CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

PEACEBUILDING, GOVERNANCE AND GENDER ASSESSMENTS

A BASIC GUIDE FOR BUSY PRACTITIONERS

Children in La Oroya, Peru, where a smelter serves not only as the town's primary employer, but also as its primary polluter. With support from CRS and others, advocates used research along with water quality monitoring by local activists to refute company claims, motivate other communities to get involved, influence the media's supportive coverage of the contamination, and pressure the government to take action. Barbara Fraser for CRS

Introduction

Peacebuilding, governance and gender (PBGG) integration constitute a core competency for CRS and our partners around the world. The agency has developed basic, "good enough" guidelines for assessing conflict dynamics, governance institutions, and gender relations that will provide a deepened understanding with which to ground holistic, integrated projects.

These guidelines are designed to provide agency staff and partners preparing proposals in various sectors, (e.g., agriculture, health, emergency response) with a very short list of questions to consider—questions that may help them to avoid doing harm and contribute to transforming systems for social justice and ultimately, integral human development. Glossaries of key terms are included.

The depth with which each PBGG component is treated in practice will vary with the scope and complexity of specific projects and the level and nature of change they hope to achieve. The best approach to these assessments in a given country program will depend on the type and quality of already existing data and analysis, and the capacity of local staff. The questions listed with each tool are general in nature and should be contextualized to maximize relevance and effectiveness.

Finally, PBGG assessments should be updated regularly. Conflict, governance and gender dynamics tend to be highly fluid; last year's data and analysis may be of limited help in responding to current challenges.

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A young woman in Zamboanga marches with Muslim, Christian and indigenous citizens from Mindanao in the Philippines.
Laura Sheahen/CRS

Conflict Assessment Tool

There are many valuable tools to guide conflict analysis, and useful new books like Matt Levinger's *Conflict Analysis* (USIP, 2013) and Lisa Schirch's *Conflict Assessment & Peacebuilding Planning* (Kumarian, 2013). The following assessment questions are adapted from Chapter 2 of *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A resource pack* (Africa Peace Forum et al, 2004). We draw as well on *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (CI, 2002) and "Good Enough" questions produced by the UK's Humanitarian Practice Network.

For a basic conflict assessment, we suggest inquiring first about broad national or regional contexts, under the term "**Profile**." Then, looking into what the Caritas manual calls the 3 P's: the **Problem** (causes or drivers of conflict), the **People** (the actors or parties to a conflict), and the **Process** (the dynamics and trends). Guiding questions are grouped here under these four categories..

1. PROFILE

- **What are the key conflict-related issues (not just violence) that people are facing?** (e.g., hunger, lack of basic health services, ethnic discrimination, lack of opportunities for youth, climate change, effects of violence in neighboring states, refugee return, religious extremism, violence against women...)
- **Where are the conflict-prone/affected areas within the broader context?** (e.g., certain rural zones, pockets of marginalized urban populations, mining or oil extraction sites, border zones, regions with severe religious or ethnic tensions, refugee camps, disputed areas...)
- **Has there been an ongoing or prior history of conflict?** (e.g., regular property/land disputes, unstable electoral periods, rebellions, external intervention...)

2. PROBLEM

- **What are the structural or root causes of conflicts?** (e.g., chronic poverty, inequitable access to resources and services, widespread youth unemployment, illegitimate government, lack of space for political participation...)
- **What can be considered drivers or proximate causes of social divisions and violence?** (e.g., flagrant human rights abuses, easy access to light weapons, discrimination, ethnic/regional rivalries...)
- **What triggers could contribute to an escalation of conflict or an outbreak of violence?** (e.g., assassination, a military coup, electoral fraud, elites competing for power, unpopular new laws, increased prices/scarcity of basic commodities...)

