huge numbers of people. To actually raise people's economic situation, though, agriculture itself must be made profitable. This often requires farmers to receive something akin to higher prices for their crops, which has complicated repercussions since food in most parts of the world is a wage good, and increases in prices to the farmers can be construed as a

⁴² UNU-IAS Report, 12.

⁴³ de Soya, Indra, and Nils Petter, Gleiditsch, 14-15.

⁴⁴ de Soya, Indra, and Nils Petter, Gleiditsch, 8.

commensurate decrease in wages for urban workers. Additionally, farmers are not merely producers, but also consumers of the goods they are producing. Unlike the industrial sector, where workers produce and collect wages for that production, farmers have a complicated decision to make each season with regards to how much to sell and how much to keep for personal consumption.⁴⁵

The potential for impacting the economic situation for people from action within the agricultural sector is huge; approximately 70% of the world's poor live in rural areas, and of those poor, 84-99% derive income from agriculture in developing countries.⁴⁶ There are 16 potential impacts of growth in the agricultural sector within the literature on agricultural development outlined in Table 1, which gives a good overview of how people's lives can be impacted from growth in the agricultural sector. These are divided into three areas, the farm economy, rural economy and national economy as seen in the table below.

Farm Economy	Rural Economy	National Economy
Higher incomes for farmers, including smallholders	More jobs in agriculture and food chain upstream and downstream of farm	Reduced prices of food and raw materials raise real wages of urban poor; reduce wage costs of non-farm sectors.
	More jobs and higher incomes in non-farm economy as additional income is spent.	
		Generation of savings and taxes from farming allows investment in non-farm sector.
	More jobs and incomes in rural economy allow better nutrition, better health, and increased	

⁴⁵ Timmer, Peter, Falcon, Walter and Pearson, Scott, "Analysis of Food Production Systems," in *Food Policy Analysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983) (accessed 10 October 2005); available from <http://cesp.stanford.edu/pubs/falcon/foodpolicy/fronttoc.fm.html>.

⁴⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Agriculture remains principal activity of rural people," FAO NewsRoom 16 January 2006 (accessed 21 March 2006); available from <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2006/1000214/index.html>.

		Earning of foreign exchange allows import of capital goods and essential inputs for non-farm production.
More employment on-farm as labor demand rises. Rise in farm wage rates.	Generate more local tax revenue and demand for better infrastructure.	Release of labor allows production in other sectors
	Linkages in production chain generate trust and information, build social capital and facilitate non-farm investment.	
	Reduced prices of food for rural inhabitants who buy food in net.	

Table 1: Effects of agricultural Growth on the Farm, Rural and National Economy⁴⁷

The impacts are not entirely “positive” as a sum across the entire table, as there is some contradictory potential, which were described previously in the discussion of the complex decision-making process people in the agriculture sector must go through each season. Despite this, “the hypothesized linkages from agricultural production to poverty probably operate significantly and in many circumstances.”⁴⁸

In addition to the aggregate impact of agriculture on economic well-being, its impact on horizontal inequalities must also be addressed. Given the large numbers of people that can be affected through agricultural programming, group dynamics must be taken into account when programs are designed. Work towards lessening these inequalities has the potential to greatly impact the outbreak of violence while at the same time pulling people out of poverty. Examining table 1, it becomes evident that every area

⁴⁷ Irz, Xaview, Lin, Lin, Thirtle, Colin and Wiggins, Steve, “Agricultural Productivity Growth and Poverty Alleviation,” *Development Policy Review* 19 no. 4 (2001): 450-451.

⁴⁸ Irz, Xaview, Lin, Lin, Thirtle, Colin and Wiggins, Steve, 462.

identified in the literature has the potential to impact the structure of horizontal inequalities, by either making them worse or by helping to break them down.

Development programs targeted at groups that are already advantaged risks the very real potential of exacerbating the inequality between groups. Given agriculture's ability to have very large spill-over impacts into non-agricultural sectors,⁴⁹ it has the potential to greatly impact these horizontal inequalities. If a certain group is able to capture all (or even most) of the social, economic and political benefit of the growth that occurs through an agricultural development project, the horizontal inequality structures can be made worse.⁵⁰ While there is always the risk of this as growth occurs, development agencies need to be especially aware of it as their position as instigator of an intervention puts them in a position of responsibility for outcomes, whether intentional or not.

Environmental Scarcity and Agriculture

The environmental sector, while possibly more subtle than the economic sphere, holds great potential for influencing conflict dynamics. Keeping an eye on the environmental affects of agriculture is not only good sense for sustainable development in the terms of environmental preservation, if it reduces the chance of conflict at the same time the benefit is multiplied immensely. The difficulty here lies in the tradeoffs inherent in agricultural development and the environment. By its very nature, agricultural development is extremely disruptive to the environment, and even more so when

⁴⁹ Timmer, Peter, "The Macroeconomics of Food and Agriculture," in *International Agricultural Development*, eds. Eicher, Carl and Staatz, John (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 200-204.

⁵⁰ Mellor, John, "Agriculture on the Road to Industrialization," in *International Agricultural Development*, eds. Eicher, Carl and Staatz, John (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 149.

practices that are not appropriate are adopted in a given area. This can include everything from improper irrigation schemes to unsuitable crop choice to poor choice of seed, all of which can have wide-ranging negative impacts. Through foresight and having the relevant information and skills, these can be mitigated.

The biggest area that agriculture has impact on the environment is through cropping processes and actual use of the land.⁵¹ This is leading to a situation where soils are being destroyed almost as fast as they are coming into production as populations attempt to keep themselves fed.⁵² The solution put forward to this by environmentalists has been to continue using traditional methods of production, while at the other side of the debate are those that advocate the use of ever-increasing inputs to increase yields. Neither of these approaches are wholly satisfying in a situation where 65% of the land in Africa, 45% in South America and 38% in Asia has been degraded,⁵³ mostly due to overgrazing, deforestation and inappropriate agricultural practices.⁵⁴

The combination of farmers being poor and the environmental decline being experienced in so many different places has led to the belief that they are inexorably linked. Historically, the literature on the subject has viewed the poverty- environmental degradation question as a “downward spiral,”⁵⁵ as diagramed in figure 1. This model

⁵¹ Reardon, Thomas and Vosti, Stephen, “Poverty-Environment Links in Rural Areas of Developing Countries,” in *Sustainability, Growth, and Poverty Alleviation*, eds. Vosti, Stephen and Reardon, Thomas Anthony (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, for the International Food Policy Research Institute, 1997).