3. PEOPLE

- **Who are the main conflict actors and who are their supporters?** (e.g., government, armed forces, rebel groups, youth gangs, drug or human trafficking organizations, mining companies or other enterprises, political parties, social movements, religious actors, UN peacekeepers, the Africa Union, diaspora groups...)
- **What are these actors' interests or motivations and their goals?** (e.g., political power, social stability, access to or control of economic or natural resources, equality, human rights, greater freedom, religious values, political participation...)
- **How do they engage in the conflict and what are their capabilities?** (e.g., popular demonstrations, active non-violence, political advocacy, international networks, bribery, economic sabotage, intimidation, armed violence...)

4. PROCESS

- **What have been the recent and current conflict trends?** (e.g., escalation or de-escalation of violence, more inter-ethnic cooperation, greater international influence, new laws or policies, worsening or improving livelihoods, new trade patterns, formal negotiations...)
- **What are possible windows of opportunity for addressing/responding to conflict? (e.g., a cease fire, a holiday period, the rainy season, a community celebration, the inauguration of new leadership...)**
- **What capacities for peace or conflict mitigation can be identified?** (e.g., influential religious actors or experienced traditional leaders, active civil society, international support and solidarity, skilled mediators, community peace ambassadors, active participation of women...)
- **What are the best, worst and most likely scenarios for the future of the conflict and what do they depend on?** (e.g., growing social inclusion and peaceful coexistence, an outbreak of mass killing, or continued inequities and tension with sporadic acts of violence...)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions are taken from glossaries in the recent books by Levinger (pages 231-236) and Schirch (pages xi-xiv) referred to above. One asterisk indicates that a definition is from Levinger; two asterisks that it is from Schirch. Note that the definition of Peacebuilding below includes what CRS calls "stand-alone" peacebuilding as well as "integrated" peacebuilding.

*Conflict: Any situation in which two or more individuals or groups perceive their interests as mutually incompatible, and act on the basis of this perception.

**Conflict-affected context: an institution, community, state, or region impacted negatively by conflict or violence or both. In a conflict-affected context, people lack human security... They need safety and development to meet their basic needs or a sense of dignity and human rights.

*Conflict analysis: A structured inquiry into the causes and potential trajectory of a conflict that seeks to identify opportunities for managing or resolving disputes.

Conflict drivers: key people, institutions or forces that play a central role in mobilizing people to respond violently to the root causes of conflict and shared perceptions of grievances relating to human security.

Conflict mitigators: people, institutions or forces that support political, economic, security, justice, and social factors related to human security.

Conflict prevention: Measures taken to keep low-level or long-festering disputes from escalating into violence.

Conflict management: Efforts to prevent, limit, contain, or resolve conflicts—especially violent ones while building the capacities of all parties involved in peacebuilding.

Conflict sensitivity: an approach to programming and policymaking that recognizes the potential influence between conflict-affected context and a policy, program or project in that region. Conflict-sensitive policies, programs, and projects aim to minimize unintentional negative impacts that may drive conflict and cause further social divisions while maximizing positive impacts on the context that mitigate conflict and bridge social divides.

Conflict transformation: the personal, social, cultural and structural change that takes place in the process of addressing conflict

Connector: A potential source of cohesion within or between groups. When leaders mobilize their constituents around a given connector, it may be transformed into a driver of peace.

Divider: A potential source of polarization within or between groups. When leaders mobilize their constituents around a given divider, it may be transformed into a driver of conflict.

Human security: The term can apply to physical security as well as economic, political, social, and justice systems that protect and support human rights and a freedom from want. Local perceptions of security, peace, justice, and stability are central to defining human security.

Peacebuilding: a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society to address…causes of violence before, during and after violent conflict…Peacebuilding can refer to the direct work that intentionally focuses on addressing the factors driving and mitigating conflict. Peacebuilding can also refer to efforts to coordinate a comprehensive, multi-leveled, multisectoral strategy, including development, humanitarian assistance, governance, security, justice, and other sectors that may not use the term "peacebuilding" to describe themselves.

Scenario analysis: A method for developing vivid and compelling stories of potential alternative futures. Can be an invaluable tool for organizations operating in volatile and uncertain environments.

Theories of Change: the "program rationale" or logic of how a program hopes to foster change to produce intended outcomes and impacts. The first part of a theory of change is a belief about what factors are driving or mitigating conflict and need to change. The second part…is either implicit or explicit assumptions about how some project, program or policy will impact a conflict-affected context.

Trigger: An event that initiates or accelerates the outbreak of a conflict.

Window of opportunity: A period during which the chances for success in an endeavor are greatly increased.

CRS and its faith-based partners mounted an extraordinary campaign for a nonviolent transition to independence, which included working at the grassroots up through the highest levels to ensure a peaceful referendum that resulted in the birth of the world's newest nation, South Sudan. Kim Pozniak/CRS

Governance Assessment Tool

The following is an adaptation of the USAID/DCHA/DRG Strategic Assessment Framework used by USAID Missions to develop their strategies for democracy and governance. The framework has been abbreviated to allow country programs to undertake a broad assessment of governance challenges. It is always possible to deepen the analysis later by further examining the actors, dynamics and institutional arenas where governance challenges play out. A basic governance analysis looks at the 5 elements of a governance-political system – consensus, rule of law, political competition, inclusion and governance – all of which are defined in the glossary of terms below.

Before identifying the challenges in each of these five elements, the country program team should first undertake a quick macro-level scan of the country's context, regime type and the political trends, or the direction of the country. These three factors can be identified by reviewing sources such as Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World* report; a USAID Democracy & Governance assessment, if one has been carried out recently; and/or the U.S. Department of State's Annual Human Rights Report as well as publications from human rights and conflict monitoring organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International or the International Crisis Group.

1. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- **What are the key political factors affecting how people and the government interact, or collaborate to make important social, economic and political decisions?**

2. REGIME TYPE

- **What type of regime is the government in power? Here is a simple list of types that are most often encountered:**
    - **New and fragile democracies** – governance institutions are weak but there is political will among key actors to consolidate democracy
    - **Authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states** – governance institutions are weak and there is no political will among key actors to consolidate democracy; instead they seek to consolidate power for themselves at the expense of democracy
    - **Crisis and rebuilding states** – governance institutions are weak if they exist at all and key actors are focused on stabilizing the country

3. POLITICAL TRENDS

- **What are the most significant recent political trends? In other words, is governance be- coming more or less democratic?** **Examples of such trends include increased protection for minority rights through constitutional reform; greater access to justice for marginalized people; more competitive elections; greater citizen access to decision-making; increased devolution of power to local governments; and strengthened enforcement of anticorrup- tion mechanisms.**

4. CONSENSUS

- What are the fundamental rules of the game (i.e., politics) and is there general acceptance by key actors that the game should be played by those rules?
- Is there general agreement on who is a citizen and what is a citizen's bundle of fundamental political and civil rights?

5. RULE OF LAW

- Is personal freedom guaranteed by the state both against transgressions by other people or groups of people or by the state itself?
- Are the public security forces (military, police, etc.) themselves subject to the rule of law and a judicial branch of government, or to what extent do they operate with impunity?

6. POLITICAL COMPETITION

- Are free and fair elections a regular feature of competition? Are there other mechanisms besides elections that ensure government delivers on its promises and fulfills the public trust?
- Is a healthy set of checks and balances present between branches of government and/or between levels of government?

7. INCLUSION

- To what extent does civil society play an active role in the key functions of governance, including policy formulation, public service delivery, monitoring government accountability, ensuring access to public information and decision-making?
- What barriers exist that formally and informally exclude and disenfranchise parts of the population from meaningful political, social, or economic participation?

8. GOVERNANCE

- Are public institutions administered equitably, i.e., fairly? In other words, do they respond to public needs of all regions and sectors of the population, and provide socially acceptable services to the most vulnerable?
- Do robust internal control mechanisms exist to hold government institutions accountable, increase their transparency and enhance their effectiveness and responsiveness to people.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Civil Society: "Civil society refers to the arena or social space that is separate from the state, the market and the family, in which citizens come together to promote their common interests. The groups they form may be formal or informal, but must be voluntary and essentially non-profit" (Harry Blair et. al. 1994. *Civil Society and Democratic Development: A CDIE Evaluation Design Evaluation*)

Consensus: The consensus or general acceptance of the boundaries of the state and the relationship among the state, civil society, and the individual (USAID, 1999. *Conducting a DG Assessment: A Framework for Strategy Development*). Consensus can also be understood as the social contract between those who govern, i.e., the state, and those who are governed,

i.e., members of society, and it resembles what CRS means when we talk about social cohesion in the context of peacebuilding.