⁵² Paarlberg, Robert, *Countrysides at Risk: The Political Geography of Sustainable Agriculture*, Overseas Development Council Policy Essay No. 16. (Washington, D.C.: ODC, 1994), 1.

⁵³ Olderman, LR, “Global Extent of Soil Degradation,” in *Biannual Report 1991-92* (Wageningen, The Netherlands: International Soil Reference and Information Centre, 1992), 19-36 as cited in P. Pinstup-Andersen and R. Pandya-Lorch, “Food for All in 2020: Can the World be Fed Without Damaging the Environment?” *Environmental Conservation* 23, no. 3 (1996): 229.

⁵⁴ P. Pinstup-Andersen and R. Pandya-Lorch, “Food for All in 2020: Can the World be Fed Without Damaging the Environment?” *Environmental Conservation* 23, no. 3 (1996): 229.

⁵⁵ Reardon, Thomas and Vosti, Stephen, 47.

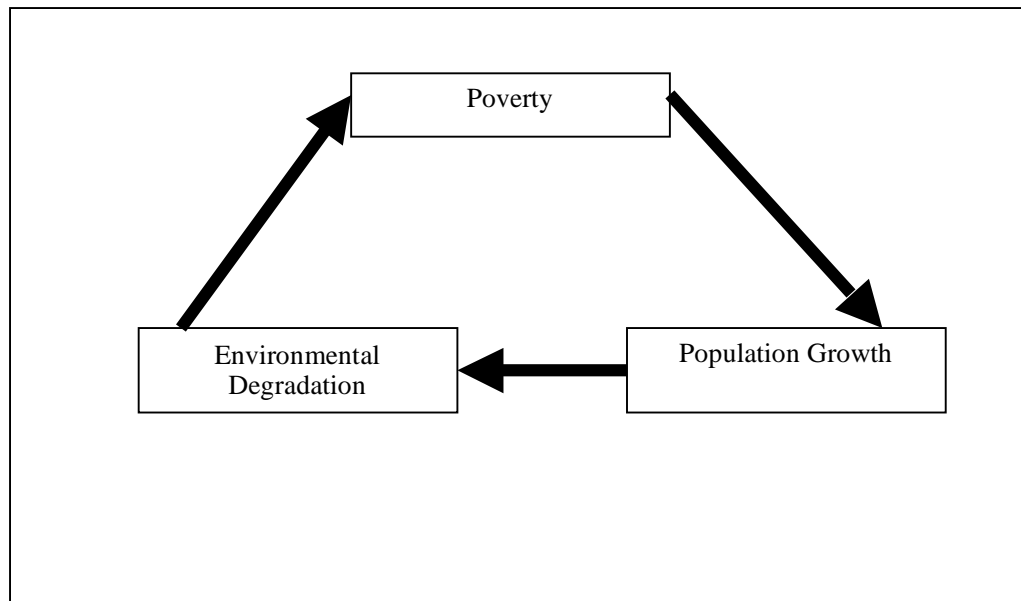


Figure 1: The “Downward Spiral” of Poverty and Environmental degradation

implies that in order to break the cycle, it is merely necessary to either pull people out of poverty or end the scourge of environmental degradation that people face. This is probably not sufficient since the problems and the inter-related nature of the dynamics causing the decline in a person’s livelihood are too complicated for such a simple and straight-forward panacea.⁵⁶ This does not mean that the downward spiral analogy is without merit, as it aptly and simply demonstrates the interconnectedness of the problem.

As the downward spiral concept shows, environmental decline will be closely linked to declining economic prospects as livelihood assets become less productive. This complex problem again leads back to horizontal inequality. Problems within the environment that adversely impact one group in relation to another can work to create the identity needed for organized violence to manifest itself. Agriculture is of specific interest in this situation because of the vulnerability poor rural populations already live under. Declining land quality, erosion, and lack of access to clean water have the

⁵⁶ Reardon, Thomas and Vosti, Stephen, 47-89.

potential to add yet another dynamic in the creation or supporting of horizontal inequalities. This is a doubly troubling situation when the economics are added, as both the economic and the environmental sides will work in tandem to reinforce one another and the inequalities that are in place.

It is important to acknowledge one other potential area of interest between environmental issues, agriculture and conflict, which is the use of natural resources and the environment as a point of intersection between competing groups. While this has traditionally been the area of work of people in the conflict resolution and natural resource fields, it is an area that can be tapped within development projects quite easily to support peace, if it is built into the project as more than an assumption that cooperation between groups will arise out of necessity.

State Capacity and Agriculture

The link between state capacity and agriculture is one that is extremely important, as it gets to the heart of a fundamental issue affecting development: the political economy choices of governments benefiting urban over rural areas. Governments make choices in favor of urban areas for four main reasons. The first is that for any bias to be in favor of the rural sector, the government would have to create a regime where farmers were somehow being supported by the urban sector, and the costs associated with this would be enormous. Second, the populations within the urban areas tend to be more educated and politically more able to mobilize for action for or against certain policies than the rural population. This means that as the government's interest is generally to stay in power, it is going to target its limited resources at the group that is most likely to have a major impact in achieving that goal. Third, there is a reduced free-rider problem for the

smaller industrial and manufacturing sectors within these countries when they do mobilize for action than in the agricultural sector. Finally, as was mentioned previously, food is a wage good in many developing countries, and urban wages depend heavily on food prices.⁵⁷

While there may generally be a political economy bias in favor of urban areas, there are still many areas where good, well-examined and targeted policies can have a great positive impact for the agricultural sector. These policy areas can be targeted at decreasing the uncertainty that is inherent within the agricultural sector, such as drains and dams, crop insurance, research and technology improvements, price forecasting information and intelligent price ceiling and floor decisions. Unfortunately, many government stabilization policies aimed at the rural sector are not effective and farmers have learned not to trust them.⁵⁸ These issues are further amplified by the relative treatment of the agricultural sector with regard to taxes. In developed countries, the agricultural sector tends to be protected, but in developing countries governments tax the sector very heavily.⁵⁹ Government policy treatment of farmers is then of very high importance to the growth and development of the agricultural sector.

From a development perspective, it is important to understand the motivations behind governments often poor treatment of the agricultural sector, since the policy and development environment in which organizations are working will often be similar to that just described. This environment will often manifest itself through a government's

⁵⁷ Anderson, Kym and Hayami, Yujiro, *The Political Economy of Agricultural Protection: East Asia in International Perspective* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin Hyman, 1986), 14.

⁵⁸ Timmer, Peter, Falcon, Walter and Pearson, Scott, 86.

⁵⁹ Lindert, Peter, "Historical Patterns of Agricultural Policy," in *Agriculture and the State: Growth, Employment and Poverty in Developing Countries*, ed. Timmer, Peter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

preference for agricultural interventions that are project- based as opposed to price-based.⁶⁰ Motivating this is the desire to reward supporters and undermine the opposition through development. Development organizations can then intelligently work in ways that minimize the creation of horizontal inequalities due to governance issues, while at the same time targeting their work to those least likely to receive aid and support from the government. This means that agricultural development actors cannot hide behind the semantic tree of “not being involved in politics.” This also means that there is significant space for agricultural development organizations to positively impact governance issues if they are aware of the potential and operate in an appropriate manner.

Conclusion

Agriculture as a sector impacts a huge number of areas within any country, especially in areas where large numbers of people are reliant on it for their livelihoods. This means it should receive special considerations for the ways that changes in the agricultural environment will impact the rest of society. The discussion here focused on three specific areas that have been identified as worthy of special attention because of their potential to have effects on violent conflict. While the links between agriculture and conflict may be one step removed in that the relationship is not a causal one, recognizing and understanding the links that are present is the first step in agricultural development organizations being able to work in a manner that minimizes the potential negative results and maximizes the positive.

⁶⁰ Bates, Robert, “The Political Framework for Agricultural Policy Decisions,” in *International Agricultural Development*, eds. Eicher, Carl and Staatz, John (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

Chapter 3: Conflict-Sensitive Agricultural Development

The Project Environment

The purpose of this section is to give a theoretical overview for how agricultural projects should be approached in areas where there is conflict or the potential for it to erupt. The most significant aspects of what is being proposed fall in how to conceptualize agricultural development and its links to other areas, so most of the discussion will be focused on addressing this area. Notably, the details on performing a conflict analysis, which is absolutely essential to working in a conflict sensitive manner, will only be touched upon. There are numerous tools and frameworks available for conducting one in many different environments and for many different purposes. Chapter two of the Conflict Sensitive Resource Pack⁶¹ has a very good and thorough overview of the tools that are available.⁶²

The contextual analysis for agricultural programming should be focused on understanding the interaction between the program and the local operating environment, as well as the wider context in which the program will be operating. The analysis should systematically take into account the environment of all three areas relevant to conflict and agriculture: economics, environmental scarcity and governance. To do this, it is first

⁶¹ The entire resource pack is available from <http://www.conflictsensitivity.am>. The individual chapters are cited here for clarity about where within the resource pack the information cited is to be found since it is a combination of nine separate files.

⁶² See Chapter 2, Conflict Analysis, “*Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment* (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.conflictsensitivity.am>.

essential to gain an overall understanding of the context into which the program will operate, as summarized in figure 1.⁶³

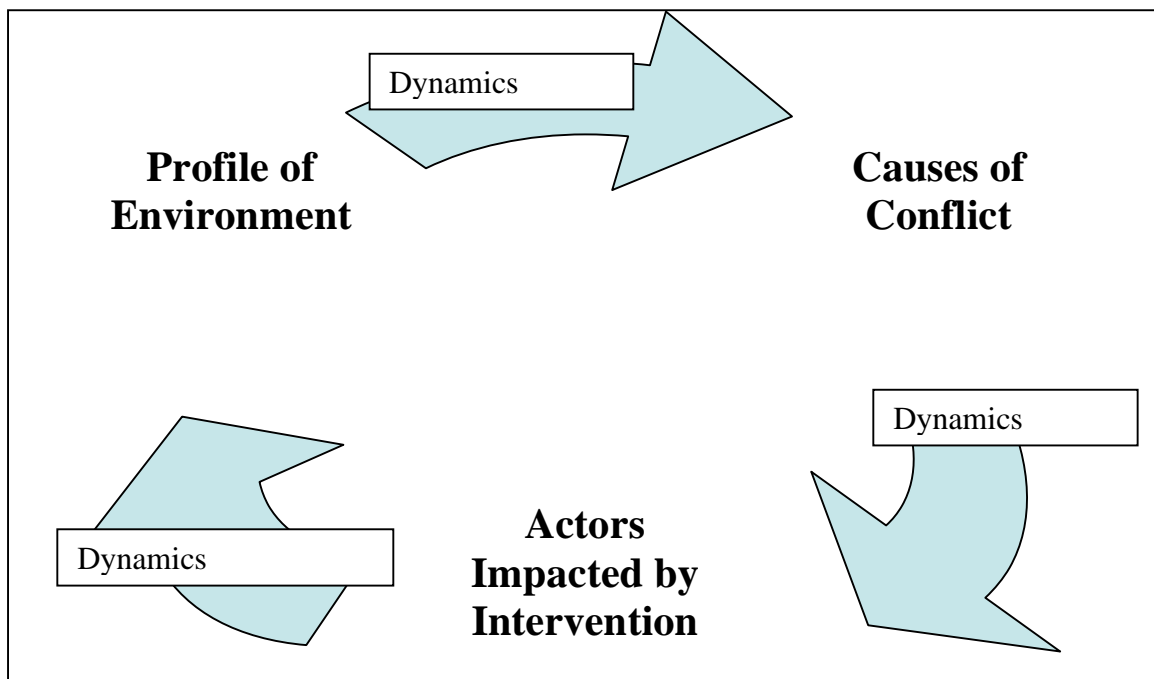


Figure 1: The Context of the Intervention

To gain this overarching view of the environment into which the program will operate, it is first important to gain an understanding of the environment by developing a **profile of the environment**. This profile is the description of the environment in which the program will operate, and must include the economic, political and socio-cultural context. The profile must be a description and analysis of the areas of potential conflict and influence of the actors, and the existence of natural or man-made resources. Finally, there must be an extrapolation of the potential and likely changes that will take place in this environment. In short, a holistic and honest assessment of the entire environment in which the program will operate.

⁶³ This is a summary of the Key Elements section found in Chapter 2, Conflict Analysis, “*Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding, tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*”: 3 (accessed 7 January 2006); available from <http://www.conflictsensitivity.am>.

Second, an understanding of the local **causes of conflict** must be gained, which includes both potential and existing conflict causes. There are three types of causes that need to be considered. Structural causes are those things that are within the environment, built into policies and structures of society that can create the pre-conditions for violent conflict. Proximate causes are factors that can contribute to an increase in violence or that can create an environment where violence is more likely to occur. Finally, triggers are events or anticipated events that can set off violence.

The third aspect to consider when trying to understand the context are the **actors**— the people or groups that are impacted by or contributing to the conflict environment (positively or negatively). Within this category will be individuals and groups at many different social and political levels, and it is important to understand the impact that this stratification can have. The potential *spoilers*⁶⁴ will be included within the analysis of the actors.

The final and most complicated aspect of this process is gaining an understanding of the **dynamics**. These are the interactions of the profile, causes of conflict and actors. Within this assessment, there is a lot of guesswork and leaps of faith, which is unavoidable. However, the impact of these leaps can be minimized by producing various assessments outlining many different scenarios. The Conflict Sensitive Resource Pack recommends three: a best case scenario, a worst case scenario, and one in the middle to give an overview of the potentials within the environment being considered.

The view that is created of the context into which the program will be inserted has a fundamental analytical weakness, however, that is easily fixed with a conceptual change, which is significant in adapting this model for agricultural development. It places

⁶⁴ These are the people who have the motivation and ability to negate positive impacts of the project.

the three components (profile of the environment, causes of conflict, and actors) on equal footing, and that is a mistake. Significantly, the components that make up the “profile of the environment” are a central link between agriculture and conflict. The causes of conflict will be intimately linked to the three areas linking agriculture and conflict discussed previously as well, having their existence predicated on the situation within the economic, environmental, and state capacity structure. The actors active in the community (including spoilers) are working with the causes of conflict, but the situation is again predicated on the economic, environmental, and state capacity situation. This distinction within the profile grouping is potentially further complicated by the multiple levels at play. Within the environment that the agricultural program will operate, there are the local, national and regional dynamics at work, all of which are significant and important to understanding the total context into which the program will operate. It is then logical to differentiate these levels explicitly. Of the most concern within agricultural development would be the local dynamics at play (potentially expanding upwards depending on the size and scope of the program in question). These dynamics should then be pulled from the profile and addressed more directly when conceptualizing the agricultural program.

These dynamics, diagramed in figure 2, at the local level are potentially mutually reinforcing, which is signified by the double- arrowed bold line. These interactions taking place within the context summarized in figure 3 are then the areas of potential influence on conflict, and the ones to be most aware of in their potential uses for peace or in pushing violence forward. In examining these linkages, it is essential to also be aware of potential group dynamics and linkages. The awareness of horizontal inequalities or

potential ones will allow for more proactive planning to address these issues before they develop or are worsened. It is these areas, then, that define the middle section of the context diagram previously (figure 2) as conceptualized now in figure 3.

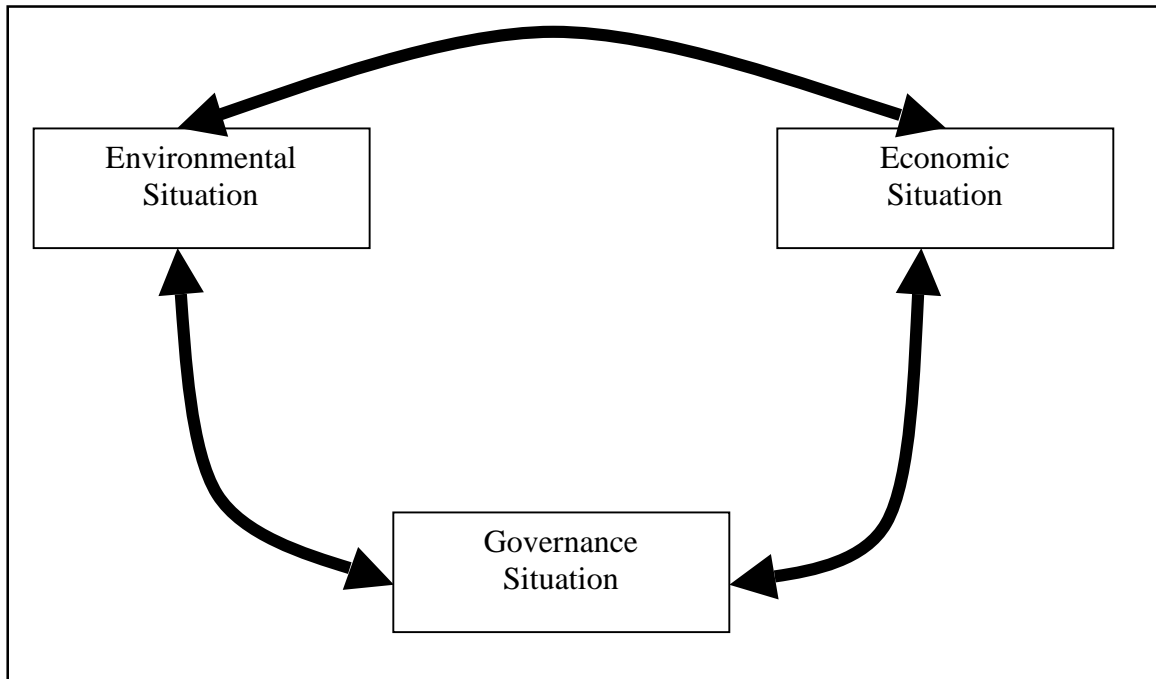


Figure 2: Interaction of Areas of Interest for Agriculture and Conflict

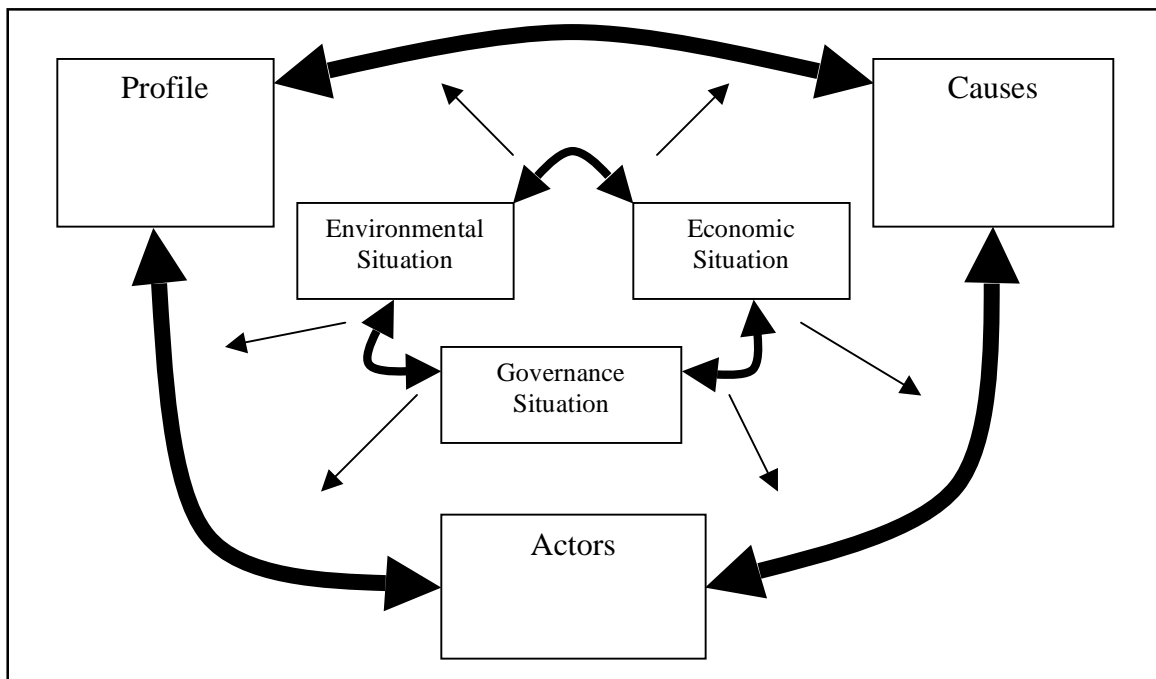


Figure 3: Adapted view of Context diagram

These three areas, the economic, the environmental, and the state capacity situation provide the pathway to impacting and understanding conflict within agricultural development. These three areas have the potential to affect the profile of the environment, the causes of conflict, as well as the actors within the community, for better or for worse. Understanding these linkages then provides the ability to design a program that can have the maximum positive impact.

The knowledge gained from undertaking this analysis allows for a more holistic approach to impacts and potential impacts within the project planning cycle. Taking into account the contextual factors that impact agriculture explicitly from the beginning allows for all three respective environments to be a part of the project design. The nature of each of these three areas will impact both the context as well as the agricultural project itself, with all three areas open to be potentially impacted by the agricultural project being implemented.

This view of the context in which the project will take place leads into the creation of the necessary baseline information on which judgment for the success of the project will be made. Without an adequate understanding of the situation with relation to all the areas of impact on the context and potentially conflict, it is impossible to measure what the end result is. This involves moving past mere descriptions of the direct environment of the agricultural program and into a more holistic view of the environment in question. The baseline must attempt to measure or adequately describe the contextual factors that can be impacted by the agricultural intervention. This will involve having measures of the economic situation, the environmental situation and the governance

situation. The information gathered from this exercise can then be used to properly inform the whole project.

The Project Cycle

The preceding section described what could be considered the data collection and analysis steps of the project cycle. It was removed from the discussion of the project cycle as a whole because it is considered important enough to warrant a discussion on its own, as it sets the basis and foundation for the entire project. Continuing the analysis already underway for how agricultural projects should be conceptualized, the project cycle can be visualized to surround the project. The economic, environmental, and state capacity situations are placed at the center, with arrows extending out from the agricultural project, showing potential impact radiating out from it onto the economic, environmental, and governance arenas.

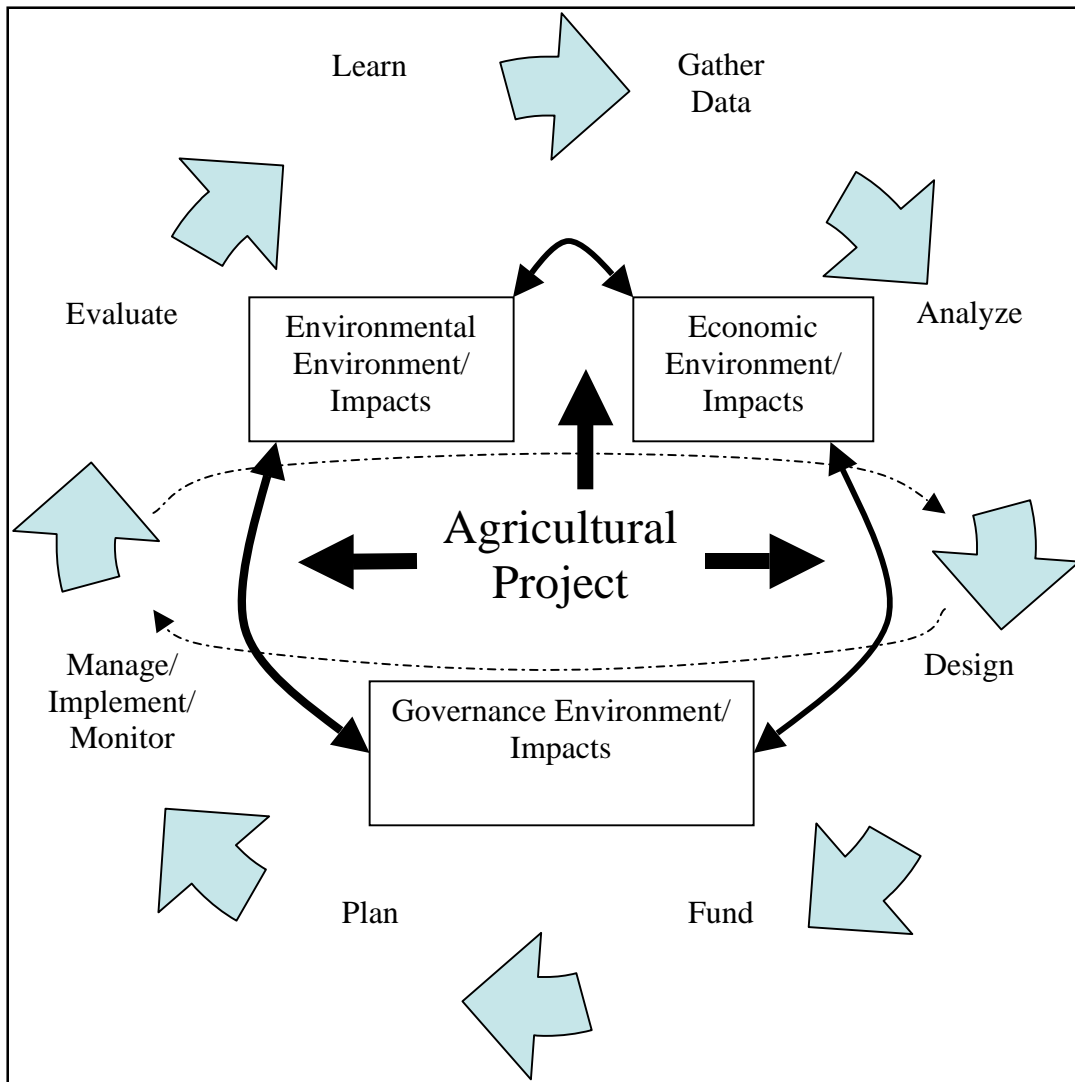


Figure 4: Project Cycle of Agricultural Development

At every stage in the project cycle it is imperative that care be taken to be aware of all three areas that can impact conflict. Because of this, it may be misleading to conceive of the project life as a circle, as ideally it would be more interconnected, crisscrossing to different stages throughout its life in order to achieve maximum effectiveness, though for simplicity the traditional circle will be an adequate visualization. This entails flexibility and adaptability in project staff as well as funders, since the project is not a linear program of checking off goals in intermediate results, or monitoring checklists. It instead becomes a dynamic process of revisiting old

assumptions, methods of thinking and challenging approaches that seemed wise at the beginning to find better approaches.

The project existing in a dynamic and fluid environment entails changing the approach normally taken to monitoring as something done to report to donors. The organization instead needs to embrace monitoring as a tool to not only report results, but to use the information gathered to make informed decisions about the project direction *while it is ongoing*. What is needed is the ability to redesign and adapt the program based on the knowledge gained through the monitoring process. Visually this would be another internal arrow (as diagramed in figure 4) within the project cycle going from the “manage/ monitor/ implement” phase back to the “design” phase and then returning to “manage/ monitor/ implement.” Making this connection explicit builds into the system the ability for information to be able to impact the direction of the project.

The monitoring system will be absolutely required for the complete implementation of the framework outlined here, as it is an important part of being able to adapt the project as new knowledge is gained about the impacts that are occurring. It is hoped that the changes implemented in the project can then lead to increased effectiveness as related to traditional agricultural programming goals, as well as positive impacts on the conflict environment as a whole. Taking the monitoring system one step further, however, leads to evaluation of the project.

While monitoring provides a view of what is happening while the project is being implemented, of vital importance is also evaluation. Evaluation allows the organization to move beyond the simple collection and analysis of indicators to look for deeper impacts and to more fully analyze the information that has been collected throughout the project,

and to also collect more data that has been found to be important. The time spent evaluating the project and its impacts will help foster the ability and environment to fully reflect on the project and what its impacts, successes and failures were.

Benefits for the Organization

The framework as outlined can be stated succinctly as an attempt to incorporate knowledge of diverse effects into agricultural programming. The connections between agriculture and conflict are such that there is room for them to be incorporated into the agricultural development paradigm. The biggest and most important benefit for the organization implementing this framework would be increased effectiveness while operating in potentially unstable and rapidly changing environments. Increased knowledge about the ramifications of projects creates a situation where they can be adapted in such ways that they become more effective in providing for their primary objectives. Possibly of equal importance is the fact that with implementation of the framework is the ability to have a positive impact on the conflict- peace dynamics active in an area. This in turn will assist in the long- term sustainability of development projects. Decreased levels and instances of violence creates an environment that is conducive for long- term growth and can mean that projects that are being implemented at the current time can serve as a foundation for future growth as opposed to only an attempt to stave off disaster today. This long- term growth and stability should be one of the central goals of development organizations in all their actions, as it is the only way that poverty rates and all the myriad of social issues associated with them will be addressed in a much more permanent and effective fashion than development work has been able to provide thus far.

Chapter Four: The Way Forward

The framework proposed linking agricultural development and conflict seemingly creates a large capacity issue, in that it proposes that agricultural projects monitor and analyze the economic situation, including horizontal inequalities, environmental degradation, and state capacity issues in addition to the monitoring and evaluation of the agricultural project itself. The way out of this capacity challenge is to define a way in which agricultural development organizations can get the benefits of using the framework without overwhelming capacity issues. The way to do this is through a focus on evaluation.

The process of evaluating agricultural projects within the framework outlined previously involves the evaluation of diverse effects. Agricultural evaluation needs to move beyond the standard process of looking at the traditional effects of projects (such as increased yields, productivity, etc), which will be called “hard effects” here and start embracing more socially- oriented ones. These socially- oriented effects include the project’s impact on horizontal inequalities, environmental impacts and impacts on state capacity and governance, which will be called “soft effects.”

To some extent, this shift is already happening as agricultural research and development organizations work to find more ecologically sound and economically responsible approaches to their work.⁶⁵ The International Fund for Agricultural Development has outlined the importance of measuring some soft effects of agricultural projects as part of the process of learning about the total impact of interventions and to

⁶⁵ Van de Fliert, Elske and Braun, Ann, “Conceptualizing integrative, farmer participatory Research for Sustainable Agriculture: From Opportunities to Impact,” *Agriculture and Human Values* 19 (2002): 25.

enable institutional learning to move forward.⁶⁶ This view is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which states that two of its goals in evaluation are to look at the “evolving programme context” and “outcomes and sustainable impacts of the programme, in terms of its contribution to a process which delivers benefits to national populations and to international public goods addressing such areas as hunger, trade, the environment and gender equality.”⁶⁷ These examples demonstrate some recognition of the importance of soft effects as they relate to agriculture, though they by no means match precisely with the agricultural development-conflict framework proposed. It is also unfortunate that they stop short of proposing that impacts on conflict dynamics should be systematically considered within projects or evaluations. In spite of these shortcomings, it is still movement in the correct direction.

The goal of taking the soft effects into account when evaluating agricultural projects is not to have a research project that is completely replicable and that captures every possible change in the project area, but to bring social aspects of it to the fore. It is the lives of the people within the sphere of influence of the project that are the most important in the end, and it is essential to be cognizant of this at all times. It is also important to be aware that while the focus here is on evaluation and how it can be used to implement the proposed framework, there is no way to completely discuss evaluation without some mention of monitoring since they are so closely related. Ideally all the effects discussed within the next section would be monitored so that changes could be

⁶⁶ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), “Methodological Framework for Project Evaluation: Main Criteria and Key Questions for Project Evaluation,” EC2003/34/W.P.3, September 2003, (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/eb/ec/e/34/EC-2003-34-WP-3.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Evaluation Service, “Approach to Major Evaluations in FAO of Strategies, Themes, Institutional Performance and Programmes,” September 2004, pg 4 (accessed 16 April 2006); available from <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/224/index.html>.

detected as they occur and the program restructured to offset any negative impacts, as was proposed in the agricultural development- conflict framework. This, unfortunately, is not reasonable from a capacity standpoint. Instead, the focus here is on evaluation, where it is believed the greatest net benefit can be obtained through the implementation of the agricultural development- conflict framework.

Actions for Development Organizations

Examining the linkages between agriculture and conflict through evaluation will allow development organizations to approach the issue of soft effects from projects based on the actual capacity of the organization. To begin, however, evaluating for the diverse effects of the projects will involve planning for evaluation, which begins at the project design phase.

Consideration of the evaluation needs to begin at the design phase. This will start the process of truly taking into account what will be needed for the final evaluation, and help guarantee that it is useful and relevant. While this statement is true for all projects, it is especially true of projects where there is significant potential to impact the peace/ conflict situation within a given area. Beginning the thought process at this time creates clearer thinking and a more refined statement of the objectives of the project, assumptions, indicators, and activities. It also helps foster realistic thinking about the costs and finances that will be required to do the evaluation and project right from the outset. This thinking can then lead to various components of the monitoring and evaluation systems being built into the project itself, facilitating data collection, compilation and analysis in a cost- effective manner, ideally incorporating the users of

the information in the design of the system to be used so that it is appropriate to the end users.⁶⁸

The results framework is also of great use at this time, as it “presents the strategy for achieving a specific objective.”⁶⁹ The specific objective here is to gain knowledge on what is happening with the soft effects that can impact the conflict environment. Taking the paradigm linking agricultural development and conflict into consideration through the process of creating the results framework opens a whole world of assumptions for analysis and consideration when implementing programs. Project teams and partners can then start systematically considering these assumptions and the ramifications they have for the context in which the organizations are operating, and more specifically on the economic, environmental, and state capacity situations.

The consideration given to the evaluation during the project design phase will allow for the creation of a relevant baseline by which to judge change by, which is absolutely essential to implementing the proposed framework. Having the baseline data on hand will allow for judgments about actual impact on the context to be made with confidence, especially as it relates to the soft effects. It will also allow the evaluation to be more efficient as the areas to be examined and considered have been well- thought-out, which will also facilitate the testing of the assumptions outlined within the results framework.

⁶⁸ Barton, Tom, “Guidelines to Monitoring and Evaluation: How are we doing?” CARE- Uganda 1997, 51 (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.care.ca/libraries/dme/default.htm>.

⁶⁹ USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Tips #13. *Building a Results Framework*. 2000, (accessed 17 April 2006); available from http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/pnaca947.pdf.

The methodological approach to take on the evaluation is one that needs to be well- considered on a project- by- project basis during the design phase.⁷⁰ There is no single approach that is best in all situations. It must be suited to the environment and appropriate for getting the best possible information. It must be stressed at this point that the project in question is still an agricultural project. The goal of the evaluation is to first evaluate the effectiveness of the project on its primary objectives, and that it is the secondary objective to evaluate the impact on the factors that have been shown to link agricultural development to conflict.

Evaluation in this context can be seen as a blend of evaluating for development as well as evaluating for peacebuilding, since signs for effects on the conflict dynamics within an area are being sought. While evaluation within the peacebuilding field has lagged behind that of the development field,⁷¹ this should not be a problem within this context. While it is being proposed that the project evaluation take the aspects that could impact violent conflict into consideration, there is not the same pressure as exists within the peacebuilding field to *demonstrate impact* on conflict and peace. Rather, the goal of the evaluation is to look for potential negative (or positive) impacts on the things within the area of operations that could potentially affect the conflict (the soft effects). This is a very important distinction, as it decreases the capacity needed to carry out the evaluations immensely. The organization should look for warning signs that there are negative soft

⁷⁰ For a description of some approaches, see “Monitoring and Evaluation: Some Tools, Methods and Approaches,” *The World Bank Operations Evaluation Department*, 2004 (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/ecd/tools>.

⁷¹ Church, Cheyanne, and Shouldice, Julie, “The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play,” (INCORE, 2002), 5 (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/publications/research/incore%20A5final1.pdf>.

effects occurring along with the project, which will give warning to hopefully allow the organization to take steps to preclude negative impacts on the conflict environment.

Tools for Evaluating Soft Effects

Finding tools to evaluate the soft effects of the agricultural projects is an essential step in implementing the agricultural development- conflict framework. Fortunately, the tools already exist in some form for all three of the topics in question, economics, the environment and state capacity.

On the economic front, projects must start with a focus on measuring and evaluating the project's effects on poverty and economic well-being. The main goal of a huge number of development projects in general is the reduction of poverty, so there are a large number of tools available for measuring and evaluating a project's impact on it.⁷² Of much more interest than just impact on poverty, however, are the effects on horizontal inequalities, which makes this an extremely challenging area for the evaluation. Researchers have had a difficult time pinning down horizontal inequalities with any precision and when there has been success, it has entailed very detailed and complicated research projects.⁷³ Here, "good enough" thinking will have to be sufficient. The goal of this part of the evaluation will be to have enough data and information to make a judgment about whether there seems to be negative dynamics at work that are affecting the horizontal inequalities so that the organization can act if necessary to stop the

⁷² See for example, Baker, Judy, *Evaluating the Impacts of Development Projects on Poverty: A Handbook for Practitioners* (Washington DC: LCSPR/PRIMPO, The World Bank, 1999) and Zeller, Manfred, Sharma, Manohar, Henry, Carla and Lapenu, Cécile, *An Operational Tool for Evaluating Poverty Outreach of Development Policies and Projects*, FCND Briefs 111, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) 2001 (accessed 21 April 2006); available from <http://ideas.repec.org/p/fpr/fcnddp/111.html>.

⁷³ Østby, Gudron, "Do Horizontal Inequalities Matter for Civil Conflict?" International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo (accessed 3 February 2006); available from http://www.polarizationandconflict.org/bcn04/7%D8stby_Horiz.pdf.

negative effects. It must be stressed here that the goal of the evaluation is not to find incontrovertible proof that the inequalities are getting worse. Instead the goal is to have enough information to be comfortable that no negative effects are occurring in this regard, or to have some warning that negative repercussions are occurring.

The environmental aspect of evaluating for soft effects is also an area where there is a wealth of resources available. This is due to the fact that “[c]onstru[cting] environmental or ecological indices is a popular topic that has been extensively addressed in many different research and policy arenas.”⁷⁴ In terms of the agricultural development-conflict framework, this is fortunate. It means that the information on relevant indicators should already be available in some form, and it is only a matter of choosing the proper indicators for the project. Within this topic there is also the issue of horizontal inequalities as they relate to the environment, and the same problems of measurement that exist within the economic sphere exist here as well. Luckily, the solution is the same for both. The goal of the evaluation in looking for effects on horizontal inequalities and the environment is to give warning about potential impacts the project is having in these areas so that action can be taken in a proactive manner.

Finally, tools for governance and state capacity evaluation. Again, there are tools available for this type of evaluation, and the meaningful aspects within state capacity for the project at hand can be picked from existing resources.⁷⁵ It is especially important that the focus here is narrowed down to the areas that can be impacted by the agricultural

⁷⁴ Ascough II, James C, Hoag, Dana, and Engler- Palma, Alejandra, “Evaluating Agricultural Systems for Environmental Sustainability Using an Impact Matrix Approach,” *Proceedings of the First Biennial Meeting of the International Environmental Modeling and Software Society*, iEMSS: Manno, Switzerland, 2002. ISBN 88-900787-0-7. (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.iemss.org/iemss2002/proceedings/pdf/volume%20due/294.pdf>.

⁷⁵ See for example, “Governance Indicators: A User’s Guide,” United Nations Development Programme (accessed 18 April 2006); available from <http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs04/UserGuide.pdf>.

project and which may have some impact on the conflict context in which the project is operating.

Evaluating all these areas seems like it can be overwhelming and that capacity is an issue. Each of the soft effect areas should not be fully evaluated and analyzed. Even though it has been mentioned above, this idea needs to be internalized. Only the aspects of each of the three areas proposed for evaluation with regards to soft effects that will give warning that there may be problems should be watched. When warning signs are found, then the analysis can be expanded, but the goal is to find those warning signs, not overwhelm the organizations with data collection and analysis, since the number one objective is still running a successful agricultural development project.

Implementing this approach is one that should be feasible so long as it is taken as necessary for the project from the design phase and presented as part of the project as a whole. It is recommended that the evaluative frame outlined above be implemented in a limited fashion and that it be scaled up as its worth is proven and organizations gain expertise in examining the linkages to conflict dynamics, where the core strengths are, and where any weaknesses are that need to be adjusted to fit the local context.

Specific Steps for Implementation

Implementing the evaluative recommendations for the agricultural development-conflict framework does not entail massive changes within development organizations. However, there are some specific steps that can be taken by organizations to make implementation smoother and to maximize effectiveness. To start, there needs to be a commitment that both “hard” and “soft” effects are important and that they need to be taken into account throughout the life of the project. Somebody on the project team needs

to champion the idea and push to make sure that both areas are considered throughout the project life. This will be facilitated by including both considerations in the design phase of the project, especially in being explicit about the assumptions in each of the areas impacted by the project. Secondly, a baseline is essential to making judgments and seeing the warning flags of potential problems, as without it there is no basis for comparison and judgment on what effects the project is actually having. Finally, there must be a commitment to learn the lessons from evaluating these diverse areas, as the learning process and change in project implementation and process will be a significant area of impact from the framework proposed.

Organizational Learning

The goal of implementing the agricultural development- conflict framework through evaluation is to start a cycle by which organizations can learn about the soft effects of their projects and take steps to become more effective and gain capacity. Towards this end, the organization must absorb and adopt the lessons learned through the process, finding effective ways to take the knowledge gained by individuals and using it to change organizational behavior accordingly, allowing it to use the new knowledge in a variety of situations and innovate more broadly.⁷⁶

The only way that this learning can take place is if it is known what the results of a project actually were. This is a strong argument in favor of the approach to implementation outlined here. When the lessons are learned and internalized, then further innovations can take place. These innovations can then be evaluated and lessons

⁷⁶ Berg, Elliot, "Why Aren't Aid Organizations Better Learners?" in *Learning in Development Co-operation*, eds. Carlsson, Jerker, and Wohlgemuth, Lennart (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2000), pg 25 (Accessed 18 April 2006); available from http://www.egdi.gov.se/pdf/20002pdf/2000_2.pdf.

internalized from them into the organization. In this way, the evaluative process becomes a major instrument of organizational change and induces organizational response.⁷⁷

There is significant potential within the organizational learning paradigm for inter- organizational cooperation. Lessons learned through the evaluation process should be shared with other organizations active within the region. There is also potential for organizations cooperating within this evaluative framework to reduce expenses and support one another's work quite effectively by sharing information relevant to the other's projects, cutting down on information collection costs and time. This information sharing could happen in any number of ways, whether just through informally sharing reports and participating in meetings up to the more ideal situation of making the information available through networks on the internet where anybody who has need of the information has access to it. In order for this to occur, there would have to be a shift away from the belief in the proprietary nature of information organizations collect.

Donor Support

Donors should support the actions of agricultural development organizations to implement the proposed framework. Money must be made available to carry out the evaluations to find what soft effects are occurring as a result of agricultural development projects. The result of this will be more efficient programs, as well as programs that are more aware of the totality of impacts from a project, which will hopefully lead to better designed projects that can have positive impacts on conflict dynamics. An important way that this can be done, in addition to more funding for evaluations and analysis, is to start pushing organizations to be more open with information than they currently are. This is

⁷⁷ Berg, Elliot, 33.

easily possible through a system of rewards for organizations that become more open with others. A potential problem in this system can be precluded by donors making the decision that organizations that do not open up and become more cooperative with others will find funding much more difficult to obtain. This would allay fears of organizations that free riders will benefit from their openness and work while potentially significantly increasing their effectiveness and total impact.

Conclusion

Implementation of the agricultural development- conflict framework as described in this chapter will not provide the full breadth of organizational or developmental benefits as was described at the end of chapter three. However, it is an important step towards the full incorporation of the framework in the longer term. The increased knowledge that is gained about the context in which organizations are operating that will be obtained by beginning with the evaluative stage should serve to prove the worth of the model for the future. The lessons that are learned from the process are also of very significant importance. The evaluation stage provides a rare opportunity for reflection and learning that is not available in the same manner at any other stage. It is up to the organization, though, to ensure that all the benefit possible from this time is captured.

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