Equity: "Equity is the fair and just management of social, economic and political institutions, distribution of public services and collective goods, and formation and implementation of public policy" (CRS, 2006. *Justice & Peacebuilding Strategy*).

Governance: "…the ability of government to develop an efficient, effective and accountable public management process that is open to citizen participation and that strengthens rather than weakens a democratic system of government" (USAID, 1999). It is important to add "equitable" to the list of adjectives describing public management process, given CRS' commitment to Catholic Social Teaching embodied in its guiding principles. A definition more consistent with IHD would be the rules and processes that guide the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental actors to manage public resources for the common good.

Inclusion: Most public donors define inclusion simply as citizen participation, but that neglects the barriers that prevent certain segments of the population from being able to participate. Therefore, given the emphasis of organizational partners on working and being in solidarity with the most vulnerable and often marginalized in society, inclusion can be better defined as the degree to which people enjoy equitable access to public information, resources and decision-making.

Political Competition and Accountability: "…the instrument by which popular sovereignty is tested and implemented, and by which power is checked and balanced" (USAID, 1999). As seen in that light, political competition is about more than just political parties and elections. It embodies the mechanisms that ensure that a balance of power exists between the state and society, between the different branches of government and between the different of levels of government.

Regime: A regime or type of political regime describes the totality of a political-governance system's structures. It also designates the fundamental formal and informal "rules of the game," identifying who holds power, how power is obtained and how its exercise is regulated and by whom (Skaaning, Svend-Erik, 2006. *Political Regimes and Their Changes: A Framework*).

Rule of law: "…the rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency" (UN, 2006. *Report of the Secretary-General on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies*)

In Nicaragua, a CRS project improved the health of women and children by involving men in their health care.
Christian Meléndez-López/CRS

Gender Assessment Tool

Men and women, boys and girls experience their surroundings differently as they fulfill unique roles and face different sets of rules, norms, and practices informed by their particular cultures and contexts. In recent decades, significant progress has been made toward promoting gender equality in these contexts, but it has been uneven and insufficient. Gender-related inequalities and power imbalances still are among the key underlying factors driving chronic poverty, food insecurity, poor health, and violence against women and children. Failing to consider gender norms, roles and dynamics in country programming may add to existing gender inequalities and bypass important opportunities to improve the lives of women and girls, boys and men, and to develop more equitable relationships at household, community and even societal levels.

Using a gender analysis perspective facilitates a deeper understanding of the gender dimensions of poverty, conflict and the complex relations that exist in communities. Without gender analysis, critical assumptions can be overlooked and either our programs are undermined or harm is inadvertently caused. By addressing the root causes of existing gender inequities we increase our understanding of how to address them in our programming and throughout the project cycle. The inclusion of a gender analysis is essential for developing gender-responsive programs and strategies for individuals and communities to achieve integral human development. For example, see *A Sample Gender Analysis from CRS Ethiopia.*

The domains of gender analysis is an adaption of a USAID tool for identifying areas in which gender can be assessed (USAID's *Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 205 Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle)*. The framework, which is aligned with *USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, provides the opportunity to explore how women and men have differential status and access to resources within these domains, and how elements in these domains shape gender roles and responsibilities. The tool enables users to identify gender-based constraints and to systematically assess gender considerations in each of these areas. Based on the analysis, project planners can design project and program activities that take gender-based constraints into consideration or create activities to remove them. The gender domain framework can be applied alone or in conjunction with other analytical frameworks to assist in project design and planning and in developing gender-sensitive indicators.

1. GENDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- What are the roles and responsibilities of women and men, girls and boys within households and communities?
- Do women and men's roles entail or lead to gender inequalities in accessing services? Do women and men's roles influence how decisions are made?

2. ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OF ASSETS, RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES
- Who has access and control over basic livelihood assets, resources, services and income

and to what extent?

- Are there different obstacles that men and women face seeking health, education or extension services?

3. DECISION MAKING AND POWER RELATIONS

- What decisions do women have control over, and men have control over? At what level? Household or community?
- Do women actively participate in formal decision making structures, including at a regional or national level?

4. DIVISION OF LABOR

- What are the gender differences in the division of labor, both productive and reproductive?
- Will participation in a particular project increase women's workload?
- Would certain responsibilities prevent women and girls from participating at certain times?

5. NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

- What are women's and men's practical and strategic needs and priorities?
- What perspectives do they have on appropriate and sustainable ways of addressing their own needs at household and community levels?

6. PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- Are communication channels available to and used by both women and men?
- What are the barriers to women's leadership at the community level?

7. KNOWLEDGE, CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS

- Do women and men have equal access to knowledge in areas that are important to their success and well-being – markets, products and services, appropriate technology?
- What may be cultural barriers that inhibit the involvement of women, men boys and girls and other vulnerable populations?

Other useful tools that describe a CRS approach to gender integration include the *CRS Global Gender Strategy* and *CRS Southern Africa Guidelines for Gender-Responsive Programming*.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender: Refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society. Factors such as ethnicity, class, race, age and religion can affect gender roles. Gender roles may vary widely within and between cultures, and often evolve over time.[1] These characteristics often define identities, status, and power relations among the members of a society or culture.

Sex: The biological identity of males and females, as manifested primarily by physical characteristics.

Gender equality: Reflects the concern that women and men, boys and girls have equal opportunities, resources, rights, and access to goods and services that a society values—as well as the ability to make choices and work in partnership. Gender equality does not mean that men

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[1] From address given by Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, permanent observer of the Holy See to the UN at the 55th session of UNESCO's Commission on the Status of Women, March 18, 2011.

and women, boys and girls become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal and that the differences that do exist in their abilities, talents, skills, interests, ideas, etc. will be equally valued.

Gender equity: The process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls that leads to equality—the equal valuing in society of both similarities and differences between men and women, boys and girls and the varying roles they play. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages or biological makeup that prevent women and men, girls and boys from otherwise operating on a level playing field.

Empowerment: A process of awareness and capacity-strengthening that leads to greater participation and decision-making power. It enables people to take control over their lives, set their own agendas, build self-confidence, solve problems, and develop self-reliance. It involves the ability to make choices as well as to determine what choices are offered. While only women and men can empower themselves, institutions can support processes that create space for them to develop their skills, self-confidence, self-reliance, and access resources.

Gender-based violence: Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex in both public and/or private life. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering; threats of such acts; coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. While women and men, boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the main victims.

Gender analysis: Examines the differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequality for women and other vulnerable populations. It is a tool for systematically collecting data that can be used to examine these differences, the different levels of power they hold, their differing needs, constraints and opportunities, and the impact of these differences on their lives. This understanding is then applied to policy development and social services in order to address inequalities and power differences between males and females.

Gender mainstreaming: Is a strategy for promoting and achieving gender equality. It involves making women's as well as men's concerns, needs and experiences an integral part of ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities such as policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects.[2] It is not an end in itself, but a strategy and approach used as a means to achieve the goal of gender equality.

Gender-responsive programming: Programming that addresses the gender roles, relations, needs and interests of women and men, boys and girls in order to guarantee those right relationships. Men and women, boys and girls experience their surroundings differently as they fulfill different sets of roles, but also face different sets of rules, norms, and practices informed by their particular cultures and contexts.

Gender integration: Involves identifying and then addressing the gender differences and inequalities across all programs and project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Since roles and relationships of power between men and women affect how an activity is implemented, it is essential that project and activity planners address these issues throughout the life of a program or project. USAID uses the term "gender integration" in both development and humanitarian planning and programming.

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2 "Concepts and definitions." UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Accessed May 25, 2013. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm.